

## **FINAL Minutes and Action Points of Cowbridge u3a Committee Meeting Thursday 2nd April 2026 at 10:00am, Room 12, Old Hall, Cowbridge**

### **Present:**

Peter Carter [PC] Chair  
Anne Thomas [AT] Secretary  
Elizabeth Eustace [EE] Vice Chair  
Roger Eustace [RJE] Groups Coordinator & Compliance  
Ian Fraser [IF] Treasurer  
Liz Cornelius [LC] Deputy Secretary  
Scylla Cumbes [SC] Membership Secretary

### **Item 1: Welcome**

PC warmly welcomed everyone to the meeting. PC proposed that the business on the agenda should be completed within two hours, with a vote to be taken to continue for up to a further 30 minutes if necessary. Any items not reached would be deferred to the next meeting. This was agreed.

### **Item 2: Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence had been received from: Tricia Hulse [PH, Publicity & Liaison] and Rob Cumbes [RC, Talks Coordinator].

### **Item 3: Minutes of the Meeting held on 3rd March 2026 (Accuracy)**

The draft minutes of the previous meeting were circulated to all Committee Members on 17th March 2026. One amendment was agreed: on Page 5, Item 14, Line 1: "potential" should be deleted. Subject to this amendment, the minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the proceedings. The Committee thanked AT warmly for producing the minutes.

It was also noted that:

- The "u3a Festival 26", to be held in the University of York on 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> July, is fully booked except for a few places on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> July;
- The u3a Wales Representatives are planning to organise a "Welsh Culture Day".

### **Item 4: Matters Arising and Progress on Action Points (not addressed elsewhere)**

**Page 2, Item 4 (Minutes: publication on website):** It was agreed that Committee meeting Final Minutes for 2026 are to be published on our website: including: the full names of Committee Members and invited guests; First names only of other u3a members; and the bank account totals. The 2024 Final AGM Minutes will also be published. The 2025 AGM Minutes are still Draft until approved by the 2026 AGM later this year.

**Action Point: AT to send relevant documents to our Website Administrator [AT].**

**Page 2, Item 3a (u3a Matters magazine opt-out):** PC read out a draft paragraph, for the April monthly Bulletin, about Members' information that is held on Beacon. This lets Members know that their Group Leader can see their basic contact details unless they tick an opt-out option. The Committee agreed this paragraph should be included in the April Bulletin.

**Action Point: PC to send out the April Bulletin using the Beacon email system [PC].**

**Page 2, Item 5b (Social Media - Facebook):** AT reported that the Facebook page now has 99 followers. PH and AT have made 28 Facebook posts in March (almost one a day) which have received 133 interactions and 24,300 views.

**Action Point: RJE to encourage more Group Leaders to send photos and short descriptions of their meetings for the Facebook page. PH to send an email to RJE to remind him [PH and RJE].**

All other Matters Arising were either completed or will be discussed in later Agenda Items.

### **Item 5: Financial Report (IF)**

IF presented the Financial Report. It was noted that Membership fees received so far this year are £4,029, which is higher than last year's total. RJE asked whether there was any other income expected; IF confirmed that a return of Gift Aid is anticipated.

Cowbridge u3a currently has £4,000 in the 60 Day Account and £4,336 in the Virgin Money Account. The Committee agreed that any new Cowbridge u3a groups can apply for a small start-up grant to cover their initial room hire and other set-up costs, if helpful.

**Action Point: RJE will tell new Cowbridge u3a groups about the start-up grant [RJE].**

The Committee noted that there was only one Day Visitor fee in the Bank Account. IF and SC said that other visitor fees have been kept in Petty Cash. SC confirmed the amount in Petty Cash is approximately £40.

The Committee thanked IF for his report.

**Action Point: SC to email AT with the number of Cowbridge u3a paid up members for the Annual Return 2026 [SC].**

**Action Point: AT to complete the Cowbridge u3a Annual Return for Head Office by 30<sup>th</sup> April 2026 [AT].**

### **Item 6: Arrangements to Welcome New Members (EE)**

EE shared copies of two documents with the Committee: a draft "Meet and Greet" pamphlet aimed at welcoming new members (who have already joined) and the Minutes of a "Meet and Greet" sub-committee meeting.

The purpose of the "Meet and Greet" team is to identify and engage with new members at General Meetings; to talk to them and ensure that they have a warm welcome. The "Meet and Greet" pamphlet contains a list of FAQs with information that will be useful to a new member.

There was a discussion which covered how best to identify new members at meetings: it was agreed to ask new members to raise their hands at General Meetings, and that this should also be mentioned in PC's introductory remarks. It was agreed that the booklet could emphasise that Cowbridge u3a is part of the national/regional u3a organisation. SC will continue to use the current Cowbridge u3a Flyer which is aimed at attracting potential new members.

SC will arrange for the new Meet and Greet pack to be printed (probably by GVS) at the same time as she arranges for a small number of new membership cards to be printed.

It was agreed that new members should be contacted by phone approximately one month after joining to check if they have any other queries or would like more information about other Cowbridge u3a Groups or Events

A new “Meet and Greet” desk will be positioned next to SC’s membership desk in General Meetings. There was a discussion about whether to add Cowbridge u3a contact details for enquiries (a telephone number or email): at present contacts can be made through our website.

