

**Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on Friday 6 March 2026 at 2.00pm
at the Methodist Church Hall, Honiton**

Present: Richard Spoerry, Anna Jacobs, Kay Edge, Peter Halse, Jackie Moran, Martin Long, Stephen Boyd, Brian Churchill, Suzie Blithe, Honor Head.

Minutes: Kay Edge

26/031 Introduction

Richard Spoerry welcomed everyone to the meeting.

26/032 Apologies for Absence

All present.

26/033 Approval of Minutes (2 February 2026)

Approved and signed off.

26/034 Matters Arising

26/013 u3a Workshop at Taunton Racecourse

Richard Spoerry, Jackie Moran and Stephen Boyd had taken part in this day-long workshop, which was attended by about a hundred u3a people and two from HQ. The speakers were well worth listening to, the lunch was good (!), and they came away feeling we were doing well, with numbers and groups increasing, which was not the case for some local u3as. Interestingly our fees are slightly higher than some other u3as, but they charge for some of their groups whereas on the whole we do not.

26/014(2) AGM Arrangements

Anna Jacobs had drafted a membership form and this had been circulated to the committee for comments. It was decided not to have anything on the form about groups that members might be interested in, to increase the type size if at all possible, and to have 'Ms' instead of 'Miss'. It must be finalised asap so that Peter Searl can print off copies that can be filled in by members at the AGM; although Beacon is close to going live (see below) we must go with the previous system of physical membership forms for the time being. In due course it will, of course, be possible to fill in forms on the Beacon site but inevitably some members will not wish to take this route. (See below at 26/044 re communication issues.)

Kay Edge confirmed she had asked the Beehive to set out the room café style, with tables and chairs not stacked seating, and they will supply tea and coffee at £1 per cup (she asked them to cater for 90; we need at least 72 members to attend in order to achieve a quorum).

She will ask for extra tables in the corridor for membership form signing purposes. Richard suggested a second card reader would be useful, and Anna will sort this out. Suzie Blithe, Kay, Honor Head and Richard said they'd be happy to help members fill in forms and pay at the meeting.

The accounts for 2025, which have now been checked and signed off by Peter Searl, have been circulated to members, but they should also appear on screen for the AGM meeting: Anna and Brian to liaise about this.

26/023 Pickleball Disclaimer

Jackie Moran had circulated a draft disclaimer form and a covering piece written by the u3a Pickleball adviser. The disclaimer form was approved, and Honor suggested getting *all* our members to sign a disclaimer would be sensible, not just members of pickleball and other 'active' groups. Jackie will tweak the wording and bring the document to the next meeting.

Related to this, Anna Jacobs said she had been checking u3a guidance about paying outside tutors (e.g. for Yoga); it *was* legitimate, and perhaps even advisable, to pay tutors when such skilled teaching with concomitant health and safety issues was concerned, but generally the u3a ethos was to have members leading groups, for which they could not be paid.

26/029(1) Beacon Update

Brian Churchill has been working with Anna and Jackie to move towards getting Beacon set up. He needs confirmed information about next year's membership fees to enable him to make Beacon 'live'; we also need a 'public enquiry' phone number (we will buy a cheap phone, probably from Tesco, where messages can be left and we will take turns being in charge of it; Richard will acquire this) and a public enquiry email (Honor is happy to continue manning the u3a email and passing on messages to relevant people as required). A PayPal account also needs to be set up (Anna will do this).

When these are all in place, and the membership form finalised so it can be posted on the Beacon site, Brian will be in a position to issue passwords to Richard as chairman, Jackie as Groups Coordinator and Anna as Treasurer/Membership Secretary and activate our Beacon site. Members will need to be apprised of how it works and Richard will mention it in his AGM report. Explanatory information must then appear in the Bulletin as well as in an email message to all the membership. Dennis Jacobs (Anna's husband) is happy to help Brian out with Beacon admin.

Jackie explained that access to Beacon is via a member portal where a membership number must be inputted. She also felt our Data Protection information would also need updating; Martin Long mentioned the Thelma Hulbert gallery in this connection and Richard asked if Martin could let him see a copy of what had been sent out by them.

26/035 Treasurer's Report

For clarity, I have separated the accounts between the Core charity account (which includes subscriptions and all of the deductible expenses incurred in operating the charity) and the Self-Funded activities, such as group rents and Social events, which should be kept separate and ideally, break even over the year.

<u>Per Accounts</u>	<u>CORE A/C</u>	<u>SELF-FUNDED</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
B/F @ 1/01/2026	£6820.33	£1535.60	£8355.93
RECEIVED	£129.00	£96.00	£225.00
PAID	-£150.42	-£134.00	-£284.42
C/F @ 30/10/25	£6798.91	£1497.60	£8296.51

Per Bank statement as @ 31/1/26 = £ 8221.51 **less** outstanding payments £ 0.00 **plus** Petty Cash £75.00 = **£ 8296.51**.

Core receipts were subscriptions £129.00, Other £0.00. **Core** payments were Monthly speaker £50.00, Beehive rent £100.00, Bank charges £0.42.

