

FINAL: Minutes and Action Points of Cowbridge u3a Committee Meeting

Wednesday, 29th April 2026 at 2.00pm, Room 12, Old Hall, Cowbridge

Present:

Peter Carter [PC] Chair
Elizabeth Eustace [EE] Vice Chair
Ian Fraser [IF] Treasurer
Anne Thomas [AT] Secretary
Scylla Cumbes [SC] Membership Secretary
Rob Cumbes [RC] Talks Coordinator
Roger Eustace [RJE] Groups Coordinator & Compliance
Tricia Hulse [PH] Publicity & Liaison

Item 1: Welcome

PC welcomed everyone warmly to the meeting. PC proposed that the business on the agenda should be completed within two hours and that, unless a vote was taken to continue, any unfinished business would be deferred to the next meeting. This was agreed by everyone present.

PC agreed to take a proposal for a new Cycling Group as an additional Agenda item under Item 14.

Item 2: Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from: Liz Cornelius [LC], Deputy Secretary.

Item 3: Minutes of the Meeting held on 2nd April 2026 (Accuracy)

The draft Minutes of the previous meeting were circulated to all Committee Members on Monday, 13th April 2026. The following amendments were agreed:

Page 2, Item 6: Arrangements to Welcome New Members (EE)

- deleted "PC suggested that" and replaced it with "It was agreed that"

- deleted "international" and replaced it with "regional"; and

Page 5: Item 14: Additional Updates: "14a Secretary" to "14b Secretary"

Subject to these amendments, the Minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the proceedings,.

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

Page 1, Item 4: Matters Arising: Committee Minutes: publication on website

AT reported that the January 2026 and March 2026 Committee Minutes and the Approved AGM Minutes for 2024 have been sent to Graham Couchman [GC] for publication on the website. The Committee agreed that Draft AGM Minutes may be published on the website, after approval by the Chair and all the Committee Members. There will be an explanatory note that the most recent AGM Minutes are Draft until approved by members at the next AGM. The Cowbridge u3a Social Media Policy has also been published on the website.

Action Point: AT to send the Draft AGM 2025 Minutes to the Committee Members for comment before the next Committee meeting. [AT]

Ongoing Action Point: PC to send a Word version of the Bulletin to GC for publication on our website. GC will remove any personal email addresses before publishing. [PC]

Page 2, Item 4 (continued): Matters Arising: Social Media, Facebook

Photos from Group Leaders: PH reported that the response from Group Leaders regarding photos and short summaries of their meetings remains low. It was noted that photos need not feature members - they can show, for example, book club books or bridge games. It was also recognised that some groups which are already full, do not wish to recruit more members. RJE reported that the recent Group Leaders' meeting, attended by 14 group leaders, was successful.

Ongoing Action Point: RJE and PH to continue to encourage Group Leaders to send photos and short descriptions of their group meetings for our Facebook page and website. [RJE and PH]

Page 2, Item 5: Annual Return

The Committee thanked AT for submitting the Third Age Trust Annual Return. Cowbridge u3a had 282 members at 31st March 2026. This has now risen to 292 members (end April 2026).

Page 4, Item 8: Instagram

AT and PH have set up an Instagram account for Cowbridge u3a.

Page 4, Item 9: Constitution sub-committee

EE has arranged the first meeting of the Constitution sub-committee for Monday 11th May 2026.

All other Action Points from the last Committee meeting were either completed or due to be discussed later under this Agenda.

Item 5: Financial Report (IF)

IF presented the financial report. Membership subscription income now exceeds £4,000 (higher than last year). The cost of the "u3a Matters" magazine was £912. After discussion, it was agreed to retain the current 'opt-out' approach rather than an 'opt-in' system for individual members to receive a paper copy of the "u3a Matters" magazine. A small number of members have already decided to opt-out and this is recorded on the Beacon system.

IF noted that the "Computer Equipment and Sundries" line includes: a Beacon licence fee of £282 (£1 per member); and £50 siteworks licence fee for our website. IF will show these as sub-headings in the next report. The Beacon licence was renewed on 31st March 2026.

Day Membership income is currently recorded as £2, with the remainder held in petty cash (approximately £30-£40). The full income from Day Memberships will be recorded separately before the end of the Financial Year (30th June 2026).

Account Balances: the Virgin Account stands at £1,821; the 60 Day Account £4,000. A transfer of £1,000 from the 60 Day Account to the Virgin Account is in progress.

Lapsed membership:

SC proposed that members whose membership has lapsed and who re-join at this time of year should be charged the half-year rate of £7.50. This was agreed by the Committee.