Red lanyards have been purchased for the “Meet and Greet” Team. EE wants to recruit more volunteers for the “Meet and Greet” Team. It was agreed that a new committee member role may be needed, in September, to lead the “Meet and Greet” Team.

The Committee agreed with all the suggestions and thanked EE warmly for all her hard work on this.

**Action Point: Any comments on the new “Meet and Greet” booklet to be sent to EE [All].**

**Action Point: PC will provide logos and an attractive coloured design for the Meet and Greet Booklet [PC]**

**Action Point [ongoing]: SC will email names of new members to EE regularly [SC].**

### **Item 7: Beacon - Progress Update**

RJE reported that all groups have updated their Members’ records on Beacon, except one group.

RJE is planning a Group Leaders' workshop on 15th April, with an expected attendance of 8-10 Group Leaders. Graham Couchman [GC] will give a demonstration of Beacon and refreshments will be provided.

IF reported that the Finance records have been input into the Beacon system although some minor reconciliation matching is still needed.

**Action Point: IF will give an update on Beacon financial records at the next Committee meeting [IF].**

### **Item 8: u3a National and Regional Matters (EE)**

EE represented Cowbridge u3a at a Regional Meeting held on Monday 30th March in Newtown, Powys. The meeting was well attended by approximately 40 people.

Some of the key points were:

- **Use of the word 'teaching':** u3as should not use the words 'teacher' or 'teaching' in their websites or publicity materials, as it may contravene HMRC rules for the eligibility for Gift Aid. The language used should reflect u3a’s objectives of 'learning' and the sharing of skills and knowledge rather than 'teaching';
- **Promoting u3as:** Some u3as are working with their local Councils to publicise u3a groups in medical and community hubs, for example writing to GPs' surgeries and advertising in council offices. One u3a has received a grant for this. This is something for Cowbridge u3a to consider.
- **Tempo Time Credits:** Llanelli u3a has registered for Tempo Time Credits. This means that their volunteers can apply for credits which are redeemable against leisure and cultural activities for example garden entry fees, as a “Thank You” for their volunteering efforts. This was noted as an idea worth considering.

### **Further points from the Regional Meeting included:**

- **Committee resignations:** A handover period of three months is recommended between a Committee Member’s resignation and the new volunteer taking up the role;
- **Setting up a team of helpers for publicity purposes:** This was noted as a good idea;
- **Friendship agreements:** The Third Age Trust (TAT) is considering Friendship Groups and a Memorandum of Association to encourage closer mutual arrangements between u3as, especially with

small u3as (under 100 members). Members of one u3a would pay a reduced or discounted membership fee to another u3a if they wished to attend one of their groups. Shared groups between more than one u3a are supported for example the South Wales geology group. Note: Cowbridge u3a insurance covers Cowbridge members attending other u3a groups;

- Technology investment: TAT is planning to invest £2.8 million in improved technology (the Digital Services for u3a (DSU) project). Beacon is considered fit for purpose for now, but a new system is being researched which will be easier for members to use. This is expected to be available in 2-3 years' time.
- TAT committee roles: TAT is introducing new committee role descriptions, better Trustee information, and a new online Committee Member recruitment kit.
- Key challenges for many other u3as include: recruiting new members and recruiting committee members. The Wales u3a website could also be improved.
- A series of online Drop-in meetings are being planned. EE will send details to relevant Committee Members nearer the time.

Sheila Crawley, TAT Vice Chair, gave a presentation which included: u3a growth and ways of achieving it; thinking continually about new members; and the importance of looking after new members. Cowbridge u3a already has a Facebook presence aimed at attracting new members. The Committee thanked EE for her thorough report.

**Action Point: AT and PH to set up a Cowbridge u3a Instagram account [AT and PH].**

There was a short break. AT was thanked for bringing Easter treats for the Committee.

#### **Item 9: Cowbridge u3a Constitution Working Group (EE)**

EE had attended an online meeting last year at which u3as were encouraged to make changes to their constitution. However, the 2026 TAT model constitution is still awaiting approval by the Charity Commission. As a result, there hasn't been a first meeting of the Constitution sub-group.

PC confirmed that Cowbridge u3a wishes to continue operating as a charity and therefore needs a constitution acceptable to both TAT and the Charity Commission.

The Committee thanked EE for her work on this.

**Action Point: EE will arrange a first meeting of the Constitution sub-committee as an appropriate time [EE].**

#### **Item 10: Quiz held on Monday 23rd March 2026 - Review and Evaluation**

PC reported that the inter-u3a Quiz was a great success with lots of positive feedback from other u3as. There were 17 teams; including approximately 80 quizzers; and 10 teams from other u3as. Cowbridge u3a entered 7 teams. The winners were: 1st Porthcawl, 2nd Swansea, 3rd Pontyclun. Cowbridge u3a teams finished mid-table - a respectable result.

The Refreshments Team did an excellent job, bringing refreshments to the tables. There was lots of positive feedback for the refreshments.

