Cestria u3a at Chester-le Street

Committee Meeting No.101 held in the Eardulph Room at the Parish Centre, Chester-le-Street on Wednesday 29th July 2026 at 10.00 a.m.

Those present: Acting Chair/Treasurer: Tony Morrell, Secretary: Angela Hamilton, Groups Coordinator: Anne Lanigan, Membership Secretary: Pat Rule, Rachel Burton, Kathleen Atkinson, Speaker Secretary Margaret Chilver,
Apologies - Chair- Mike Parker, Christine Logan**,** Lorna Thompson

Minutes of last meeting - The minutes were approved and need to be signed off

Matters arising from the minutes not otherwise on the Agenda -There were no matters arising that were not on the agenda

Website Administrator's Report- Steve reported that Cestria u3a website is still being accessed with a good level of engagement each month.

There were some comments made at the last meeting about difficulty in seeing how to join Cestria u3a. Steve has been drafting a new web page headed "Join Us". The page is based largely on Tony's leaflet, "Getting The Best Out of Your u3a Membership" page.The idea being that it will replace the current "about" page.

Steve has been looking at having an online membership form for new members to access. Not all potential new members have access to technology therefore, Steve will test the process out to see what is involved especially for the membership secretary. The current membership form will remain on the website.

Steve has made a Facebook page for Cestria u3a which needs some finishing touches and testing.

Membership Secretary's Report- We currently have 209 members, with interest from a few others. We discussed retaining new members, as these tend to be the ones who leave after only one year. One reason we discussed is that new members feel no one talks to them at the meeting. We do reach out when people join, but may not always continue this engagement afterward.

Review of Data Protection Policy - There were no issues arising

Review of Monthly Attendance - Attendance at the meetings have remained steady between 75-80. We did discuss that some members join the u3a in order to join a group rather than attending the monthly meeting.

Chairman's Report - Mike was not present at the meeting but sent his thanks to the committee members especially to those who helped at the 20th anniversary celebrations. This led to a discussion about the day about what went well and what we would change if we organise a similar event.

Treasurer's Report

The bank balance belonging to the u3a as of 25th July 2026 is £4,050. Following the position of Chair being filed from February 2027, these accounts are prepared on the assumption the u3a will continue to meet. At the moment, of the £1,200 budgeted for Anniversary Events, £350 was spent on the June event, £850 remains available to spend.

We currently expect the lowest bank balance to be £2,351 at 31st October 2026, which is £438 higher than expected when the budget was set. This may reduce as the effect of increases in the cost of room hire for certain groups takes effect.

It was agreed not to use the remaining anniversary budget to fund individual group activities as this would be too problematic. It was agreed to use part of the remaining anniversary budget to fund the next CAMEO to be held in November. A venue to be sourced and cake available instead of just tea and biscuits.

The remaining budget could be spent on new laptops. The Secretary indicated she may have a need to access a Windows computer to be compatible with the existing laptops owned by the u3a. The Secretary was to review the situation and get a quote should a new laptop be required.

Secretary's Report

At the end of our last committee meeting we briefly discussed concerns regarding dementia and the possible need for carer's. Information from the u3a website was sent out to the committee members to look at. This is a long policy and needs some work. We discussed having something shorter on one of the first pages of the website about carer's.

Concerns were raised about Dementia, that tackling this with the member can be difficult. It was discussed that every case/individual may present with different grades of dementia or disability that it could be brought to the executive committee to discuss.
We also discussed that we would need to decide how many carer's would be allowed at one session. The secretary will work on a main policy with the Website Administrator to add an outline to the website for members to access.

The question of 'Carers' was raised at the Group Leaders meeting. One member had brought a 'Carer' to a group although not an issue it had not been fully agreed by the Committee and there is a concern about the number of carers attending one group. This led to the risk assessment part of the walk disclaimer form being updated and adapted for the risk assessment for outings. It now highlights who is allowed on the walks ie: those from our network u3a's, no friends or family to be invited along unless they are seriously thinking about joining the u3a. .

Group Co-ordinator's Report - Anne discussed the group leaders meeting that was held at the end of April 2026 in the Parish Centre

New group leaders were welcomed, The risk assessments were reviewed (the importance of knowing and sharing these) and the importance of the website was stressed.
The role of the Treasurer Tony Morrell was raised alongside the Groups.
Group Boards were discussed, the group leaders to update as necessary, two group boards need to be created.
The question about our Network Groups was raised at the meeting; the information and links are available on the Groups page and What's On pages
Another question asked was how to ensure all attendees are members of the u3a? It was discussed that group leaders can have access to Beacon to allow them to send emails to their group, this also allows them to check if

a person is a Cestria member. We decided that we could send a pdf with a list of members to the group leader for their reference.
We have a new group: Wine Time, Anne has supported setting this up and had an initial meeting to consider risk.

Speaker Secretary's Report - Margaret will be compiling next year's speakers list. Margaret explained that this involves emailing the speakers, confirming when the list is completed then reconfirming nearer the time. We do need a person to take on this role from next year.

A.O.B: We had decided at the last meeting that we would have another CAMEO in November, this could be an opportunity for members to pay their membership fee for next year and an occasion to recruit new members. We briefly discussed venues and promotion of the event.

Date of next meeting- Wednesday 28th October

Close The meeting closed at 11.50am

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