



Minutes of Committee Meeting held at St Magnus Centre, Kirkwall.

February 12, 2025 10.30am

Present	Martha Kirby (Chair), Glenys Alsop, Pat Retson, Valerie Pomfret, Merryn Dineley, Peter Drummond, Ellie Wiltshire, Tim Wright, Gill Lewis, John Graham, Alison Cruikshanks.	Action points
1) Chairmans opening remarks	Martha welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked everyone for coming. She explained she was stepping up for Keith whilst he was recovering from his operation,	
2) Apologies for absence	Bill Stout, Keith Ramsay, Roella Wilson, Gill Cooke.	
3) Minutes of August 2024 meeting	The minutes were agreed and will be posted onto the u3a web page. (Done)	AC BS
4) Matters arising	None	
5) Treasurer's update	<p>February 2025 Committee Meeting Report from Gill Lewis</p> <p><u>Finance</u></p> <p>The current Orkney U3A funds amount to £1,773, with a further £658 being held in the bank account on behalf of the Craft and Straw Work Groups. This situation is virtually identical to the last financial report provided in August.</p> <p>Because of the extension of the financial year to bring the year end in line with the AGM, we have another two months to go before submitting the Accounts to be audited, but I am confident that this should be a smooth process with the aid of Beacon and on-line banking.</p> <p>Following the last committee meeting agreement to increase monthly meeting donations to £2 per person, we are now holding our own in terms of covering costs of the room at St Magnus Centre, with a usual attendance between 30 and 40 people. This is by far our most significant expenditure, followed by U3A affiliation fees which consumes half of our membership fees.</p> <p><u>Grants - Within and Without</u></p>	

	<p>Previously it was agreed that internal “grants” of £50 would be made available to groups, and this was taken up by 3 groups (Play Reading, Scrabble, and Straw Work). We still have funds available to offer this to all other groups, and so I would encourage groups to consider making a simple application – the only criteria for purpose is that the money is to be spent for the benefit of group members.</p> <p>A wider conversation to be had is opportunities for Orkney U3A to apply for funding from outside sources, such as the Awards for All fund which has been raised recently, and the previous funding that the Craft and Straw Work groups have obtained. I would invite the group leaders to contribute to this for next year.</p> <p><u>Membership</u></p> <p>Our current membership stands at 127 – having now removed from the “register” any non-renewals.</p> <p>We have a steady enrolment – with 19 new members having joined since the AGM last year.</p> <p>We have amended membership fee charges so that from hereon, people joining on or after 1st January in any year will only have to pay £5 until the annual renewal in April.</p> <p>Gill Lewis.</p> <p>*****</p> <p>Peter confirmed that he had made an application for funds to support meeting room costs for craft and straw work groups.</p> <p>Awards for All had recommended that the current application should come from u3a Orkney who hold a bank account, not a ‘sub’ group.</p> <p>There are other funders that can be applied to. With guaranteed funds from members or external bodies there is confidence to keep the groups going. If adequately sized rooms can be afforded this allows more members to attend meetings.</p> <p>Valerie indicated that if the recorder group grew any more a public venue may be preferable, so if funds were available this would encourage the group to expand.</p>	
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	<p>Merryn indicated she would apply for a £50 grant to cover the cost of hiring a room for a Botany meeting when the summer programme is planned.</p> <p>With the agreement of the members present, Gill, Peter and Pam W were asked to investigate grant applications in greater detail.</p>	<p>MD</p> <p>Gill, PD, PW</p>
<p>6) Constitution</p>	<p>For clarity Alison explained-</p> <p>In October 2024 she reviewed the minutes on u3a web site to see how many committee meetings we were holding each year, because we had decided that as there was no business to discuss we did not need a meeting in October/November 2024.</p> <p>At this time, by chance, 2020 AGM Minutes were seen and reviewed. These reported that the chairman at the time had suggested that a Meeting Secretary /Coordinator (MC) role be introduced to share the Chairman's workload. At the same time it was agreed to hold 3 not 4 committee meetings a year. These motions were proposed and seconded. However the AGM took place under covid rules, everything was carried out by mail/email; and then seemingly forgotten.</p> <p>Alison agreed to take on the role of secretary at the 2022 AGM and was then told that if no one was found the job of MC would also be part of the role.</p> <p>At subsequent meetings a MC was sought. Alison was told this was not possible because the constitution would have to be amended and this would be a long process.</p> <p>Alison has recently sent the 2020 minutes to the Third Age Trust (Linda) with an explanation. It has been confirmed</p> <p>1/ the role of MC can be carried out by any committee member with no change to the constitution</p> <p>2/ 3 meetings a year is acceptable</p> <p>3/ we are using 2013 constitution; this was updated in 2018 and 2020 which we seem to have missed. A new constitution is being drafted and Alison continues to ask TAT for a copy, it will be sent when available and presumably we can decide if we wish to adopt it</p> <p>In an email to Alison TAT say we <i>recommend when reviewing or planning to make changes that u3as</i></p>	

