



U3A Committee Meeting 21 May, 2025 St Magnus Centre 10.00am

Minutes

Present: Keith Ramsay (from item 7 onwards), Gill Lewis, Roella Wilson, John Mowat, Gill Wilson, Bill Stout, Merryn Dineley, Peter Drummond

1. *Introductory remarks.*

Keith was delayed and Roella, having taken the chair, welcomed everyone.

2. *Apologies for absence*

Tim Wright, Ellie Wiltshire, Glenys Alsop

3. *Adoption of minutes from 12 February*

Adoption of the minutes was proposed by Merryn, seconded by Gill Lewis.

4. *Matters arising*

Bill clarified a number of points concerning the constitution:

- The current constitution of Orkney U3A was adopted in 2013, based on a model constitution for Scottish member organisations.
- New model constitutions were issued in 2018 and 2021 but were not adopted in Orkney.
- There are no plans currently for a new model. The constitutional work in progress on the part of TAT is on the constitution of the parent body.
- We are under no obligation to adopt any new constitution.
- The 2018 model constitution is written to cover member organisations which are registered charities.
- Orkney U3A is an unregistered charity and a member organisation of TAT.
- If we were to register as a charity it would be worth adopting the 2021 model constitution.
- A proposed change to reduce the annual number of committee meetings from 4 to 3 was approved by TAT but was not put to the recent AGM and is therefore not in force.
- Our constitution provides for four officer roles: Chairman, Vice-chairman, Treasurer and Secretary, which are subject to AGM appointment.
- Other roles, eg Meetings Coordinator, Membership Secretary, Group Coordinator may be defined and filled at the discretion of the committee.
- Up to 2 members may be coopted onto the committee, with a tenure extending to the next AGM.

Roella noted that there would be tax benefits through Gift Aid in acquiring registered charity status – but administrative cost. We **agreed** that cost-benefit analysis would be needed before any consideration, but no action was assigned.

5. ***AGM draft minutes***

A few changes to the draft minutes were requested and accepted.

Action: Bill to revise the draft and submit to **Roella** to put up on the website as a draft to await the next AGM for adoption.

6. ***Begin an initiative to bring on new Committee members***

Bill noted that our constitution provides for 5 to 12 committee members and that we currently have only the minimum number. For purposes of sharing tasks as well as for succession planning it would be advisable to add more heads. We can begin by coopting two members. Well in advance of the next AGM we should try to groom a few candidates. Group Leaders may be amenable since they already attend some committee meetings.

7. ***Proposal to co-opt Gill Wilson***

It was **agreed** to coopt both Gill Wilson and Merryn onto the committee. Gill accepted the Meetings Coordinator role on condition that she be given support, which Keith and Bill committed to.

It was **agreed** that finding speakers for the forthcoming year should be a joint committee exercise under Keith's direction.

Merryn declined taking on a specific role at this point.

8. ***Present role descriptions for endorsement***

Bill noted that Alison Cruikshanks had initiated the writing of committee role descriptions with himself and Gill Lewis. The initial driver was to separate out the Meetings Coordinator role. However, these descriptions will be useful in future for recruiting new committee members and in allowing handover of responsibilities.

Action: All to review and feed back any detailed comments to Bill by email.

9. ***Introduce a protocol for managing Group waiting lists***

Gill Lewis raised the issue of managing the expectations of new members with regard to which Groups are full, and have a waiting list. The process of managing waiting lists should be regularised. The broader issue of Group coordination as a whole emerged in discussion.

Action: To immediately improve visibility, **Roella** to compose an index of Groups on the website at the head of the Groups page with basic information, including vacancies. **Gill Lewis** to act as Groups Coordinator pro tem in soliciting data from Group Leaders.

Action: Bill, Gill Lewis and Roella to form a subcommittee to produce a proposal on Groups management, including (but not limited to)

- exploitation of Beacon Groups management features
- Group Leader role description
- guidance on data privacy
- waiting list management
- protocol for setting up new Groups

Note: there is currently no entry for the Recorder Group on Beacon.

10. Propose possible extensions of Beacon rollout

It was **agreed** to focus on the Groups features for now.

11. Propose a protocol for appointing scribes

The term “scribes” was agreed to be intimidating.

Action: Bill to write to all members with a list of forthcoming talks to request volunteers to “take notes”.

12. Policy regarding sharing Group contact details with members

It was **agreed** to roll this into the subcommittee action in item 9 above.

13. Privacy policy – some Group leaders hide members email addresses, others don’t – do we need to clarify with individual members?

It was **agreed** to roll this into the subcommittee action in item 9 above.

14. Policy regarding storage of accounts – for how long and where?

It was **agreed** that there is no need to retain finance documents longer than the statutory minimum period of 7 years.

15. Venue for general meetings

We **agreed** to park this issue until there is an opportunity to consider the new Salvation Army citadel.

16. Any other business

Peter Drummond: Patricia Long a new member of Orkney U3A has asked that consideration be given to setting up a Group which looks at Orkney's Social History by considering written works, archive records and possibly buildings.

Action: Peter to contact Patricia to clarify whether she would be prepared to act as Group Leader and to suggest how the Group would operate in terms of meetings and research. Once we have a prospectus **Bill** to solicit interest in membership. Only then would it be possible to size a venue etc.

There is no established protocol for setting up new Groups but there clearly has to be committee endorsement.

Bill: When submitting our general meeting writeups to *The Orcadian* we should make the most of the opportunity to say who we are in the endnote. We **agreed** that the wording needs to be carefully crafted to make clear that membership is

open to those no longer in full-time employment - and that trial attendance at up to two meetings is welcomed.

17. Date of next meeting

10 September, 2025 pencilled in.

Bill Stout

4 June, 2025