

Minutes of Petersfield U3A Management Committee Meeting

The United Reform Church, Wednesday 6 August 2025 at 1400

Present: Jenny Thwaites (Chair), Rose Noonan (Secretary), Charles Price, Sandy Stephens, Bernice O'Reilly, Peter Lake, Greg Cumming, Tim Willans, Titian Fleming, Doreen Challen, Susie Reynolds; Peter Clist (observer)

NOTE: * indicates pre-circulated paper

1. **Apologies:** none

2. **Declarations of interest**

Bo'R noted a possible conflict of interest in the Writing Group grant request.

3. **Chair's Opening Remarks – see (4)**

4. **Introduction**

JT welcomed Peter Clist who may join MC with a view to working with Bo'R on the groups programme. Peter has a special interest in language groups.

5. **Minutes of the meeting held on 14 May 2025***

These were agreed and signed by the Chair.

6. **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising from the Minutes.

7. **Members' reports**

a. Finance* (GC)

On 31 July 2025, Petersfield u3a had £735.37 in the cash account, and £29,815.37 in the Gold deposit account.

GC has reviewed the financial aspects of the Byelaws (2023), and proposed several changes in the sections 'Financial Procedures and Authority for Expenditure' and 'Interest Groups' (see related paper). These were accepted with one amendment, proposed by CP, to 2a(i): *'Within their first [6] months of operation, new interest groups may request start-up assistance funds to a maximum value of £5 per person or £50, up to a maximum of £100 (indicative amount).'*

➤ **Secretary's note: this amendment was altered following discussion at the next meeting to:**
'Within their first [6] months of operation, new interest groups may request start-up assistance

funds to a value of £50 per group or £5 per person, whichever is the greater, up to a maximum of £100 (unless otherwise agreed by the Management Committee).’ DC 11/09/25

The Committee approved GC’s request to pay an annual subscription for a new accounting system, currently under £50 (but expected to rise).

b. Vice-Chair’s Report* (JT)

JT alluded to the matters covered in her report. In relation to the ‘new member pathway’, SR offered to make follow-up phone calls to new members to explore their experience of u3a to date and identify any problematic areas, and is willing to act as a point of liaison between MC and the Welcome Team. JT welcomed this offer, observing that the improved database including members’ interests/skills will be available, and will discuss further with SR.

c. Membership* (SS)

SS spoke to her report. It was clarified that as Petersfield u3a is a separate charity from other local branches, Gift Aid can be offered by Associate Members if they so wish.

d. Groups* (BOR)

Bo’R summarised points from her report relating to new groups and the continuing development of the Convenors’ Listening Groups, next due to meet in late September.

d. IT* (TW)

TW covered points from his report, noting that he has taken on the role of systems administrator. IT training is progressing as planned, and Dropbox will be migrated to OneDrive in due course. He pointed out that a thorough review of GDPR policies and processes is necessary following the passing of DUAA.

SS plans to work with Sue Besant to add new information to the volunteers’ database. JT explained that the intention is to make available information about members’ skills, etc., to those colleagues who communicate with new members. It was agreed that Beacon access also requires review.

ACTION RN: to add DUAA and Beacon access review to next meeting agenda.

e. Policy Review (DC)

See item (10).

f. Speaker Secretary’s Report (TF)*

TF reported that speakers have been booked for all General Interest Open Meetings next year. She requested that colleagues ensured any emails were sent to her u3a address; TW is aware of some ongoing issues and will work on this with Mike Bracey.

8. Open Meeting Speaker Costs

JT explained the issue that has arisen relating to payments to speakers for the Arts and Heritage meetings run by Joan Shepley, averaging about £75-£100 per talk. JS has offered to pay for speakers out of the existing A&H funds, rather than to charge attendees. PL identified two separate issues: (i) whether it is reasonable to subsidise A&H speakers, given that S&T and Health speakers usually don’t charge; and (ii) whether it is legitimate to pay an external speaker on the grounds that no appropriate expertise is available within Petersfield u3a itself.

It was agreed that although A&H members will continue to pay for their outings, Petersfield u3a will fund the speaker, initially using A&H's existing funds, to be kept under review while further research is carried out. A&H will continue to manage finances for trips. DC suggested that a policy relating to speaker costs would be helpful, for consideration in the future; this was agreed.

9. **Bridge and Writing Group Funds (GC)**

GC has received two requests for funding:

- (a) The Bridge Group has requested £150 towards the purchase of Bridgemaster equipment and software. It was agreed that GC will seek further details before a decision is made, particularly as free apps for the same purpose exist.
- (b) The Writing Group has requested £500 towards a writing workshop for group members plus other interested u3a members, which will be led by a professional tutor as the requisite skills are unavailable in-house. The total cost would probably be around £750, with members making up the difference. Although the initiative was welcomed in principle, it was considered costly. JT suggested asking the Writing Group for more information about the event, with a view to possibly offering half the cost.

During the discussion, the idea of a 'bursary pot' to enable such learning-enhancement events was raised; groups would be able to bid for funding from this at a particular point for use in the year ahead. **ACTION: PL, DC and CP** to investigate further.

10. **Policy review**

DC raised some questions relating to aspects of the *Membership Types* and *Guest and Visitor Attendance* policies. PL explained that these were originally written in response to specific issues. Given the overlap between policies and Byelaws, PL suggested that some of Petersfield u3a's policies should be incorporated into the Byelaws in a format that would enable users to locate them by online searches.

DC also pointed to an issue relating to Guest and Visitor attendance. It was agreed that names and contact details do not need to be taken. At Open Meetings, a 'Guest' or 'Visitor' bar code scanned on entry would enable numbers to be logged alongside member attendance data (RS deals with this). SS offered to create a 'Guest' and 'Visitor' scannable card, to be kept with each scanner along with instructions for the volunteer on the door. Regarding Interest Groups, it was agreed that as convenors need to input member names to Beacon, they are in a position to know whether participants are members and ask any visitors to join u3a if they wish to attend again. JT suggested that an audit might be timely to highlight any anomalies.

PL suggested that although the convenor handbook is available on the website, this too would benefit from becoming an online, easily searchable document.

ACTION: DC, PL and TW to work on a policy/byelaw conversion.

11. **Christmas Party**

RN is exploring the option of a choir as entertainment, and plans to organise a non-competitive fun quiz for members to engage with at their tables on arrival.

12. **Connect**

Nothing to report.

13. **PCC Keyholders**

CP and TF are currently keyholders.

14. **AOB**

- (a) CP intends to set up a small group to conduct a project 'Communications in Petersfield u3a', outlined in his paper*, which was welcomed by the Committee.
- (b) SS noted that she will be away mid-February to mid-April, but can arrange for membership business to continue.

The meeting closed at 17.00

Date and Time of Next Meeting: Wednesday 10 September 2025 at 1400.

Venue: United Reform Church

DMC 06/08/25

Chair's signature:

Date: