

EXETER u3a

Minutes of the committee meeting of Monday 5 January 2026

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

1. Welcome

Terry welcomed all

2. Apologies for absence

Harriet Smith

3. Declarations of interest

None

4. Minutes of the meeting of 3 November 2025

The minutes were approved

5. Matters arising from the minutes of 3 November 2025

5.1 Finance: It was reported that the Mint cannot offer any reduction in room hire charges for regular bookings

5.2 Speaker team: Harriet has joined the speaker team and will act as conduit between the team and the committee

5.3 Policy reviews: Noted that full information about the difference between 'indemnity' and 'insurance' is available in detail on the national u3a /Third Age Trust website

5.4 Policy reviews: The review of the Finance Policy has been deferred

5.5 Beacon: Given the small numbers of convenors who are not using Beacon, it was agreed not to send out an email about the issue. The access rights to Beacon of these convenors will be withdrawn

5.6 Newsletter: Virginia reported that her letter to postal recipients of the Newsletter only elicited one response, from a member who requested continued postal delivery of

a hard copy due to disability. It was agreed that after 1 April 2026 all other recipients of a hard copy will be asked to collect it at a monthly meeting at a charge of £3 (to cover printing costs). If any of these members request continued postal delivery of a hard copy due to accessibility, these requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis

All other actions in the minutes of 3 November 2025 had been completed, were in process or were on the agenda

6. Regular reports

6.1 Finance: Rosie had circulated the current account statement via email. Noted that the balance is now c£10,500.00 as more payments have gone out since the statement. Membership fee: Rosie tabled a paper giving projections for 2026-2027 based on various assumptions and giving details of how Exeter u3a's finances might look based on different prices for the annual fees. It was agreed that a financial 'cushion' of £8K will be the target for 2026-2027 and that on that basis, the annual fee for members should be kept at £25.00. However, the discount for early renewal should be reduced from £5 to £3.

6.2 Membership: Ian had circulated a report via email. Total membership now exceeds 800, with 129 new members so far in the financial year 2025-2026. Membership renewals at monthly meetings via cash/card/cheque can cause practical problems sometimes and it was agreed that Ian & Rosie need more help on the day. M.J. & Ann H. offered to help initially and Ann offered to draft a pro-forma for recording payments made at monthly meetings
Action: Ann H to create pro-forma

6.3 Groups: Annabel had circulated a report via email. New Chess Group (meeting in the Central Library) had asked whether non-u3a members could join the group. It was agreed that this sets a precedent which could be difficult to manage and that the current position on joining groups should apply to all groups i.e. non-u3a-members may attend two sessions of a group as a 'taster', after which they must join Exeter u3a in order to continue attending. If the fact that the group is held in the Library causes issues around this, the convenor could usefully be pointed to the Victoria Park Tennis & Bridge Club which has excellent facilities for games groups and very reasonable hire charges
Action: Annabel to liaise with convenor

6.4 Speaker team: Harriet will replace Terry as liaison between the committee and the Speaker team

7. External examination of accounts 2025 and 2026

This is necessary due to the 'high' financial turnover of Exeter u3a. Steph Ward has acted as external examiner but from 2026 someone else is required. Keith Shaw (former Exeter u3a Treasurer) is willing to do this and has the necessary knowledge/experience

(the examiner is not required to be a qualified accountant). The committee approved his nomination for the role.

Action: Terry and Ann H to complete the formalities with the Charities Commission in order to appoint Keith Shaw to the role of external examiner of accounts

Noted that it would be helpful to have a 'plan B' for ensuring that Exeter u3a has an external examiner; perhaps a local accountant

Action: Ann H to ask other local u3as how they manage this and also see if any local accountancy firms offer services which are particularly suitable for charities

8. PFV costs and annual membership fee

It was agreed to hold PFV fees at the current rate of £1.50

The membership fee for 2026-2027 will be £25.00, or £22.00 for early renewal (see item 6.1 above)

9. Policy reviews

Membership Policy review: Approved and will be put on website with dates showing when reviewed and when next review due

Other reviews: it was agreed to defer review of the Data Protection policy until March and the Finance policy review until after the financial year-end

Noted that if possible, policy reviews should be done in the period May to December rather than January to April

Action: Ann H to check dates of policy reviews to see how they might best be timetabled

10. Supporters' lunch, 15 January 2026

M.J. reported that this is fully booked (50) and that menu choices will be circulated shortly. Approval was given for the purchase of a modest prize for a quiz on the day

11. Groups Fair, 22 January 2026

Annabel reported that plans are well in hand for this but help will be needed on the day to set up/down

Action: All committee members who are available on 22 January to meet at the Mint at 9.45am if possible

12. Open Day, St Stephen's, Tuesday 3 March 2026, 10am-2pm

M.J. reported that a working group of her, Anne B and Sue had held an initial meeting. Volunteers from the committee will be needed to help with circulating publicity material (this will hopefully be available to take away at the Groups Fair on 22 January)

Action: Anne B to get 100 A5 posters printed for committee members to take to libraries, community centres, doctors' surgeries etc in their area
Help will also be needed the night before and on the day to set up/take down and also staff a 'committee table'

Action: M.J. to email committee with list of timeslots/work required and create a rota
Further help from the general membership needs to be solicited to provide the refreshments service (staffing and cakes) and meeting & greeting members of the public

Action: M.J. to draft an email to the membership to be sent out by Terry (as Chair)
Audio-visual display (projection on the wall of slides similar to those at the monthly meeting): this had not worked well at a previous Open Day but St Stephen's now has new facilities so it might be worth doing

Action: Anne B to enquire with St Stephen's about new AV technology
Publicity: The committee agreed that £50-£100 be spent on printing publicity material and 'takeaway' material for the day

An 'advert' needs to be on landing page of Exeter u3a website

Action: M.J. to liaise with Bob Cottis

Current u3a members need to be encouraged to tell neighbours/friends/community about the Open Day

Action: Virginia to put a message to this effect in the next Newsletter

13. AGM: Deferred to March meeting

14. Newsletter

Covered in matters arising above (5.6)

15. National Poetry Day, 1 October 2026

The convenor of the Poetry Group has requested support from the committee for hiring a room at the Mint to put on an event open to all Exeter u3a groups. The committee agreed to fund the hire charge and cover any 'losses' arising should usual PFV fees from attendees not be sufficient.

16. Any other business: Ann H reported that following her email, some 50 members have said they are happy to read the (reduced) online version of Third Age Matters

Date of next meeting: Monday 2 March 2026, 2pm in the Wesley Room at the Mint
(noted that it may be possible to go straight to St Stephen's after the meeting to do some set-up for the Open Day on Tuesday 3 March – **Anne B. will enquire with St Stephen's if this is possible**)