Item 6: Meet and Greet (and arrangements to welcome new members) (EE)

EE presented the latest version of the Meet and Greet booklet (dated 20th April 2026). The Committee were very impressed with the content and agreed with EE that, while the booklet contains a lot of useful text, it would benefit from more photos. PC suggested using a Cowbridge

High Street graphic to tie the Bulletin and Meet and Greet booklet together visually under the theme 'u3a Cowbridge - Serving the Vale'.

The purpose of the Meet and Greet team is: to welcome new members to Cowbridge u3a; to provide a New Member Welcome Pack; to direct new members to relevant interest groups and like-minded members; to answer any questions; and to arrange at least two coffee mornings a year for new members. If new members are unable to attend a coffee morning, the Meet and Greet team will follow up with a telephone call to answer any questions.

The Meet and Greet team will wear red lanyards. A Meet and Greet Desk will be staffed in the Main Hall with clear signage. People wishing to complete membership forms or pay the Day Member fee will be directed to the Membership Desk. The Committee noted the importance of remaining flexible and responding to individual needs.

The Committee approved the Meet and Greet booklet, noting that the paragraph about membership cards needs to be more generic to accommodate any changes to our future membership cards. The Committee authorised EE to commission GVS to print 75 copies of the Meet and Greet pamphlet at an estimated cost of £39.35.

Everyone agreed that Meet and Greet is very important. The Committee thanked EE warmly for all her work on the Meet and Greet initiative.

Action Point: PC to send a photo or graphic of Cowbridge to EE for use in the Meet and Greet booklet. [PC]

Action Point: PC to advertise for more Meet and Greet volunteers in the next Bulletin and at the next General Meeting. [PC]

Item 7: Beacon

Item 7a: Take-up of the Beacon system by Group Leaders:

RJE reported that all Group Leaders are now entered on Beacon, except one; a good result.

RJE has entered some of the information using details sent to him by Group Leaders. It would be better for Group Leaders to enter their own group information and keep the records up to date, especially in respect of updating the records of lapsed group members. However in practice, there are some Group Leaders who are grateful for RJE's assistance with Beacon.

SC asked whether Group Leaders are sending emails via Beacon; RJE confirmed this had been demonstrated at the recent Group Leaders' meeting. The Committee expressed their gratitude to RJE for all his work on Beacon.

Item 7b: Beacon - Financial Records (IF):

IF noted that 1st July marks the start of the new financial year, and preparations for Beacon financial records are progressing accordingly.

Item 7c: Lapsed membership [SC]

This was discussed under Item 5 above.

Action Point: PC to invite GC to give a Beacon update to the Committee, either as a stand-alone session or as part of the next Committee meeting. [PC]

Item 8: National and Regional u3a Matters (EE)

The Wales Regional AGM will be held on 13th May at 6.00pm via Zoom. There is a vacancy for the position of Region Vice Chair.

The Secretaries' meeting is on 7th May; AT has registered to attend.

Item 9: May Fayre - Plans and Arrangements

PC distributed handouts for stall holders and a site map for the May Fayre. Cowbridge u3a will have a stall using the Cowbridge u3a gazebo. The Town Hall staff will supply two large tables and display boards. PC will bring some camping chairs. Other Committee members may wish to bring their own folding chairs. The May Fayre opens to the public at 12 noon.

RJE will begin setting up the gazebo and stall from 10am and will need help from at least three other members. Everyone was asked to bring any u3a leaflets and spare u3a Matters magazines. PH suggested that we talk to visitors and show them our information rather than hand out a leaflet to every visitor. PH will print some signage including: advertising the raffle and the QR code for 'Follow us on Facebook and Instagram'. PH has arranged for some photos to be printed for the displays. Raffle tickets will cost £1 for a strip of 5 tickets.

Other May Fayre activities include: a Bake Off competition and a pet show.

Action Point: RJE to carry out the risk assessment for the May Fayre stall. [RJE]

Action Point: PC to laminate the display photos and attach velcro. [PC]

Action Point: RJE will bring champagne (cost £35) as the raffle prize. RJE will also bring raffle tickets as well as a tin of chocolates to hand out to visitors.

Item 10: Policy on Allowing Children to attend Cowbridge u3a Events and Meetings

PC reported that, having given the matter careful thought, he had changed his initial position of welcoming children to General and Group meetings. The Committee agreed, as a matter of policy, not to admit children (anyone under the age of 18) to Cowbridge u3a meetings. EE confirmed that the u3a's insurance cover does not extend to those aged under 18 years.

