



## Northumbria Region u3a

### Minutes of the Zoom Committee Meeting

5<sup>th</sup> September 2025

From 14.00 to 16.15

**Present:** - Wendy Dale (WD), Theresa Mulkerrin (TM), Peter Barnett (PB), Ted Watt (TW), Jean Cubbin (JC), Kathy Clegg (KC), Cecilia Coulson (CC), Mary Barlow (MEB).

**Apologies:** - Moira Stokoe (MS), Malcolm Wilkinson (MW), Ann Carr (AC), Keith Allison (KA).

**Minutes:** - Spelling mistake – KA agreed to be Vice Chair not Vice Chai.

TW proposed that the minutes of the 18<sup>th</sup> June 2025 meeting was a true record and TM seconded the motion. The members present agreed they were, and the proposal was accepted.

#### **Matters Arising:** -

1. Review of Messenger - PB said there had been little movement due possibly to the holidays and it was agreed to review next meeting.
2. TM was asked by WD if there was any movement on the updating of Tips for Treasurers from Catherine Stevenson. TM replied none to date and she would chase up Catherine.
3. The item on the Trust Representatives contacting the councillors in the region. CC informed the meeting that the Mayor of Gateshead had been a member of the u3a and was aware of our aims.
4. CC feedback on the National Survey a) it was late coming out and left little time to contact their committees or respond b) it was too long.

**The future look of the region:** - WD had produced a paper that had been circulated prior to the meeting. She had received comments from MS which have been circulated and from KA. The paper suggested that since the reorganisation of the Third Age Trust (TAT) the Northumbria Region network did not fit the model and asked a) do we need a new regional model? b) are we

agreed about the basic assumptions of role of the committee c) what might a regional committee look like in terms of roles d) possible options for a way forward and e) next steps.

TM noted the TAT seemed in a state of confusion and should be advising us and providing guidance but that the council members themselves seemed to find their role in a constant state of change.

MEB agreed and asked why was this not all thought out and put into Fit For the Future (FFTF) plan which was accepted at the Trusts AGM. It was noted that perhaps we the u3as/regions should have asked what the future plans were for them.

CC asked why was there no job description for the Council Members? Why were regions not informed at any point that changes lay ahead for them also.

JC noted that a lot of other regions are further along the road to change than ourselves, but that some of them did not have regional committees originally and have therefore found it easier to move forward.

WD pointed out that Networks in our region at present are unaccountable, but MEB pointed out that they should each have a member of this committee in their makeup. JC pointed out that in future KC and herself would be attending these meetings where possible as part of the new set up. This would enable council members to give better feedback to the national council.

WD asks do we need a new regional model. CC answered yes, we need one to move forward and other members agreed with this statement.

As suggested in WDs paper a possible future name for the region should be Northeast u3a. MEB suggested should it not be Northeast England u3a, but members disagreed and Northeast u3a was unanimously agreed. This will have to be put each u3a and voted on at an EGM or AGM. Provided members agree to the change the Charity Commission will want a copy of the minutes, and they will do the necessary work to the website. There are quite a number of other implications with changing our name such as changing the bank account, constitution, website etc.

CC said she thought the word assumptions was the wrong word and asked for clarification of the separation of events into organising events and organising social events. WD said the former was a learning occasion whereas the latter was social.

Roles of members on the committee were looked at but no firm conclusions were drawn.

The role and numbers of Trust Volunteers in our area were discussed and their seemed confusion at the national office on numbers along with who were subject advisers.

Regarding the options for the way forward PB, TM, TW, MEB thought option three best but CC said she preferred option two and after rewording option two from closing Northumbria Regional network to renaming members agreed this was the best way forward.

MEB asked the two council members if a new constitution was being drawn up. JC said there was but it would be some way off.

**Report from the TAT:** – KC said that their comments in the above discussion had covered the points they were raising.

#### **Reports:**

**Chair (WD):** - Already discussed in the above.

**Business Secretary (MEB):** - Nothing to report.

**Treasurer (TM):** - Report circulated. There is a glitch in the system as payments have been prepared but they have not come through for counter verification. This is being sorted and there have been other accounts received for payment. TM has not yet received a request for payment from Ushaw College.

**Events (CC):** - Report circulated.

**Website (PB):** - Things running smoothly.

**Facebook (Mike Cook):** - Report circulated. There was a suggestion that we encourage members to follow our Facebook page to get up to date news. Peter agreed to include it in the next Beacon email.

**Beacon (PB):** - Currently no problems.

**Messenger (MEB):** - See item at the beginning of these minutes.

**Regional Meeting:** - This has been arranged for the 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2025 at the Angel View, Gateshead. Each u3a is requested to send a representative. Alan Walmesley chair of the Board of Trustees will be attending.

It was agreed that the cost to members would be £5.00 and run from 10.00 to 13.30.

TM will prepare the Google form for circulation to u3as.

WD to prepare something for the website and the Beacon letter.

### **.Any Other Business**

1. Whickham u3as zoom licence is used for various regional network events run by CC namely the events team meetings, creative writing and they are wondering if region would be prepared to reimburse them for this. The committee agreed to contribute £50.00.
2. Mo Brown has made it known that she will be stepping down from holding and organising the use of the regions zoom licence when it comes up for renewal.
3. Lloyds Bank – The bank has made it known that they will be introducing charges for use of some of their accounts which means this will affect small businesses and charities. JC has said that numerous emails have been received by the TAT and that she will be circulating an email which includes the comment that [Bank accounts for community groups | Resource Centre](#) and Money Saving Expert is always worth a look. TAT do not give advice on which bank to use.
4. A matter that had been missed from the report from the TAT. Concerns have been raised in the region about the process for appointing a Vice Chair (TAT) – It is noted that from having four candidates for this post there is now a preferred candidate and because of this two of the original candidates have stood down. They have put forward two candidates and stated that one is their preferred choice. Once this has been done, no matter how hard one tries, it is almost impossible to make an informed impartial choice as unconscious bias inevitably comes into play. In addition, they have stated that they have chosen a female, and it doesn't seem to fit the equality policy to choose someone based on gender. And finally, if the other candidate was successful, it feels like it could make his position untenable, knowing that the board preferred someone else. There is also concern that there is no place for abstentions on the voting paper which means that u3as are not able to show how they feel about the process. JC felt that individual u3as were taking action.

The next meeting will be held on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2025 at 14.00.

Name. Wendy Dale                      Position. Chair                      Date. 17<sup>th</sup> October 2025

Name. Mary Barlow                      Position. Secretary                      Date. 17<sup>th</sup> October 2025