

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF WILMSLOW U3A

Wednesday 25th March 2026

In the United Reformed Church Hall, Wilmslow

at 2.30 p.m.

Present

Peter Highfield (Chair), Kate Bryant (Treasurer), John Andrew (Secretary) plus other Committee Members and Members.

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming all members present.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from 10 Members.

2. Minutes of last year's meeting

There were no additions or corrections to the Minutes of the meeting held on 26th March 2025.

3. Acceptance of Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26th March 2025 were unanimously approved.

4. Matters arising

There were no Matters Arising from the Minutes of the meeting held on 26th March 2025.

5. Vote of thanks for retiring Committee members

The Chair said that the past year had seen many changes on the committee through a combination of health issues, relocation or the feeling that more than enough time had been served keeping this u3a running. He asked those present to show their appreciation in the usual way to the following people who had resigned from the Committee since the last AGM:

Angela Every (the previous Chair), Gillian Fosdyke, Stella Martin, Margaret Wood and Mike Kiddey

In addition he said that he wanted to start something new by giving a special thank you to people who have made a particular contribution to the u3a. It is becoming increasingly difficult to get people to volunteer for all the various jobs that need to be done to keep this u3a going, so we should acknowledge those who have made an extra effort when they step back. Since this group started in 2010/11, a lot of people have put time and effort into developing it and perhaps we were remiss in the past for not acknowledging that more.

We would like to acknowledge Anne Grace's contribution on the committee, arranging the refreshments after monthly meetings and sorting out the Christmas lunch along with Cherry Dolden.

We would like to acknowledge Caroline Mangnall's long-term commitment having several roles as Business Secretary (twice), Membership Secretary and Groups Coordinator, as well as running the Bridge Group

Finally, we want to recognise the contribution John Cookson has made over the life of this u3a. He is member number 1, was the first Chairman, he developed and then managed the website for the last 10 years, plus sorting out the audio visual equipment at these meetings.

Anna Grace and Caroline Mangnall were presented with bouquets of flowers and John Cookson was presented with a bottle of wine.

6. Chair's report

The Chair's report is reproduced here as delivered.

"The Chairman's report is an opportunity to look back on the previous 12 months and assess the current health and direction of our u3a.

One measure of health is the number of members and this year we are in line with recent years having close to 400 paid-up members, as of today. There is a slight increase compared to last year but the most significant increase is in new members; up from 15 to 24. We expect the total to increase during the year as we get additional new members and late renewals.

In terms of Interest Groups, that also is pretty much as before with 25 active with Whist and Canasta as newest addition. For a u3a of our size we have fewer Interest Groups than would be expected. So I would encourage all members to consider what new groups you would like to see. The u3a ethos is to come together and share our knowledge and experience – "by its members, for its members". You don't have to be an expert to lead a group. We do need a Groups Coordinator to help get new groups off the ground; there is an opportunity to volunteer for this role later in the meeting.

As well as the groups, we have our regular Monthly Meetings and I think the last year of talks has included a wide range of topics that should have included something for everybody. So thanks to Cherry Dolden who took over as Speakers Secretary during the year.

As I mentioned at the last agenda item, one part of this u3a that has not stayed “pretty much as before”, is the committee. As things stand, there will be 9 committee members 6 of whom will be either new since last year’s AGM or doing a new job.

On the one hand, having such a wholesale change on the committee can be a good thing. There is a freshening of ideas and renewed energy. As you will hear that has definitely been the case here. But the downside is the process we had to go through to get to this point.

I became Chairman in July last year when, unfortunately, Angela Every had to resign on health grounds. However, several others also needed to step down. At that point we were very close to not having a committee and facing the prospect winding up Wilmslow u3a.

Nevertheless, through a desperate appeal for new committee members, we have survived and are, I believe, in a much better place than before but not completely out of the woods. We still need a Deputy Treasurer, Vice Chairman, Groups Coordinator, and Minutes Secretary to have a full complement. Beyond that Kate Bryant is into her fifth year as Treasurer and we need to find someone who can take over that role during the coming year. So, as has been the case for most of the time I have been involved with Wilmslow u3a, there is a need for more people to become involved with running it.

If anyone would be prepared to take on any of these roles or would even like to join the committee without portfolio just to see what is required, then please put yourself forward when we come to the elections for the committee or at least see me or any other committee member later.

As a new committee we have been looking at the situation and have taken some actions to try and address this perennial problem. Wilmslow u3a has been running since 2010 and, although there are new members every year, we believe that the average age of our membership is gradually rising with the inevitable consequence that there is less enthusiasm/energy for taking on committee roles or even group leadership. In addition, our membership numbers are still a bit down on where we were pre-COVID by around 15-20%. This is an issue affecting very many u3as across the country.

So, we want to increase the membership, particularly amongst some younger people. Now in this context younger means closer to 60 rather than 80! We want to attract those people who have reached a point in their lives where they have, for whatever reason, more spare time and want to find something useful and interesting to do with that time.

Our first step has been to carry out a survey so that we better understand both the demographics and the interests of current members and there will be a presentation on the results later.

We have also developed a new website in line with the majority of other u3as which we hope will help with recruiting and retaining members. Again, there will be a presentation on that later.