The total expenses for the inter-u3a Quiz afternoon were £214.45. The income was £165, leaving a shortfall of £49.45. The Committee's donation of £50 from Cowbridge u3a funds covered this.

RJE suggested the idea of holding an internal quiz between Cowbridge u3a groups as a social event, although it was noted that preparing a quiz requires a lot of effort.

**Action Point: IF to pay the Quiz group the £50 donation, as previously agreed by the Committee. In future, all income and expenditure for similar events should be handled by the Treasurer.**

**Item 11: May Fair - Monday 4th May 2026**

PC reported on progress with the Cowbridge May Fair arrangements, although the actual venue has not yet been confirmed. PC will let RJE (and others) know when further details are confirmed, including a set-up time for the gazebo.

There is no overall theme for the May Fair this year. Discussion took place about what to put on the u3a stand: brochures, photos, display boards, chocolates for visitors and a possible raffle were suggested. SC mentioned that u3a polo shirts could be purchased. PC handed out u3a lapel badges to Committee Members.

**Action Point: RJE to buy champagne and chocolates for our May Fair stall and raffle [RJE].**

**Action Point: PH and AT to find photos that can be laminated and used on the stall display boards. PC and AT both own small laminators [PH and AT].**

**Action Point: PC to take photos at the May Fair for the Bulletin, the website and for Facebook [PC].**

**Item 12: Purchase of Card Reader (SC)**

SC reported that a good meeting had taken place with AT and Paul Thomas to discuss the card reader options. A card reader has now been at a reduced price £39 + VAT = £46.80. Paul was warmly thanked for his advice. SC and IF hope that the card reader will be ready for the May Fair. The Committee thanked SC warmly for her efforts.

**Item 13: Diary Dates**

Wednesday 8th April at 2:00pm	General Meeting - 'Whale & Dolphin Conservation', Bernard Purrier
Monday 27th April at 11:00am	Coffee in 96 Degrees Coffee Shop
Monday 4th May	Cowbridge May Fair (u3a stand)
Wednesday 13th May at 2:00pm	General Meeting - 'Wonderful Things About Bees', Robert Pickard
Monday 26th May	NO Coffee in 96 Degrees (Spring Bank Holiday)

**Item 14: Additional Updates from Committee Members**

**14a Chair (PC):** PC asked for any material for the slideshow or Bulletin.

**Action Point: RJE will send details of new groups to PC [RJE].**

**14b Secretary (AT):** AT has been contacted by a guest member asking if they can bring a grandchild to the next Cowbridge u3a General Meeting. After discussion, the Committee agreed to allow this on this occasion.

**Action Point: EE to check the Head office policy on allowing grandchildren to attend u3a events and meetings [EE]**

**Action Point: PC to include the policy of allowing children into u3a meetings for discussion on the next agenda [PC].**

**14c Treasurer (IF):** none.

**14d Vice Chair (EE):** Reported under Items 6, 8 and 9 above.

**14e Deputy Secretary (LC):** none.

**14f Membership Secretary (SC):** Membership cards: our current cards are not particularly well used, although the list of events in the cards is useful. A membership card that fits in a wallet or mobile phone case was suggested. SC asked for a discussion about membership cards to be added to the next Committee Meeting agenda.

SC asked whether she should record the names of members who prefer not to have their photos taken for u3a publicity, on the Beacon database. After discussion, it was agreed that Members who prefer not to have their photos taken for u3a publicity purposes, should indicate this at the time of the event or meeting. This is easier for the photographer. AT displays photography signs at meetings and event leaders are asked to give verbal notice that photographs may be taken. It is Cowbridge u3a policy to respect the wishes of any member who does not wish to have their photo used for publicity purposes.

**Action Point: PC to add “Membership Cards” to the next Committee Meeting Agenda [PC].**

**14g Talks Coordinator (RC):** On behalf of RC, SC reported that the June speaker for the General Meeting has asked to postpone his talk. RC is trying to find a replacement speaker.

**14h Groups Coordinator & Compliance (RJE):** RJE reported that, in his regular update to local u3a Principal Officers, Ian Cassidy the Head Office Coordinator, has updated the guidance on Gift Aid. The policy on group finances has also been updated with a strong recommendation that all group finances should be held centrally by the Treasurer, not by individual groups.

**Action Point: RJE will send copies of the guidance to all Committee members [RJE].**

**Action Point: RJE asked for the “Policy on Group Finances” be added to the next Committee Meeting Agenda [PC].**

**14i Publicity & Liaison (PH):** AT had provided an update on social media activity earlier in the meeting (on behalf of PH and AT).

### **Item 15: Any Other Business**

**Contingency planning (PC):** PC said that a major refurbishment of the Town Hall is being planned. The Town Hall is Grade II\* listed and is expected to be out of use for approximately one year, potentially from 2027. Many organisations will be looking for alternative venues. The Committee agreed to be aware of this but no action is required at this stage.

### **Item 16: Date of Next Meeting**

**Wednesday 29th April 2026 at 2:00pm, Old Hall, Cowbridge, Room 12.**

PC warmly thanked all Committee Members present for their contributions to a useful meeting. The meeting closed at 12:10pm.