Action Point: PC to include a note in the next Bulletin explaining that children under 18 years old are not able to attend Cowbridge u3a meetings and groups. [PC]

Item 11: Policy on Group Finances (RJE)

A copy of the Group Finances policy document had been circulated to Committee Members just before the Committee meeting. RJE drew the Committee's attention particularly to Sections 3 and 4.4 of the document. RJE suggested a new policy that Group Leaders could retain and account for amounts under £100 per annum locally: however for income amounts of £100 per annum or more, transactions should go through the Cowbridge u3a central account.

The Committee agreed to read the document and to discuss this further at the next meeting.

Action Point: PC to include the Third Age Trust's Guidance on the Group Finances on the agenda for the next Committee meeting. All Committee members to read the policy document and return comments at the next meeting. [PC and All]

Item 12: Membership Cards (SC)

SC reported that approximately 50% of members do not take their current membership cards and suggested that a credit-card sized membership card may be more convenient.

Other points raised included whether GVS could print cards using Beacon data, the availability of PVC card machines (potentially shared with other u3as), although the uneven spread of new memberships throughout the year may make a shared machine problematic.

The Committee will discuss three options at the next meeting:

- Option 1: retain the status quo and current cardboard membership cards.
- Option 2: SC and PH to investigate Head Office resources for membership cards.
- Option 3: EE to speak to the Region and Chepstow u3a about shared card production.

Action Point: PC to include an Agenda Item on membership cards for the next Committee meeting, based on the three options discussed. [PC]

Action Point: EE to speak to the Regional co-ordinators and possibly Chepstow u3a for useful advice about membership cards and shared membership card production. [EE]

Action Point: SC and PH to look at the Head Office resources for membership cards. [SC and PH]

Item 13: Diary Dates

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| Monday 4th May 2026 | Cowbridge May Fayre |
| Wednesday 13th May 2026 at 2.00pm | General Meeting: 'Wonderful Things About Bees' by Robert Pickard. |
| Tuesday 26th May 2026 | <u>No meeting</u> at 96 Degrees Coffee House (Spring Bank Holiday). |
| Wednesday 10th June 2026 at 2.00pm | General Meeting: 'Behind the Curtain' by Bridget Wallbank. NB: please note this is a change to the advertised programme. |

Item 14: Additional Updates from Committee Members

14a Chair (PC):

PC requested any extra material for the slide show or Bulletin from Committee members.

14b Secretary (AT):

It was noted that Committee Minutes (Final versions) are now being published on the website.

14c Treasurer (IF):

None.

14d Vice Chair (EE):

None.

14e Deputy Secretary (LC):

Absent.

14f Membership Secretary (SC):

SC and IF reported that the card reader is now up and running. A couple of trial payments have been made successfully, with fees deducted as expected. The Committee thanked SC and IF for the progress made.

14g Talks Coordinator (RC):

RC gave his apologies for absence for the next General Meeting.
There was a discussion about entertainment for the AGM in September 2026.

Action Point: RC to book the Porthcawl Ukele Bandits as the entertainment for the next AGM if possible (September 2026). [RC]

14h Groups Coordinator & Compliance (RJE):

RJE reported that we have three new groups: including: the new Reading Group "Cover to Cover"; a Family History group starting on Monday 18th May; and the new Cycling group (see details below).

Ongoing Action Point: RJE to send details of new groups to PC for inclusion in the slide show and Bulletin. [RJE]

14i Publicity & Liaison (PH):

PH reported that she needs more material for publicity purposes from Group Leaders and Committee Members, especially for Facebook and the new Instagram Account.

14k Cycling Group (new item):

PH and RJE reported a proposal to establish a new Cycling Group, meeting on alternate Mondays.

Action Point: RJE to send details of the Cycling group to interested members and confirm the Group Leader arrangements. [RJE]

Action Point: PH to email PC with details of the Cycling group for the Bulletin and slide show. [PC]

Item 15: Any Other Business

PC asked Committee members to give thought to the AGM agenda, in particular whether current members wish to be nominated to remain on the Committee.

The Trips Coordinator role remains vacant. The Committee noted that this role does not need to be held by a committee member.

Item 16: Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday, 2nd June 2026 at 2.00pm, Council Chamber, Town Hall, Cowbridge.

Graham Couchman will attend to give a Beacon and website update and to demonstrate some other features of the Beacon system for example a calendar of events.

PC warmly thanked all Committee Members present for their contributions and for attending the meeting.

The meeting closed at 4:00pm.