

Minutes of the Quarterly Committee Meeting held 27th August 2025

Longley Room, The Orchard, 1 – 3 Gleneagles Court Library, 14:00

The Orchard's much smaller Bloom Room had been booked for the meeting, but on the day was required for an urgent meeting, so we were offered the much larger Longley Room at no extra cost.

Attending: Chair (Jim McGough), Secretary (Margaret Lloyd), Treasurer (Graham Friday), Communications Coordinator (Sue Parker) and General Trustee (John Williams). The last named left at 15:30 due to an appointment in Brighton.

Standing Items for Discussion

Agenda Item 1: Apologies for absence

The Vice-Chair (Alan Rew) sent his apologies as he needed to take his wife to a hospital appointment.

Agenda Item 2 Approval of the Minutes of the 28th May 2025 Committee Meeting

These were approved with no amendments.

Agenda Item 3: Trustees' Progress Report as at 25th August 2025

Updates were received on the following items (references in blue to Trustees' Progress Report item):

Progress towards Crawley u3a Office (Section 1 Item 3)

- (i) The General Trustee stated that an Engineer was coming on 29th August to check whether his old Canon photocopier could be brought back to working order (Item 3.1) [29th August: *The Engineer confirmed that the photocopier would require a new board costing hundreds of pounds, so the option of using it is no longer feasible. The Secretary is to research buying a new machine.*]
- (ii) GLs intending to use the office (Item 3.3)
- (iii) Volunteers for manning the office (Item 3.4)

The Chair confirmed he had received some responses to each of his requests on the above and would share the details shortly with the Secretary.

Liaison with Crawley Community Action (CCA) (Section 1, Item 5)

- (iv) The Chair had fixed an appointment with the Luke Boucher on Social Prescribing for 1st September.

Ruby Event Celebration Estimate of Cost (Section 1, Item 7.6)

- (v) The Treasurer stated that he estimated the total cost would be around £4,000. This was lower than he had originally expected for two main reasons: the hire of the display boards had been cheaper than predicted, and the invoice from the Charis Centre, covering room hire costs and the lunch for the volunteers was, at £1,800, lower than the original quote.

Bank Charges (Section 2 Item 2)

- (vi) The Treasurer explained that Lloyds would start charging fees, mainly for handling cheques and over the counter transactions, from November 2025, but that for the first twelve months they would be discounted by 86%. Two types of u3a financial activity would be particularly impacted:
 - The Membership Renewal process (for the 2024-25 Renewal 54% of members paid by cheque). The membership renewal for the 2027-28 year will be the first renewal cycle for

which we would incur full charges. The Treasurer will be working with the Membership Team to look at alternatives to cheques. This will be a significant project.

- The use of members' cheques for trips and outings. Members often ask about the use of Card Reading machines, but these involve both fixed and transaction costs

The Treasurer explained that the Third Age Trust (TAT) Treasurer was resisting pressure by individual u3as to lobby Lloyds (or any other bank) against charging u3a organisations, on the grounds that other national organisations were doing so on behalf of the whole of the voluntary and charitable sector. The TAT's continuing advice is against Group Leaders processing cash or cheques through their own personal accounts, so it seems to suggest that u3as will have to incur these charges and find ways to minimise their impact.

Impact of very hot weather on activities (Section 2 Item 4)

- (vii) Group Leaders for O&A, walking and physical activity groups would be reminded to check that members had adequate water during hot weather and to encourage members to take breaks whenever they felt the need.

The Secretary would ensure that this is included in the relevant Risk Assessments.

Out & About Groups (Section 2 Item 7)

- (viii) The Secretary pointed out that O&A 6 (now led by Sue Pay) had increased its membership upper limit from 60 to 70. As a consequence of this O&A 8 (led by Carol Allen) had now also moved its target to 70, enabling it to take on a few new members.

Vote for TAT Board Vice-Chair (Section 3 Item 1.1)

- (ix) It was agreed that Crawley u3a would support Nick David since he had made a better impression on those Trustees who had watched the hustings.

There were no other updates to the Trustees Progress Reports to report.

Agenda Item 4: Purchases, Procurement & Contracts: System to Assist Members Hearing at Meetings

It was agreed that Vonyx VSA 500bp 122 portable PA system was the more suitable model for our purposes. The Treasurer questioned whether, given the height of the stand, it might be too large to be stored in our office at the Orchard but the General Trustee explained that the stand collapses and he believed there would be plenty of room for it.

