DRAFT
STONE (Staffs) & DISTRICT u3a

Minutes of the 18th Annual General Meeting, held in the President's Hall, Walton Community Centre, on the 6th September 2025 at 14h00

1. WELCOME BY THE CHAIR:

The Chair, Chris Norcross, declared the AGM open when the quorate of members was reached.
She then welcomed and thanked all the members present for attending.

2. APOLOGIES:

21 apologies were received from members (details are available on request).

3. MINUTES OF THE 17th A.G.M. 6th September 2024

These minutes were sent to all members prior to the AGM, no issues were raised.
The Chair proposed that the minutes be accepted by members and asked for a show of hands.
The minutes were accepted unanimously and then signed off as a true and accurate record.

4. MATTERS ARISING:

There were no matters arising from the last minutes.

5. COMMITTEE REPORT:

The Chair presented the Committee Report for the year.
She confirmed that we remain a striving u3a as our numbers have risen steadily over the year, although it's not possible to predict the final membership count until renewals have been completed.
She explained that the increase of membership fees from £45 -£50 still remains a very competitive price compared with many other u3a's or social groups, especially considering the variety of groups available.

The Chair then assured the members that the committee have been working very hard on their behalf. Both by promoting our u3a at every opportunity, including attending Eccleshall festival, organising open days and advertising in the Gazette, Newsletters and on Facebook.

Additionally, they have also been updating much of our u3as documentation, particularly GPDR guidelines making sure they conform to new legislation.

She then thanked all the committee members in turn for all their hard work and support over the last year, including the Shadow treasurer, who has had to step down for personal reasons.

Finally, she thanked all the Leaders, without whom there would be no u3a, and asked all members to appreciate that leaders and committee members are all volunteers giving freely their time and experience.

6. TREASURER'S REPORT:

The treasurer was careful to explain that the financial accounts emailed out before the AGM relate to the year ending October 2024, and therefore not as current as he would like, as the AGM is now held far behind the financial year. However, he assured the members that the 2025 accounts will be posted on the website once approved by the Independent Financial Examiner and encouraged members to take an interest in them and would welcome considered suggestions on improving finances or reducing expenditure.

He gave a brief overview of our financial circumstances, explaining that our income is almost entirely made up of membership fees and our largest expense by far is venue hire, which has increased considerably over the last few years. In 2023/2024 room hire amounted to £30,357.15 more than £6500 higher than the previous year, caused mainly by the rise in the price of venues and budgeting for new groups.

He stressed that this year we have to look to the future, as this is the third year in succession we have eaten into our reserves which are now depleting, so we must be prepared for some tough decision making on procurement and the introduction of new groups to reduce our costs, but emphasised we are still firmly committed to supporting all current activities within reason.

It was proposed that the financial statement be accepted by the members. The vote was counted and accepted unanimously.

7. GDPR

Tony Riddler the web manager explained with the use of a short power point presentation the work that has been completed over the year to bring our GDPR regulations up to date. This including how we use personal data and how and what we store and how we dispose of personal details safely and as quickly as possible when not required. He also highlighted that everyone has the right to ask for their details to be removed, and that any new committee officers will be trained to keep members information safe.

8. ELECTION OF TRUSTEES

As stated in the constitution, the members present were asked by the Chair to re elect each of the existing members of the committee for another year. One by one each of the 9 officers were voted in unanimously. The Vice Chair then called for a vote to re-elect the Chair, this was also passed unanimously.

There were no new members nominated this year. The Treasurer emphasised the need for members to volunteer to join the committee as there were available spaces, and in particular he highlighted the need for a new shadow treasurer. He thanked Margaret for the support she had given and emphasised how helpful it was to work with someone who had previous experience in accounts and would be happy to discuss the role with anyone interested in the position.

9. MEMBERSHIP FEES

The treasurer confirmed that the committee as a whole agreed, that in this uncertain financial climate with costs still climbing, we have to look to the future and anticipate further price rises and therefore proposed that the fees for 2026 will be increased to £55 to keep in pace with expected inflation.

One member spoke to say she believed this still to be good value compared to other equivalent groups.

Another Member agreed to the increase but wanted the fee to be paid in several payments spread over the year– the treasurer responded that this would cause a lot of additional administration and also difficulties in yearly budgeting as members could cancel payments. However, the Treasurer agreed he would research more into the value of using direct debits from other u3a members.

A further member asked if we could return to using free rooms at the Fire Station again, to reduce costs. An ex-member of the committee confirmed that the fire station has now stopped letting free rooms – which has seriously added to our expenditure. A few other low costing venues were suggested by several members, however they were all known by the venue officer and were not considered suitable.

The chair then asked members to vote for a £55 membership fee in 2026
This was strongly supported with 1 vote against and 2 abstentions.

10. Any Other Business

A complaint was made about the committee refusing to pay for a zoom licence especially as the group was one of the few inclusive groups.
It was explained that it would be possible to use free Zoom with a little organisation by the group leader, and the committee have to adopt less expensive options if available, it was also pointed out that zoom is not an inclusive option, many members do not have either the equipment or the ability to use zoom.

The question of payment and standing orders was raised again by a member- who stated that as there were only 10% of the members present, she would like a questionnaire sent to all members to get their response to paying in stages over the year, this idea was seconded by another member. The committee agreed to look into this request.

As there were no further questions the Chair closed the meeting at 3.30