	<p><i>consider adopting the latest model constitution as it includes additional clauses to support your u3a and to futureproof them going forward.</i></p> <p><i>If you want to proceed with the current model constitution, please send a draft copy of your constitution with any proposed changes highlighted.</i></p> <p>The above is relevant</p> <p>1/ to reassure members that the matter of a MC has now been dealt with</p> <p>2/ the person who has agreed to take on the role of secretary at 2025 AGM is not able to take on the MC role as well.</p> <p>3/ MC will need to be appointed at the AGM.</p>	
7) Monthly Meeting Venue	A change of venue has been mooted due to lack of parking and cost at St Magnus Centre. However, no other suitable venues have been suggested; but once works at The Salvation Army Hall have been completed (June 2025) this may be a possible option to review.	KR/ secretary
8) Web site update / IT Report	<p>IT Report for 12 February, 2025 Bill Stout, read by Alison</p> <p><i>Website maintenance</i></p> <p>Having completed the updates emerging from the AGM in April, there has been only limited activity. This has involved primarily three functions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creating and posting general meeting notices • posting blogs from the Botany, Photography and Walking groups • posting general meeting notes <p>This pattern is likely to continue unless we decide to undertake a revamp of the site. U3A nationally has developed a new website platform for branches to use, but there is a good argument for us to stay with orkneycommunities.co.uk given its integration with many other organisations based in Orkney and the fact that it is probably a go-to site for folks looking for local activities. Our updates get promoted to the home page - so it does give us visibility.</p>	

	<p>Beacon</p> <p>The Beacon membership database and finance management features are being fully updated and exploited by Gill.</p> <p>Email services</p> <p>The email services based on Beacon and Orknet Roundcube are well bedded-in. The old system based on Sal's account has been sunset.</p> <p>An email address directory is maintained on Beacon as part of the membership database by Gill and is copied periodically by IT Support to Orknet Roundcube to provide addressing from there.</p> <p>A slight limitation of Roundcube is the volume of storage we've contracted for. This is consistent with the original intention, which was to use the service only for email redirection. We have insufficient space to maintain a long-term email archive on Roundcube. Most of the emails are fairly ephemeral anyway, except perhaps those relating to finance. We could take a view on increasing the capacity at some point, but it hasn't been much of a problem so far – we ran out of space once and had to be rescued by Orknet. There would be a cost associated with any space increase of course.</p> <p>Bill Stout , 6 January, 2025</p>	
9) Speakers 2025/26	The monthly programme for 2025 has been completed. Keith has ideas going forward and can liaise with the MC when appointed, for the 2026 programme	KR
10) Group Reports	<p>Scrabble – Continues to meet on a Friday with 9 regular members attending. There would be room for 1 more table. If more members join, consideration could be given to hiring a room.</p> <p>Craft – 8/10 members meet weekly for a variety of BYO crafts at the library which is currently affordable. More members are welcome.</p> <p>Straw Work – 11 members are currently working on coiled baskets. Corn dollies and plating to follow. The group has visited the Orkney Museum to see the straw work collection. Members pay for a 3-month term to ensure the room hire is covered, Sandra continues to guide and assist the group.</p>	

