



U3A Committee Meeting 10 September, 2025 10.00am

Garden Room, King St Halls

Minutes

Present:

Committee: Keith Ramsay (chair), Merryn Dineley, Gill Lewis, John Mowat, Bill Stout, Gill Wilson, Roella Wilson

Group Leaders: Glenys Alsop, Peter Drummond, Valerie Pomfret, Patricia Retson, Ellie Wiltshire, Tim Wright

1. *Introductory remarks.*

Keith welcomed everyone.

2. *Apologies for absence*

Gill Cooke

3. *Adoption of minutes from 21 May, 2025*

Adoption of the minutes was proposed by Keith, seconded by Merryn.

4. *Matters arising*

Group facilitation

As agreed at the May meeting, a subcommittee comprising Gill Lewis, Roella and Bill had met and produced a written proposal for group facilitation, including role descriptions for Groups Facilitator and Group Leader. There was no dissent from the meeting towards progressing to implementation as proposed. Gill Lewis will take on the role of Groups Facilitator.

Gill had already begun to check group memberships and contact details with the Group Leaders. She had found a few anomalies, such as non-u3a members in some groups and incorrect email addresses. It was felt that the exercise was already proving worthwhile.

Action: Gill Lewis to continue to implement the facilitation proposal.

General Meeting notes

As agreed at the May meeting, Bill had circulated members to ask for volunteers to take notes at general meetings. Only Marion Sutherland had stepped forward, and she kindly prepared the notes for the June meeting. In his capacity as secretary, Bill is willing to take notes by default, but will tap some shoulders for help when he isn't going to be available.

5. ***Treasurer's report***

Gill's report is appended.

Action: Bill to upgrade the service from Orknet to the next level of disk capacity (500mb) at a cost of £2 per month in order to avoid frequent disk-related outages.

Agreed: when a new group is approved, to apply some of the £50 grant to the cost of the kickoff meeting (to be arranged by the Groups Facilitator).

6. ***New groups***

Scrabble 2

The proposal to set up a second Scrabble group, based in South Ronaldsay, has been withdrawn since expressions of interest have come largely from outside u3a.

Orkney social history

Expressions of interest in the proposal from Pat Long to set up a group to study Orkney social history currently stands at around 15 members.

Action: Gill Lewis together with Pat Long to follow the process to initiate the group.

Bridge

Six members are interested in playing bridge. Some are either rusty or inexperienced. It is suggested that initial activity should go ahead outside of the u3a. Depending on how things develop, the creation of a u3a group can be reconsidered later.

7. ***Fundraising for Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance (SCAA)***

The agenda item was prompted by the SCAA presentation to an ad hoc general meeting in early August. However, Orkney u3a has a long-standing policy of not getting involved in charity fundraising.

Agreed: Confirm the existing policy. Whenever charity organisations present to us, we may provide a donation box at the meeting. Otherwise charity activity is a personal matter.

8. ***Christmas lunch***

Pat Retson is managing the Christmas lunch event. She has booked The Merkister Hotel for 12.30 on Thursday, 4 December.

There was some discussion about methods of payment and whether prepayment might attract a discount. There was a general feeling that individual payment at the table after eating was easier to manage, but Pat will discuss options with The Merkister. A menu will be circulated when available.

9. Speakers for 2026

Gill Wilson, as Meetings Coordinator, has done an impressive amount of work in preparation for the 2026 programme of general meetings. Robert Foden and Andrew Appleby had provided a range of possible topics – a point to note for future last minute engagements. Some feedback was provided to Gill on preferences at the meeting. Further feedback and ideas should be directed to Gill at g.wilson2112@gmail.com

The following programme guidance was confirmed:

- Provide a balance of topics eg local and external
- No politics or religion
- Maintain the practice of meeting on the third Thursday of the month
- The April meeting will be the AGM – with a photographic quiz again (thank-you, Tim!)
- No meeting in the holiday month of July, or in December, when Christmas lunch will be arranged instead
- Continue to produce the programme on a whole-year basis

Action: Gill to continue to put together the programme for 2026, optionally soliciting feedback at her discretion, with the final draft to be approved by the committee over email.

There was some discussion of the Tea Rota for 2026. Groups with a small number of members are not expected to volunteer unless in collaboration with another group. Ten events require refreshments and there are sixteen or so groups, so it would not be appropriate to simply clone the 2025 rota.

