Minutes for the General Meeting 10th July 2026

Present: Tricia Newell (Chair), John Williams (Vice Chair), Graham Friday (Treasurer) and 72 other members.

Apologies: Kim Robinson (Trustee), Marion Lang (Trustee), Moira Balackman (Trustee) and 30 other members had submitted their apologies in advance.

1. **Welcome and Introduction from the Chair**

   The Chair opened the proceedings at 2.00 pm by welcoming everyone and confirming that the meeting was quorate.

2. **2026/27 Membership Fee**

   The Treasurer introduced the proposal before the meeting to increase the 2026/27 Membership Fee by £1, from £14 to £15. This would come into effect from the 1st September 2026.

   He then provided some background to the proposal. Saying that the u3a's cost base was increasing both from the establishment of the office at The Orchard and the imposition of bank charges. The impact of this would be partially offset by the increased size of the membership, which had gone up near 11% since September 2025. In making their recommendation the Trustees were assuming that the organisation would see that level of increase continue into 2026/27.

   Of the Members who had given their apologies, 31 had indicated their support for the increase. One member had challenged the need for the increase given the level of reserves that the organisation had.

   The Treasurer responded to this point, saying that it was a very valid point. The Trustees in making their recommendation had taken the approach that it was more financially prudent to ensure that all known/expected costs were funded from the Membership Fee, using the Reserves to fund any "one-off" or unexpected costs.

   He said there were plans to consume some reserves next year through another Celebrational event, similar to last year's ruby celebration, plus a revamping and extension of the Coffee morning sessions. Also, the assumption was based on Membership numbers going up, so there was a risk of a financial deficit if that does not materialise.

   He also mentioned the risk that many organisations have faced when relying on consuming reserves to keep to their fees below inflationary increases. The was known as the "Cliff Face" because once the reserves were consumed then the organisation might be facing the imposition of a significant increase in fees, which would have potentially negative impacts. The Trustees were of the view that a more stepped approach of small increases spread over several years was a more prudent strategy.

   The proposal for the Membership fee to be increased to £15, with effect from the 1st September 2026 was put to the meeting. The vote was a unanimous 'yes' in support of the increase.

This meeting was then closed at 2.20pm.