We have also revamped the newsletter to give you information not only about what is going on within Wilmslow u3a but also across the national and regional u3as that might be of interest as well as local opportunities for volunteering and involvement.

We have also prepared materials such as fliers and posters which can be used to promote Wilmslow u3a and raise awareness of what we are and why we are worth joining. Our first experience of using these took place on the 8th March when we had a stand at the WTC Community Group Fair. This was a successful event and we had a lot of interest with several membership forms taken away. We now need to see what the follow up is. However, it was useful by making people more aware of us. It is perhaps surprising how many people have never heard of u3a or misunderstand what it is.

On top of all of this, we really would like to see some more interest groups set up and we can help anyone who has an idea to see if it can be made a reality. Having more active interest groups is of benefit to existing members as well as potentially attracting new ones.

So, looking forward, the committee will be working towards making Wilmslow u3a attractive to potential members as well as meeting the needs of the existing members.”

7. Treasurer’s report

The Treasurer’s report is reproduced here as delivered.

“The accounts for 2025 have been independently checked and signed off by Steve Hodgskiss, Treasurer of Macclesfield u3a.

(Note ‘Operational’=‘Unrestricted’, ‘Groups and Social’=‘Restricted’)

Our u3a operational income was £6722 comprising:

- £5821 in Membership Fees
- £105 for u3a Matters magazine (subsidised)
- £746 in Gift Aid reclaimed on 213 memberships
- £50 in Other Income (Bank Interest £8 plus 3 advance memberships))

And expenditure was £7090 comprising:

- £1596 in annual subscriptions paid to the Third Age Trust (£4 per member)
- £1849 in room-hire costs at the URC (increased by 2.5% in September 2025), for the monthly meetings and bi-monthly committee meetings.
- £600 (equivalent to £50 per month) in a year-end goodwill donation to the Oakmere Retirement Complex in Handforth in return for free use of their premises (at present by two Bridge Groups, the Art Group and the Whist and Canasta Group). (Accounted for in Room Hire costs)
- £1319 in speaker fees and travel expenses (ranging from zero to £185)
- £399 in IT expenses (including Beacon licence fees at £1 per member)

- £150 in grants to groups. (Reading, Bowls and Bridge groups)
- £133 for u3a Matters magazine (£4 per 5 issues)
- £897 for catering, including £499 for a Group Leaders' afternoon tea.
- Smaller amounts totalling £148 for Postage and Stationery and Bank Charges.)

Giving a DEFICIT of £369

The Groups' And Social Activities : Income £7393 (+ £61 (cash floats increase))

And Expenditure £5849 (add £1840 liabilities)

Giving an apparent surplus of £1543

However : There was a liability of the unpaid cost of the U3A Christmas Lunch of £1840

Giving an actual DEFICIT of £296

The Total Funds at year-end were £7697

Of which the u3a operational funds were £4460 (down £369 from £4829 in 2024)

And the Groups and Social £1397 {taking into account the £1840 liability} (Note £4460 + £1397 + £1840 = £7697)

The £7697 total funds are held as follows :

- The CAF (Charities Aid Foundation) Bank : £2599
- The CoOp Bank : £4329
- Cash in hand : £189
- And Funds (cash Floats) held by groups : £580 (Bowling approx. £300, Science approx. £100)

This approximately £400 deficit in total Unrestricted funds means we have a healthy working balance of £4460 going forward. The committee therefore agreed to maintain the £14 membership fee for 2026, with the expectation that costs may continue to rise."

8. Approval of Accounts and appointment of Examiner

The Accounts were unanimously approved and Steve Hodgskiss (treasurer of Macclesfield u3a) was unanimously appointed as the Examiner.

9. Motions

The Secretary reminded Members that 3 Motions to amend the 2017 Constitution had been attached to the AGM Notification. An opportunity was given for questions following which the 3 Motions were unanimously approved and adopted as Resolutions.

10. Election of Officers and Committee

Nominations were invited for the following Officers:

Chair

Vice Chair

Treasurer

Secretary

Peter Highfield was duly nominated, seconded and unanimously elected as Chair.

Kate Bryant was duly nominated, seconded and unanimously elected as Treasurer.

John Andrew was duly nominated, seconded and unanimously elected as Secretary.

There were no nominations or volunteers for Vice Chair.

Nominations were invited for Members of the Committee

Ken Bishop, Cherry Dolden, Michael Palmer and Bob Rajan were duly nominated, seconded and unanimously elected as Members of the Committee and will continue in the roles of Communications & PR, Speaker Organiser, Deputy Treasurer and New Website Manager respectively.

Melanie Davy and Dave Bryant are continuing as Members of the Committee having being elected less than 3 years ago. They will continue in their roles as Joint Membership Secretaries.

Two more volunteers were sought to join the Committee and perform the roles of Groups Co-ordinator and Minutes Secretary. The importance of the Groups Co-ordinator role was emphasised but there were no volunteers.

11. Close of AGM

The Chair closed the formal part of the meeting by thanking those present for attending and inviting them to stay on for short presentations on the Member Survey and New Website followed by refreshments.