Action: Gill Wilson and Gill Lewis to work something out on the 2026 Tea Rota

10. Group reports

The Group Leaders who were present provided updates on their group activities. All appear to be in very good health. We may have been a bit envious of the upcoming Photography Group trip to Granton-on-Spey. The following issues were raised:

- First aid training for some members of each group which makes field trips, with advice on what to include in a first aid kit
- Provision of emergency contact names and telephone numbers
- Insurance indemnity cover for meetings hosted in a private residence
- Management of group size, especially in the case of the Botany Group

Action: Bill to research first aid options

Action: Gill Lewis with support from Roella to:
(i) approach the membership to obtain emergency contact details and to record them in Beacon.

(ii) devise a method of making emergency contact details available to Group Leaders, especially those who lead field trips, noting that Group Leaders may not be personally present at every meeting or on every trip.

(iii) amend all relevant documentation, including the collection of emergency contact details from new joiners.

(iv) in carrying out the above, take into account privacy and data protection legislation, and any sensitivities.

Action: Gill Lewis to research the issue of indemnity insurance.

Agreed: Group size is mainly an issue for the Group Leader. A firm line is required for groups such as the Botany Group to prevent the group getting so big that it devalues the experience for everyone. There are practical difficulties in splitting a group in two, but this should be considered. This issue is covered in the groups facilitation proposal, which is an initiative to manage numbers, vacancies and waiting lists. The Scrabble Group presented a case study of managing close to the limit.

11. Any other business

Bill reported that he had received an email from Alison Cruikshanks expressing her thanks for the £40 voucher the committee had presented to her on her retirement as Secretary.

12. Date of next meeting

11 March, 2026 pencilled in.

Bill Stout

16 September, 2025

September 2025 Committee Meeting Report

Finance

The current Orkney U3A funds amount to £1,985, with a further £1746 being held in the bank account on behalf of the Craft and Straw Work Groups. This is little change to the situation reported at the AGM.

The most significant spending over the 5 months of this year are predominantly affiliation fees, amounting to £508, and room hire, currently reported at £365.

Income during the period includes £1200 for membership fees, remaining at £10 per person for the year, and meeting donations of £251.

Grants - Within and Without

The Music Appreciation Group received £50 back in April, with the intention to put the contribution towards the costs of a subscription to YouTube Music. The group found that being able to watch music performances as well as listen to them really added to their experience of the music.

I would like to remind other group leaders that these internal “grants” of £50 would be made available to groups who have not previously applied. Should anyone wish to take this up, an email to me at treasurer@orkneyu3a.org stating their case is all that is required.

With regards to external grants, some activity has occurred. We responded to an expression of interest in the Community Led Local Development (CLLD) funding available although it was difficult to make a reasonable case to match their project focussed requirements, and the funding was over subscribed.

While communicating with group leaders in the foreseeable future in order to get group lists updated I will re-assess any potential funding requirements which may be more specific and therefore potentially easier to match funding for.

Membership

Our current membership stands at 130 – and we currently have 8 people who have not responded to 3 prompts for payment at this stage. I have a list attached and ask for any help or information from group leaders who have information on these individuals before I “resign” them by default.

We have had 10 new members since April – some returners, others new.

Gill Lewis

Orkney u3a
Statement of Accounts

Income & Expenditure, 1st April 2025 - 31st August 2025

Category	Brought forward	3,040.31		Net	
		In	Out	Income	Expenditure
Administration				-	
Advertisements			20.00		20.00
Affiliation Fees U3A			508.00		508.00
Beacon Licence Fees			127.00		127.00
Craft & Straw		1,098.20	646.80	451.40	
Donations		251.60		251.60	
Gifts & Gratuities			86.75		86.75
Membership		1,200.00	15.00	1,185.00	
Orkney Website				-	
Refreshments				-	
Room Hire			365.00		365.00
Sundries			70.00		70.00
TAT Magazine			20.00		20.00
	Sub-totals	2,549.80	1,858.55	691.25	

Total **3,731.56**

Balance Sheet

Cash	40.00
Current	3,691.56
Total	3,731.56

Funds retained for Orkney U3A	1,985.37
BF Funds held on behalf of Craft & Straw Groups	1,294.79
New Funds held on behalf of Craft & Straw Groups	451.40
Total	3,731.56

Membership Analysis, at 31st August 2025

	<i>Members</i>
Individual	130
Non-payment	8
Active	122

New

Apr - Jun	7
Jul - Sept	3
Oct - Dec	
Jan - Mar	
	10

Resignations/Losses **8**