Self-Funded receipts were Group dues £96.00. **Self-Funded** payments were Rents £134.00.

Total Group Balances Held (£0 unless listed) at 26/02/2026 £1497.60 made up as follows:

Art ff £29; Cribbage £8; Current Affairs £168; Games £67; Historic Churches £40; History £481; Local History £30; Reading fp £41.50; Singing ff £475; Spanish £106; Walking (Brian H) £29.50; Writing ff £ 22.60.

26/036 Secretary's Report

Kay Edge had received an email from Caroline Retter at the Beehive asking if we could revive the system of members pre-ordering their lunch on our Beehive meeting days. (Val C-G tried to get this going a year or two ago and it really didn't work.) The Beehive are trying to streamline and reorganize their café service and the only alternative to pre-ordered lunches seems to be them serving a limited menu (soup and a roll/one lunch option) on our meeting days. She will let Caroline know that this is our preferred route.

26/037 Membership Secretary's Report

Peter Halse reported that we now have 360 members, a great achievement. Anna will be getting together with Ann and him during March to transfer the current membership records over to Suzie and her, so they can familiarise themselves with the information prior to the new membership year.

26/038 Group Coordinator's Report

Jackie Moran reported that Lynda Pidgeon (Local History group leader) has a lot of other commitments and may be stepping down but Jackie felt another member of the group might well take it over; similarly, Val Frood wants to stop leading the Nature group, which is very popular and could well continue with someone doing the admin and the group cooperatively deciding on what they wanted to investigate.

26/039 Programme Secretary's Report/Events

Suzie Blithe felt a second regular 'coffee morning' would be a good idea, as some people find the acoustics at Coffee No.1 hard to take. She suggested Weatherspoons might be an alternative venue, perhaps on the Wednesday of another week, and she will look into what is possible. She felt some people might welcome the opportunity to go to both! The AGM speaker is lined up and knows it must be a shorter lecture on this occasion.

Looking forward, Suzie felt we needed to book a venue for the Summer Social and suggested Cotleigh again as the hall is pleasant and light, the parking ample and the kitchen facilities good; she will book it for the mid-August date. More volunteers will need to be recruited; Jackie said she would put a notice up on the board at our Beehive meetings. Anna felt we needed to alter the wording on the website to: The membership fee includes ten monthly meetings and the u3a magazine. Two annual social events are charged for separately.

26/040 Publicity Report

Martin Long said the Bulletin is almost completed; he would need any more contributions by tonight as he will be finalising it tomorrow. He will mention some groups have vacancies and that the email address for sending in photographs for the Showcase has changed. The next Bulletin will come out in May – the magazine will come out next month – and Honor will be compiling the Bulletin in future.

He is making sure that the next round of information for the press and parish magazines is in place before he steps down at the end of the month and Richard confirmed that Martin has sent him an excellent resume of everything that the new Publicity officer (when someone steps forward!) will need to know. In the meantime Richard will put up the posters around town.

26/041 Magazine: Inside Honiton u3a

Honor Head said that so far she'd not received as many submissions as for the first two editions of the magazine, but she is hopeful some groups will shortly let her have up to date information about their activities. The cut-off date for material is 16 March and she will bring the draft finished copy to the next committee meeting for approval.

26/042 Communications Report

Brian has been tied up with work on Beacon but did have a query about communication with members who were not online – see below at 26/044 where the matter was fully discussed.

26/043 Network Coordinator's Report

Richard attended a Zoom meeting last week about setting up groups; our regional rep, Marian Luck, is being very proactive.

26/044 Any Other Business

1. Communication issues with members who are not online

A document compiled by Jackie had been circulated prior to the meeting, pinpointing the various issues we need to address about how to communicate more effectively with members who are not online, and also with supplying information to new members. Some of the former are not only unable or unwilling to engage with this technology, they may also have health issues that impact their ability to attend the Beehive meeting where they would be able to find out necessary information. Perhaps they could ask friends for help with this, but they are certainly entitled by their membership to ask for and receive clear information. Stephen Boyd said he had great sympathy with their dilemma and offered to take over distributing copies of the Bulletin, magazine and other information to them, consulting Peter

Searl about this first as he was responsible for doing it in the past. This would be a great help. (Richard felt that only about a dozen people were in this position.)

Jackie also felt we needed to be systematic about compiling, and regularly updating, packs of information, especially for new members, to include lists and dates of Beehive talks, the information leaflet, group lists and vacancies, and contact phone numbers of some of the committee (Honor will compile a list). This 'membership pack' could be emailed out to new members and distributed regularly to those not online. This is not something for Jackie to compile alone but should be a joint effort by the committee.

26/045 Date of next meeting

Monday 6 April 2026 at 2pm in the Methodist Church Hall (NB this is a Bank Holiday).

Richard thanked everyone for their hard work, making special mention of the two committee members who are stepping down after years of hard work on behalf of our u3a, Peter Halse and Martin Long. Their efforts are hugely appreciated and they will be much missed. The meeting ended at 3.28pm.
