

Cestria u3a at Chester-le Street

Committee Meeting No. 98 held in the Eardulph Room at the Parish Centre, Chester-le-Street on Wednesday 29th October 2025 at 10.00a.m.

Present: Chair - Mike Parker, Secretary - Angela Hamilton, Treasurer - Tony Morrell, Groups Coordinator Anne Lanigan, Membership Secretary - Pat Rule, Website Administrator - Steven Willan, Newsletter Editor - Christine Logan. Lorna Thompson, Rachel Burton, Speaker Secretary - Margaret Chilver,

Apologies for Absence - Margaret Bozic, Robert Berry, Kathleen Atkinson.

Minutes of Last Meeting held on 16th July 2025

The minutes were approved and signed off by Mike Parker

Matters arising from the minutes not otherwise on the Agenda

There were no matters arising that were not on the agenda

Review of Data Protection Policy

There were no issues arising

Review of Monthly Attendance

The attendance at the meetings have continued to remain steady with an average of 85 members over the last 5 months.

Chairman's Report

Mike thanked the committee members and group leaders for their ongoing support.

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer presented the "Financial Report and Narrative" to the Committee, copies of which were distributed before the meeting and a short discussion followed.

The Committee agreed to pay £200 to Cornerstones as a contribution to the expensive replacement of their projector and sound system. The system is essential equipment used by the u3a at Monthly Meetings and it was agreed the repairs or replacement would help ensure this equipment is available to the u3a for future meetings.

A general discussion concerning the 2026 budget then followed. It was agreed to budget £1,200 for the anniversary celebrations during 2026, £600 of which was allocated to an event in June 2026.

Membership fees are not to rise. It was also decided that any excess surplus held by the u3a, should be reduced by financing special events etc. rather than reducing the £2 fee to attend the Monthly Meeting.

The life of the laptops used by the u3a has been extended following a software upgrade, however, due to the age of the laptops, the Committee decided to ensure sufficient funds should be available to purchase replacements should they fail.

The Treasurer will present a detailed 2026 budget to the Committee during the January 2026 Committee meeting.

Secretary's Report-

The next AGM will be held on Wednesday 4th February 2026, committee member nomination forms will be sent to the committee soon.

Emails will be sent from the membership secretary to members allowing them to renew their membership from next month.

During u3a week in September four committee members took our Group information boards to Chester le Street library to promote our u3a where we did receive some interest. At the meeting today we discussed other venues ie: Cornerstones to continue our promotion. We will also join the christmas tree event at Cornerstones.

Our Network u3a groups were discussed as it was asked about inviting them to our events etc. An email was sent to the relevant person of each network and in future we will invite them along to events. Following on from this the u3a Information about the Network u3a's has now been added to the What's On page and also remains on the Groups page.

Website Administrator's Report

Steve reported that our website is well used and demonstrated this with a graph and list of website page views. Group Leaders have been asked to review their group pages and inform Steve of any updates.

Steve's work to set up Facebook is ongoing.

Group Coordinator's Report

Anne informed us that she and Tony Morrell had a meeting to review progress to date, general info, change of venues etc. The Library and Music Wonders are no longer possible venues due to their cost.

Some groups found that their groups were not well attended in the last few months, the Group Leaders were reassured that it was holiday time. It was discussed that u3a members could inform the group leader if they were unable to attend.

A New Group: **Photography For Fun** has been set up with Anne attending the initial meeting and other arranging further meetings with the new group leader to set this up. The first group was very successful with 8 members attending and more interested. Anne mentioned that the new group leader commented on the amount of support they had received in setting up the group, which was not the experience they previously had when in a different u3a.

The **French Chat** group have revised their venue, the plan is to change this to the home of Marie Sheekey. Maximum of 8 to date. The risk assessment is to be completed.

Unfortunately the Group 'Pats Bags' was not set up as the leader changed their mind

The **Board Games** group leader Judith Rousseau is leaving her leadership role with the hope a current member of the group will take over which needs to be confirmed.

The **Discussion Group** leader Robert Berry is also leaving the leader role. The group is awaiting a decision for a current member to replace this role. It was discussed that we do need a contact person for the group for the website and someone to collect the money and send it to Tony

Robert will also be standing down as Honorary President next year and will no longer be a committee member. Robert currently is admin for our Beacon system and it was agreed by the committee that he will continue with that role.

Anne offered her thanks to both Judith and Robert who have held the positions of Group Leaders for many, many years

Anne informed the committee that an email has been sent requesting Group Leaders to review their website 'blurb' and to send their 2026 programmes electronically to Steve and herself to place on the main board at the monthly meeting and the website, as previously discussed according to Steve's report it appears that the u3a members look at the website at the beginning of the year.

A New Kurling Group at Barley Mow Community Centre is in the midst of discussion with P Wilson. Anne would also like to set up a bowling group but needs someone to lead this.

We have two new Group Boards completed for the Art Appreciation Group and Bus Pass Group with just the Crafty Group and 'Crack' now to be completed.

Anne discussed promoting the wider use of the Cestria website and directing members to this.

The committee members expressed their gratitude to Anne for all her hard work as Group Coordinator.

Membership Secretary's Report

We currently have 214 members, acquiring 16 new members this year. Cestria u3a members will be sent an email next month enabling them to renew their membership for 2026

Speaker Secretary's Report

Margaret informed us that she has had help from Stephen Clark in organising next year's speakers. The list was given to the committee members and the same discussed.

Next years 20th Anniversary

We discussed progress with the arrangements for our 20th Anniversary next year which will be a Beetle Drive and afternoon tea. We discussed what will be required ie: printing of cards, tickets, prizes and one of the founder members doing a little speech at the beginning of the event to explain how the u3a group came about.

Meeting closed at 11.50

Date of next meeting

Wednesday 28th January 2026 in the Eardulph Room at the Parish Centre, at 10am

Charity Number 1163334