

# **Annual General Meeting of the Wantage and Grove u3a held on Tuesday 20 January 2026 at 2:00 pm in St John's Church Hall**

## **Minutes**

### **1. Apologies for absence**

The Chair, Brian Denton, opened the meeting, welcomed the members, and gave the usual notices about fire and safety, and upcoming u3a events. Apologies were received from Pauline Gibson, Andrew Langley, Lyn Toms, Beverley Darlison, Diane Coates, and Ann-Marie Summers. There were 49 members present at the meeting.

### **2. Minutes of previous AGM held on 21 January 2025**

The minutes of the previous AGM had been circulated to the membership with the notice of the meeting. The Chair asked for comments, and with none being received, he signed the minutes as a true record of the meeting held on 21 January 2025.

### **3. Matters arising**

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

### **4. Annual Reports**

Brian stated that various Committee members would give a short report of the significant events of 2025 in their roles, after which they would answer any questions from Members.

#### **(a) Chair**

I think it's fair to say that 2025 has been quite a successful year for W&G u3a in spite of a major problem which I shall come to in a minute. In 2025 our membership increased by over 30%, which brought it up to just under 200, a figure which, I believe, exceeds our pre-COVID number. It is not possible to attribute this success, it might be because of our general publicity, of our new website, or of the popularity of our monthly coffee mornings, which incidentally necessitated a move to the new venue of the Vale and Downland Museum. I am sure the excellence of our bimonthly extended meetings and the range of our Special Interest Groups have also helped. It remains to be seen, however, how many members renew in 2026. Some people move away, some take a break and, inevitably, some pass to another place.

The Special Interest Groups continue to thrive. We have recently added two new ones and managed to revive two more which were close to an imminent demise for the want of a new Group Leader. Our Emergency Response Group is fully cognisant of CPR methodology, the use of our defibrillator and other simple first aid techniques likely to be useful at our meetings. The Group is having a refresher session in February. There are spare spaces and anyone who would like to come

along to see how it is done are welcome to do so. An email will be circulated shortly. The major problem we have had this year, to which I referred to earlier, is our banking arrangements. When Jenny Green took over as Treasurer from Richard King in January 2025, we approached the TSB in Wantage to find that the change and the updating of the various signatories had to be done online, dealing with the Head Office in Scotland. Further, the upshot of this was that TSB forced the change in our account name to comply with that listed by the Charity Commission.

As you well know, not to be outdone, we changed the name of our charity and it is hoped when things quieten down later in the year, we shall be able to reinstate our old account name. This might require a tweak to our constitution, but we will cross that bridge when we come to it. It must be said that we are not the only organisation to have these problems with TSB in this area and u3as all over the country are experiencing similar problems with TSB and other banks. One u3a reported that it took them 2 years to get the signatories on their account updated.

Special thanks are due to our Treasurer, Jenny Green, and our Secretary, John Hancock. Were it not for their unstinting efforts to sort this out, we'd have been in a very difficult situation.

2025 saw the 40th anniversary of the Wantage & Grove u3a and on 15th July some 80 of our members enjoyed a cream tea, some anniversary cake and the first showing of a film celebrating the history and the current activities of our u3a, put together by Andrew Gregory, our technical specialist.

Following a few problems in the planning stages, the 2025 Holiday to Morecombe in October proved to be a great success and was greatly enjoyed by all who went.

Again, I must express our gratitude to Malcolm Wetherill for arranging everything.

On the occasion of our Christmas Social, 70 members enjoyed mince pies and Christmas cake, washed down with either alcoholic or non-alcoholic beverages and tea, while partaking in various entertainments including a fiendish quiz and a game of bingo. Nearly half were sufficiently recovered on the following day to attend the annual Christmas Lunch at the Bear Hotel in Wantage.

None of these social activities or the Special Interest Group activities just happen, they all require detailed planning and effort and for this I must thank all the members of the Committee, the Group Leaders and other volunteers willing to give their time to do the necessary.

We shall shortly finalise the Committee for 2026 so I must take this opportunity to thank those members of the 2025 Committee who are standing down. Several have found important family commitments taking more, or too much, of their time to be able to afford sufficient time for committee duties. Ann Chadwick found this early on and, more recently, Adrian and Wanda Clarke, Beacon Administrator and Membership Secretary respectively, resigned for a similar reason. David Coates has completed his term of office as Groups Coordinator and has decided also to relinquish the position of Deputy Chair, thus leaving the Executive Committee.

I shall conclude now by saying that I think 2026 will be another full and enjoyable year for the Wantage & Grove u3a.

### **(b) Treasurer**

Jenny Sorrell began by explaining some of the difficulties that she had encountered with the bank concerning her name and the u3a name, which had taken time to unravel.

She then stated that the u3a central office had issued financial guidance notes for Treasurers and Trustees of all u3a branches. These included the necessity of each u3a Executive Committee to set down its own financial policies and procedures. The Committee had recently carried out this advice, and our financial rules and regulations were now available on the website. She also explained that the Executive Committee had to monitor (via the Treasurer) the income and expenditure of the Groups and that the Group Leaders had to provide such information that is required to carry this out. The advice also stated that as soon as the member had paid any money to the Group Leader, then it immediately belonged to the u3a, and not the Group.