Given the cost we would need to ensure that it was stored securely (as would the existing XuanPad 2024 5G WiFi Bluetooth Projector, currently still stored at the Treasurer's home). The Office Working Group would be setting up a process whereby Group Leaders borrowing items of equipment would need to sign them out, and then sign in again when returned.

Cupboard at St Pauls

The Treasurer stated that the cupboard in the main hall at St Pauls used to store equipment for the Short Mat Bowls and Table Tennis groups is no longer fit for purpose, and is a safety hazard as items could fall out of it.

Action: Treasurer to check with St Pauls who owns the cupboard (it may be ours) and to look at costs for a replacement.

The General Trustee promised to pass him details of an Office Supply shop in East Grinstead he had found to be reliable in the past. The Treasurer was also advised to check both the St Catherines and the British Heart Foundation second-hand furniture shops in Crawley.

Agenda Item 5: Other Committee Approvals Required

(i) AGM Timetable

This was approved. It was agreed that special Ruby Anniversary cakes would be served at the meeting.

(ii) 2025 Membership Renewal & Actions

This was approved.

Non-Standing Items for Discussion

Agenda Item 6: Notes from 7th August Ruby Celebration Working Group

The notes were approved and would be placed on the web under [Admin/For Event Planning](#).

The Trustees agreed that, although the event was undoubtedly very successful, the amount of work involved meant that if it becomes a regular fixture it would be only held every other year. A concert featuring performances by the musical groups could be held in intervening years.

Agenda Item 7: 2025/26 Events

(i) 12th December Christmas Party

It was agreed that, due to lack of any volunteers, we should plan on the basis that the traditional Christmas Party would be replaced by a festive monthly meeting, with light seasonal refreshments only. Most Groups organised their own Christmas events for their members in any case.

Action: Comms Coordinator to consult Liz Tennant about possible speakers or entertainers.

(ii) Autumn Term Group Leaders Meeting

It was agreed that there was no need to hold this, given that there were no pressing matters to discuss and that the new Committee effective from November 2025 may well have a different policy with regard to Group Leader Meetings and may be keen to meet with them early in 2026. The Secretary would communicate this to Group Leaders.

(iii) Use the Charis Centre for Some Monthly Meetings in 2026?

It was agreed this was something for the next Committee to consider. Meanwhile we should make bookings at the Friary for the 2026 monthly meetings as normal. These can always be cancelled.

It was agreed that the **RUGS Christmas Party** would proceed in its usual format, though the timing may have to be different because of Isabel Baker's long trip to Australia.

Action: Secretary to liaise with Isabel to fix a date and make a booking.

Agenda Item 8: Recruitment of Trustees for November 2025 onwards

The Treasurer and the General Trustee announced the name of a member who had provisionally agreed to stand as the new Chair, though following a talk with a former Chair, the member appeared to be harbouring doubts. The concept of Joint Chairs was discussed. Nobody had expressed a willingness to consider the post of Secretary.

Action: Chair to talk to potential new Chair, explaining that the role is not unduly onerous, especially if other Committee members are willing to act as Chair at members' events such as monthly meetings or Group Leader meetings.

A minimum of five Trustees is required, including all four Officer roles. Functions such as Communications, Groups, Membership, Events and Systems could be carried out by Support Roles or Teams outside the Committee, as long as they reported into the Committee at agreed intervals. As far as we are aware all Support Role holders intend to continue.

Action: Chair to draft a paragraph for the forthcoming September Newsletter on the need to recruit new Trustees

Agenda Item 9: Discussion on Future Trustee Meetings

(i) Trustee Team Meeting.

It was agreed this would take place late morning on the Thursday 9th October [*8th September – date now to be changed as two Trustees are not available then*].

(ii) Next Quarterly Trustees Meeting

This had been provisionally arranged for 3 months' time, on 26th November, almost two weeks after the AGM at which a new Committee would be elected. It was agreed that, in the interests of providing a smooth handover, retiring Trustees would be invited as well as Trustees elected and re-elected at the AGM. Retiring Trustees would not have any voting rights. This meeting would mark the point at which the new Trustees take office.

Action: Secretary to book the Longley Room.

Agenda Item 10: Any Other Business

None.

The meeting finished soon after 16:00