

EXETER u3a

Minutes of the committee meeting of Monday 3 November 2025

Present: Terry Ancell (Chair), Annabel Nater (Groups Co-ordinator), M.J. Morgan (Minutes), Ian Murray (Membership Secretary), Ann Harper (Secretary), Elaine Thornton, Mark Hall, Harriet Smith, Sue Spence, Rosie Hydar (Treasurer), Virginia Rosenfeld (Vice-Chair)

1. Welcome

Terry welcomed all including Sue Spence, now formally co-opted to the committee

2. Apologies for absence

Anne Barwell

3. Declarations of interest

None

4. Minutes of the meeting of 1 September 2025

The minutes were approved

5. Matters arising from the minutes of 1 September 2025

5.1 Use of Zoom by Science Group: Elaine reported that the group has trialled the free Zoom option and at the next meeting will trial Google Meet

6.2 Email to convenors about use of Beacon: M.J. had circulated a draft email and Anne Barwell had replied with a paper giving further information. Only 7 convenors are not using Beacon. Agreed to defer this for discussion under agenda 9

All other actions in the minutes of 1 September had been completed or were on the agenda

6. Regular reports

6.1 Finance: Rosie tabled a paper of the current account statement and a list of charges for venues. It was agreed that the latter could be very useful to convenors if decisions need to be made about changing a venue or setting up a new group

Action: Annabel to circulate to convenors

Noted that the Mint's charges for room hire have increased and that some venues offer reduced charges for regular bookings so there might be room for negotiation about this

Action: Rosie to speak with the Mint about possible discounts for regular bookings

Rosie reported that the SumUp machine is now in use for members to make card payments at monthly meetings for Paid For Venue fees and membership. As yet, use has been limited but this might be increased if members were specifically made aware of its availability

Action: Virginia to put an item in the Newsletter about availability of SumUp

Noted that one of the problems with SumUp is that it doesn't appear to provide data about the source of payments when these appear in the u3a bank account, therefore a paper record of payments made at meetings still needs to be kept. Rosie will explore the system's facilities further and/or options for keeping paper records e.g. printing out a second receipt with name on for the records

- 6.2 Membership: Ian had circulated a report via email. Total membership is now almost 800, including 22 new members since 1.10.25, when half-year membership (£13) became available. Noted that membership fees for 2026-2027 need to be agreed in January 2026

Action: Ann H to add to agenda for January meeting

- 6.3 Groups: Annabel had circulated a report via email. Noted that 'Group Detail' on Beacon contained a lot of out-of-date information about venues, convenors etc but that this is not used as an information source; it is more important to ensure that the website information about groups is accurate

- 6.4 Speaker Team: Terry reported that the team needs another member to bring numbers back up to 4. Harriet has volunteered

Action: Harriet to contact Frances Berry

Noted that the A/V facilities at the Mint (for monthly meetings) still have issues (audio and visual); Terry reported that the Mint is considering updating them but no detail/timescale yet

7. Carolsing

Thursday 18 December, 10.15am for 11am start (replaces monthly meeting for December)

Action: All committee members to bring 10-12 mince pies or other festive snacks suitable for eating with hands only. M.J. to bring napkins left over from last Open Day. Annabel to contact 'performance' group convenors to seek volunteers to do readings. Ann H. to send out email to members giving details of the event

8. Policy reviews

All of Exeter u3a's local policies/documents are subject to review on a regular cycle. Two need reviewing now: Membership and Finance

Membership: The following need updating: full details of the Mint's address; updated PFV information; updated web address information. There was some confusion as to the issue of 'indemnity' and 'insurance' which needs clarifying

Action: Ann H. to contact Third Age Trust to get information about indemnity & insurance

Action: Ian to update membership policy

Finance: Rosie will review with input from Terry. Agreed that the expenses claim form should be added to this rather than being a separate item

Action: Rosie to update finance policy

Noted that in 2026 the Accessibility and the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion policies are due for review

Action: Ann H. to add to agenda for next committee meeting

9. Beacon

Mark reported on a 'snapshot' he had taken on 1 October 2025 to check data on groups:
79 groups

17 have 2+ convenors

12 groups have fewer than 3 members

5 groups have a waiting list (so not perhaps a big issue for Open Day etc?)

27 people are on the Beacon Users list i.e. have access rights but 13 of these have never used it and 10 appear not to be convenors

Action: Mark to liaise with Annabel about accuracy of this data and 'disable' people's access rights as appropriate

Further discussion of agendum 5 – convenors who do not use Beacon. In the light of the small numbers involved, it was agreed to re-draft the email and send it only to these convenors

Action: Mark, Anne B & Annabel to liaise about final wording of email and send out

10. Open Day

St Stephen's booked for Tuesday 3 March 2026. M.J., Anne B, Sue and Harriet will form the working group to organise.

Action: M.J. to convene the working group

11. Supporters' lunch

Exeter College restaurant @34 booked for Thursday 15 January 2026, 12 for 12.30pm.

Action: M.J. to circulate list of people to be invited for committee members to provide updates/corrections to this before invitations are sent out (December)

12. Groups Fair

Thursday 22 January 2026 (replaces monthly meeting)

Action: Annabel to send email to convenors before Christmas, alerting them of the date and asking if they want to be involved

13. Sharepoint/file sharing

Elaine reported that she has rearranged the site into 4 main areas so far:

Committee papers; Finance archive (back to 2017-2018 to comply with regulations);

'How Exeter u3a works' reference papers; Newsletter

All committee members can have access to this if they ask Elaine for details. Noted that there is a need to create an 'archive' for older committee papers but we need to decide what to prioritise for this

Action: Terry, Ann H & Ian to liaise to discuss policy/action for this

Action: Elaine to offer training about use of Sharepoint for committee members in the new year

14. Newsletter

Virginia (Newsletter editor) raised the issue of the cost of printed copies. 14 members receive a printed copy by (second class) post at a total cost of £4.55 per copy (only at this price if the number of pages is 24 or fewer; otherwise more expensive). Annually, the cost exceeds the membership fee which the member pays. These members also receive AGM material once a year by post. It was agreed that this situation needs reviewing

Action: Virginia to circulate full details for information/feedback, Ann H to put on agenda for January meeting

15. Any other business

In Terry's absence, Virginia will chair the November monthly meeting. Committee members (and others) to send any 'parish notices' for this meeting to Virginia

Date of next meeting: Monday 5 January 2026 2pm in the Wesley Room at the Mint