EXETER u3a

Minutes of the committee meeting of Monday 7 September 2026

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

1. Welcome

Terry welcomed all

2. Apologies for absence

Elaine Thornton

3. Declarations of interest

Rosie declared an interest in the purchase of the SumUp machine under item 6.1

4. Minutes of the committee meeting of 6 July 2026

The minutes were approved
Action: M.J. to send to Bob Cottis for the website

5. Matters arising from the committee meeting of 6 July 2026

5.1 Open Day (item 6.2);

M.J. is now able to access Sharepoint and will upload the various documents relating to Open Day over the next few months

5.2 Revised Exeter u3a constitution (item 7.1)

Action: Terry to check if the new constitution has been sent to Elaine for the website

5.3 Groups Fair (item 12)

Confirmed that there will be no Groups Fair in October 2026; the next will be in October 2027. The speaker team has a speaker for the October 2026 monthly meeting

All other actions in the minutes of 6 July 2026 had been completed, were in process or were on the agenda

6. Regular reports

6.1 Finance: Rosie had circulated a report by email

Statement of account to date: Noted that the 'year to date' column needs to be moved up a row. Rosie confirmed that 'Gift Aid' under Income refers to the refund from HMRC for financial year 2024-2025; refund for 2025-2026 financial year has not yet been applied for

SumUp machine: this is working well, driving a reduction in cash and cheque payments. Noted that Rosie needs to be reimbursed for the cost of it, but that this expenditure should be actioned/approved by two other members of the committee, not Rosie
Action: Terry and Ann to arrange for Rosie to be reimbursed for the cost of the SumUp machine

PFV costs: Rosie included in her report the costs which groups incur in using paid-for-venues (PFV). Some of these are relatively high for the number of people in the group, particularly for sports groups and groups meeting at the Mint (the Mint has raised charges by approximately 10% every year for the last 3 years). Sports groups require specific accommodation but some other groups might not and it could be suggested to convenors that other venues might be explored, to reduce costs where Exeter u3a is 'subsidising' members' attendance at a high rate. Noted that some groups require easy access to public transport which might affect their choice of venue. It was agreed that convenors of groups where the PFV 'subsidy' exceeds £100 per year should be contacted to offer them advice about alternative, cheaper venues
Action: Rosie to update list of venues with current prices and add in information about public transport (where possible). This to be shared with Annabel and Sue who will contact individual convenors as appropriate. PFV costs for sports groups to be reviewed next year

6.2 Membership: Ian had circulated a report by email

There are now a total of 800 paid-up members, down 20 from the same time in 2025. However there are a number of expressions of interest which could be converted to membership once half-year fee is applicable from 1 October.

It was agreed that membership might be increased by (a) reducing the number of groups showing as 'full' and (b) engaging with social media such as Facebook (including Exeter u3a's own group) and Next Door, but both are difficult to achieve – the latter because it requires someone on the committee to engage with social media outlets on an ongoing basis

Ian reported that the number of members opting out of receiving a hard copy of *u3a matters* now exceeds 300

6.3 Groups: Annabel had circulated a report by email

5 new groups are in the pipeline: Intermediate Italian, Book Club number 8, Latin for Beginners, Finding your Voice, Drawing for Everyone
The 'newcomers' cafe' has ceased due to lack of attendees. It was agreed to direct new members to existing social events – Topsham coffee morning, drop-in drinks, Poltimore meeting

The issue of 'dormant' groups was discussed and it was agreed that in the Newsletter these should be removed from the full list and put into a separate list incorporating a request for new convenors
Action: Virginia to edit Newsletter as above

6.4 Speaker team:

Harriet reported that speakers are booked until the end of the calendar year. A new member has joined the speaker team and another person has showed interest so the team is being strengthened. Virginia requested information about the November speaker for the Newsletter (deadline 10 September)
Action: Harriet to send details of November speaker to Virginia

7. Committee roles and succession planning

Ann had circulated a list of the current situation and Terry had emailed to all committee requesting details of future plans, with a view to implementing 'shadowing' of roles in the next 6 months.
The current situation is as follows:
Chair: Terry will step down in May 2027; currently no replacement identified
Vice-Chair: Virginia will continue to May 2028
Secretary: Ann will continue to April 2028
Treasurer: Rosie will step down in May 2027; Terry is willing to stand for this role
Membership Secretary: Ian will step down in May 2027; Elaine is willing to stand for this role. Pam also volunteered to shadow if required
Groups co-ordinator: Annabel will step down in May 2027; Sue is already shadowing her in this role
Minutes: M.J. will continue to April 2028
Newsletter: Virginia will continue
IT: Mark will continue to work on Beacon issues; needs to talk to Elaine about what else needs doing if she stands for role of Membership Secretary
General members: All other members willing to remain until the end of their periods of office/membership. Annabel & Ian indicated a willingness to remain on the committee from April 2027, provided this does not block access to newcomers. Rosie will leave the committee in April 2027 but might be interested in re-joining later
Action: Ann to put on agenda for November meeting. All involved to consider their situation and discuss with other committee members where appropriate

8. Open Day 2027

Tuesday 2 March if St Stephens can be booked. If not, another date in the first two weeks of March
Action: M.J. to contact St Stephens to discuss

9. u3a equipment and materials for storage

M.J. had circulated a list. Most is in the possession of Anne Barwell. In principle, the Mint is happy to accommodate some items e.g. the flag and the A-frames, but this needs further discussion – storage for more items may become available as the Mint revises its own storage systems

Action: Annabel to liaise with Anne Barwell and Lesley (the Mint), with a view to bringing some items in to the Mint

10. Gift Aid wording

The updated correct wording is longer and will create space issues if incorporated into current application form. Agreed that Rosie will send a separate document to Ian which can be sent once a new applicants ticks 'Yes' to Gift Aid

Action: Rosie to send document to Ian

11. Independent inspection of accounts

Due to a rise in the Gross Income Threshold set by the Charity Commission, it is now no longer a requirement for Exeter u3a to have an independent inspection of accounts. However, given that this has now been put in place (at no cost), it might be helpful to keep doing it as a safeguard/second pair of eyes on the figure. This was unanimously agreed

12. Interest-bearing account for surplus funds

It was agreed that in principle it is inappropriate to hold too much in the way of a surplus and that rather than gaining interest from it, the surplus should be reduced. TAT guidelines suggest having a year's expenditure in hand (c£25K) but given that most costs are fixed (excluding room hire) it's probably not necessary to hold this much. However, any policy on reducing surplus would need to fit with Exeter u3a's financial policy

Action: Ann to contact TAT for any updated guidance on holding of surpluses and bring that, plus Exeter u3a financial policy, to the November meeting for discussion

13. Review of Members' Code of Conduct

Ian had circulated this prior to the meeting and it was approved, subject to addition of review date and next review date (January 2029)

Action: Ian to edit document and send to Ann. Ann to ask Bob Cottis to put on website

14. Beacon data tidy-up: Deferred to next meeting (**Action:** Ann to put on agenda)

15. Beacon members' portal: Deferred to next meeting (**Action:** Ann to put on agenda)

16. Speaker guidance review

Harriet reported that this had been done, with no changes

17. Newsletter

Deadline for next issue is 10 September. Following a decision at the last committee meeting, hard copies would be printed for the small number of people requesting them and made available for collection at the next monthly meeting but in view of the very low take-up of this service, it would not be offered again in the future

18. Any other business

Ian reported that at the last monthly meeting, someone had joined and we had received their membership fee but the application form was missing and would need to be sent to them again
Action: Ian

Date of next meeting:

Monday 2 November, 2pm at the Mint