	<p>Music 1 – 5 members continues to meet and can watch orchestral works via a large TV screen. Space for 1 more member.</p> <p>Book club – Winter meetings have proved slightly difficult as usual venue has closed for the winter on a Tuesday. The group has reverted to meet at members' homes. Group continues to meet every 4/6 weeks to discuss the book of the month over lunch.</p> <p>Music 2 – 3 members continue to enjoy their music on Cd's. There is space for new members.</p> <p>Recorder – After 1 year, 8 members have joined., and playing is proceeding well. If more people wish to join it may be best to create a second group.</p> <p>Non-Fiction – The group has established a regular pattern of meeting once per month, with five members usually attending. There was no meeting in December in view of competing commitments. Since October, meetings have been held over Skype since I have been staying overseas. We will resume physical meetings in May.</p> <p>Recent and forthcoming books include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · September: "Exactly", Simon Winchester – 2017 · October: "The Wood Age", Roland Ennos – 2020 · November: "What we cannot know", Marcus du Sautoy – 2016 · January: "Doughnut Economics", Kate Rayworth - 2017 · February: "The Mother Tongue", Bill Bryson – 2009 · March: "Cynical Theories", Pluckrose & Lindsay - 2020 <p>Bill Stout , 12 February, 2025</p> <p>Cinema – Has not met recently due to Keith being unavailable. A very informal group who enjoy a coffee afterwards to discuss the film.</p> <p>Art Group. Currently meet twice a month on the second and fourth Friday in Stromness Community Centre. There is a small charge per person for room hire (£2.40 regardless of numbers). New members are welcome.</p> <p>Walking- keen walkers meet regularly. Walks this year have been to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Newark in Deerness · Birsay and the Brough · Fourth Barrier to Eastside in South Ronaldsay 	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Up Keelylang to the Masts · Hammers Hill in Rendall to the Mast, Ward Hill in Orphir · Yesnaby to the Black Craig · Happy Valley and Russadale · Marwick Bay to the Palace in Birsay · Holm around the Loch of Ayre and Graemshall Loch circular <p>Reports on all these walks are on the Orkney U3A blog on the Orkney Communities Website. New members welcome.</p> <p>Play reading- The last member of the group has now returned following covid. 8/9 members continue to meet regularly reading various plays. Space for another member. Play Reading Group. From March 15th. 2024 'Mary Queen of Scots had her head Chopped Off' 'Blood and Ice' 'Perfect Days' and 'Misery Guts' all by Liz Lothead 'The Misanthrope' Molière 'The Man of Mode' (or 'Sir Fopling Flutter') Sir George Etheridge 'Antigone' Sophocles 'Antogone' Darren Murphy (After Sophocles) 'Cornerstones' & ' Sophocles Asks Why' both by Eric Linklater 'Tartuffe' Molière 'Fallen Angels' Noel Coward 'Fuente Ovejuna' Lope de Vega 'Time and the Conways' J. B. Priestley 'An Ideal Husband' Oscar Wilde</p> <p>Walking 2- 8-13 members turn out regularly for a walk followed by coffee. Sufficient car parking can be an issue at the beginning of some walks. More walkers welcome.</p> <p>Photography- The Group is full, and will be going south on another photo trip. The group has visited</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · St Margarets Hope · The Palace in Birsay · Finstown and Binscarth Woods · Westray Day Trip · Shapinsay Day Trip · Scapa Beach and Pier · Harrold Esson's Collection · Ness Battery · And four days away in Grantown-on-Spey to find and photograph items of interest. <p>Reports on all these can be found on U3A Blog on Orkney Communities Website.</p> <p>Botany – Meet May – September twice a month on a Tuesday, with up to 25 members, some are unable to</p>	
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	attend in person but enjoy seeing the photos and descriptions provided following a visit. The group meets in April to discuss the programme for 2025.	
11) Preparation for AGM	<p>Reports will be needed from Chairman and Treasurer. (The accounts @31.3.25 will be certified by Gavin Cullen asap).</p> <p>All Group Leaders are asked to send a report of their 2024/5 activities to secretary@orkneyu3a.org for inclusion in the 2025 AGM minutes.</p> <p>Martha is willing to be nominated as Vice Chairman, but will be leaving Orkney in 2025. (Now withdrawn as move south expected in 2025). Nominations are invited.</p> <p>Bill has agreed to stand as Minute Secretary.</p> <p>A Meeting Coordinator is needed, Group Leaders are asked to tell their members. An email will be sent to all members.(Done)</p> <p>More members are sought to join the IT team. Ideally more Committee members are needed.</p> <p>A minute taker is required as Alison is away.</p> <p>The Art and Recorder Groups are providing refreshments. They will liaise over arrangements; provision of cake is optional.</p>	<p>KR/Gill</p> <p>GL</p> <p>GL / AC</p> <p>Art/Recorder</p>
12) AOB	<p>Book from u3a Sedgefield – This was sent to us as a gift. Martha has passed it on to Tim to review and forward to A N Other.</p> <p>Bookmarks – Bill had been approached to reintroduce bookmarks with u3a meeting details thereon. The meeting agreed that with most members now on email this was no longer a requirement.</p>	
13) Date next meeting	The next Committee meeting will be held in May following AGM in April	secretary
	There being no further business the meeting closed at 12 noon.	

Approved and agreed

Date / / 2025