

Preston and District u3a Committee Meeting
Minutes of the meeting held at 10am on 28th March 2025 at
St Cuthbert's Church, Lytham Road, Fulwood, PRESTON

Agenda Item		Actions
1. In Attendance	<p>KH welcomed the committee and then pointed out the fire exits etc.</p> <p>Kay Harrison (KH) – Acting Chair (Vice Chair) Tony Cheetham (AJC) – Assistant Treasurer Sue Holder (SJH) – Secretary Janet Nixon (JN) - Treasurer Cathy Widdows (CW) – Membership Secretary Sheena Clowes (SC) – Interest Groups Coordinator Eric Haworth (EH) – Members’ Representative David Parker (DP) – Beacon Administrator Maggy Simms (MS) – Website Administrator</p>	As per signed sheet
2. Apologies	Lyn Perry	
	OFFICERS’ REPORTS circulated (Membership Secretary, Treasurer, Website Administrator)	
7. Vice Chair’s Report	<p>KH welcomed CW and EH to the committee.</p> <p>Further succession planning is necessary as there is still no candidate for the position of Chair and at this time next year it is likely that the Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer will stand down. The Secretary undertook to draft a note to members outlining the options. For more impact EH undertook to produce a visual accompaniment to this.</p> <p>Consideration was given to changing the name of the Monthly Meeting to make it more attractive to younger members. MS suggested asking members for their ideas. It was agreed to give this further thought and consider it again at the next committee meeting.</p> <p>Re. a ‘coffee afternoon’ – this would be an opportunity to attract new members and thank Group Leaders for their efforts. The coffee morning held last year was not as successful as was hoped. MS suggested asking members why they didn’t attend such events or join groups. This may be because Group Leaders say that groups are full. Perhaps a policy is required whereby Group Leaders do not automatically say that a group is full and consideration is then given to setting up a second group. JN pointed out that we could ask members about what groups they would like at the coffee afternoon. This was considered a sensible idea. It was proposed that members could bring a cake so that we could have a Jacob’s join. SC undertook to check that the Northumbria Hall was available on the 10th July.</p>	<p>SH, EH</p> <p>All</p> <p>SC</p>
3. Website progress	<p>MS summarised progress with the new website. Visits to the website peaked in January at just over 2000. Peter Kitchen, Eric Howarth, David Parker and Tony Cheetham have volunteered to join the website team. DP will add these names to the website.</p> <p>CW added that members have started applying for membership online. CW will do the training course for using Beacon for online membership. This would overcome certain problems and be a lot less work. MS will pass on to CW her slides from that course.</p>	<p>DP</p> <p>MS</p>

	<p>Group Leaders have been emailed re. training sessions. Three sessions are lined up each for 10 people. Presently 23 Group Leaders have self-editable pages. AJC pointed out that it would be beneficial to separate the Members' Area and Policy and Procedures. MS agreed to look at this. The Group Leader contact system appears to be operating well.</p> <p>Re. the ability of the website team to cope when MS absent – the team can cope to varying degrees. The provision of training for Group Leaders is the most difficult as it is reliant on the machines members bring to the training sessions.</p> <p>The committee thanked MS for updating them.</p>	MS
4. Minutes of the last meeting	The minutes of the last meeting held on 14th January 2025 were accepted and signed as a true record.	
5. Matters arising from the minutes	<p>JN has still not received any invoices from Galloway Hall so SC undertook to contact the head office - again.</p> <p>Lyn Perry has stepped forward to take up the role of Speaker Organiser.</p> <p>Re SumUp: EH has loaned the branch a device which, if it can be set up successfully, will mean that another SumUp machine is not required.</p> <p>The Secretary has been registered to vote in TAT elections.</p> <p>Aidan's Room at St Martin's is suitable and cheaper for group meetings.</p> <p>Other actions have been completed.</p>	SC
8. Treasurer's Report	<p>The 2024 accounts have been closed off and the balances on the Membership and the Interest Group accounts noted above have been transferred to the main current account ready for the start of 2025. The Final Accounts have been independently audited and signed off by Margaret Jones.</p> <p>During the audit process, and because of the problems with the monitoring of interest group income, the auditor and treasurer, jointly agreed to meet and review the accounts half yearly as well as at the end of the financial year. This will be in July.</p> <p>An inflation rate of 5% has been used to monitor the budget over the year.</p> <p>It was pointed out that the membership year runs from April whereas the financial year is from January to December. A reminder re. payment of membership fees is thus sent out mid-April to enable payment at the Monthly Meeting. Money from Monthly Meeting fees barely covers the costs of the meeting. Speaker costs have risen.</p> <p>Expenditure versus income should be balanced. Interest group expenditure is still being subsidised from the General Funds, which has implications for claiming Gift Aid. The latter will be claimed towards the end of the year.</p>	
9. Assistant Treasurer	<p>There is an issue re. sound and vision support at FFMC due to missing staff/members. A new person will be brought in to assist at a cost of £30. EH may be able to help at future meetings but is not available in April.</p> <p>Many venues have raised fees by 10% so to keep expenditure under control accommodation costs should be reduced where possible whilst still maintaining a good relationship with St Cuthbert's. Members should be asked if they are willing to speak at Monthly Meetings. KH undertook to speak to Lyn Perry about this.</p> <p>Re. Tai Chi tutor fees – this group meets weekly. The tutor is currently paid £35/hour. The tutor fee will rise to £40/hour but the group attendance fee will remain at £4. JN expressed some concern about this when the branch is only £4000 in the black. Tutors have to be paid a market rate but if other</p>	KH

	groups have to pay their tutors more then it may be necessary to increase group fees.	
10. Members' Representative	EH expressed his thanks to Laura Mole for her help. A report will be provided next month.	
11. Membership Secretary Report	CW expressed her thanks to Peter Kitchen for his help. He provided this month's report.	
12. Interest Groups Coordinator	SC is trying to reduce expenses (accommodation costs) and increase income. There is a free British Sign Language course consisting of 1 hour of tuition per week for 6 weeks which could be put on at a smaller venue if there is sufficient interest. SC is looking to move smaller groups to cheaper accommodation e.g. German Conversation is moving to St Martin's. A significantly cheaper venue has been found for the Drama Group.	
14. AOB	AJC pointed out that each member now pays £1 for Beacon compared with 50p a few years ago. This has seen TAT accumulate a surplus rising from £56K four years ago to £143K next year. AJC is a member of the informal Chair's Forum where he will express an opinion about this and suggest a reduction in the fee. Items 6 and 13 from the agenda will be taken at the next meeting.	
15. Date/Time/ Location of next meeting	The next meeting will be held at: 10am on Thursday 29th May 2025 in the Melrose Room, St Cuthbert's Church, Fulwood The Vice Chair thanked the committee for their support and closed the meeting.	

SIGNED AS A TRUE RECORD.....

DATE.....