Jenny then presented a user-friendly version of the final Accounts for 2025 to the members. The full Annual Accounts for 2025 are attached to these minutes. After some questions, the Chair asked the members if someone would propose that the annual accounts be accepted as presented. Ann Chadwick made such a proposal, which was seconded by Jean Barrett, and this was passed unanimously by the members present.

### **(c) Business Secretary**

As Business Secretary, I look after the administration and organisation of the Executive Committee meetings. I collect the various discussion items and work with the Chair on the agenda. I also take the minutes and circulate these and other documents from the meeting to the Committee. Any Member can read the minutes of the Committee meetings as there is a copy at front of the room at all Tuesday afternoon meetings. I also circulate information from the u3a office and keep up to date with u3a policy guidance and legislative requirements. I prepare and submit the annual returns required by the u3a office which are the contact details and roles of our committee members. I also work on our other contacts, for example, with the charity commission. Again, this is filling in the returns for our committee members who are all trustees. This year we decided to change our name from the 'university of the third age' to 'u3a'. This is what we are known as, and it is much easier to get on a cheque or BACS transfer form. For this purpose, we needed to change our constitution and having agreed this with the u3a office I called a special general meeting to enable that change to be agreed by the membership. Having got this agreement, I approached the charity commission and informed them of our wish. They agreed to this change, and we are now listed officially in the UK Register of Charities as Wantage and Grove u3a. I also maintain liaison with the Inland Revenue and apply for the annual gift aid return from them, which this year was almost £600. I also take the minutes for this AGM, so I will finish now and get back to writing down our proceedings!

#### **(d) Groups Coordinator**

Again, we have had a very successful year for our groups. There are now twenty-three groups operating with a wide range of subject matter. Two new groups have started this year, Local History and Italian Conversation. We need to thank all group leaders for their sterling work in keeping this functioning so well. This role does take time but allows groups to operate efficiently. It would be very helpful if group members could rotate in the role as group leader so that the burden is shared. Unfortunately, the Poetry Group stopped meeting during the year as the group leader, Valeries Francis, found she could not keep on with the role. Pleasingly Martyn Payne has taken over leadership of this group from January 2026. There will be new group leaders in place from January for Art Appreciation, Modern Philosophy Issues and Science. Thanks to Jennifer Denton, and David Coates for their work with these groups. The new group leaders are Marion Mills, Ann Chadwick, and Jennifer Green/David Coates. Unfortunately, the French Group will no longer be meeting in the new year. We need to thank Susan Wheare, who was the group leader but has relinquished the role. No one has come forward to replace her. Many groups meet in peoples' homes. These individuals need to be thanked for allowing groups to work so effectively. We have had regular meetings of group leaders to discuss issues related to the role. These have been very fruitful and helpful to all who attended. As this is my last Group Coordinators Report I have asked Group Leaders to give a brief report of their activities this year. And these are now on our website.

#### **(e) Website Administrator**

Recently, June Grunwald and Marion Mills had exchanged roles, and Marion was now the Website Administrator. She stated that she had been getting to know the structure of the website and had been making some small changes. However, she felt that the site required a full revision to make it more dynamic and pleasing to the eye. She asked the members to contact her with any ideas for developing site, or areas they thought would improve the site if they were included. The Committee had already agreed to set up a small project group which she would be leading to make these changes.

#### **(f) Membership Secretary**

Paula Corfield gave this report as acting Membership Secretary. The membership has continued to grow in 2025 and as of 31 December 2025 stood at 198 members, of whom 51 joined in 2025. A big welcome to our new members, if you have any queries please contact me.

A combination of word of mouth and our coffee mornings, now being held at Vale and Downland Museum, account for most new members. We also had a stand at the Health and Wellbeing event held at the Beacon in the spring to publicise U3A. In terms of renewals, a big thank you to all who have paid so far. The number of outstanding renewals as of 18 January stands at 97 members. Can you please pay by the end of January, preferably by BACS, but we can also take cash or a cheque. If

anyone is having problems, please see myself or Jennie after this meeting. I would just like to say a big thankyou to Jenny, our Treasurer, for helping me with the renewals process this year, to make it as smooth a process as possible for myself as a newbie to the membership secretary role. I hope 2026 will be a great year for Wantage and Grove U3A.

#### **5. Motions for consideration and approval**

Following the report of the Treasurer, the members proposed that the annual accounts of Wantage and Grove u3a be accepted as presented. This motion was carried unanimously.

#### **6. Status of Committee membership and New Nominations**

The status of the various Committee members and positions was detailed in the agenda.

The Chair explained that he, Jenny Green, June Grunwald, Andrew Gregory and John Hancock continued in their positions as Committee members without re-election. Jenifer Denton needed re-election as Events Organiser after her term in office had expired, and this was carried unanimously by the membership. Ann Chadwick, Adrian Clarke, Wanda Clarke, David Coates, and Colin Wood had stepped down from the Committee.

Valid application forms for Committee membership had been received from Paula Corfield (Membership Secretary), Marion Mills (Website Administrator), and Hazel Townesend (Groups Coordinator). These were put to the vote by the Chair, and they were carried unanimously by the meeting. The position of Vice Chair was left vacant, but this could be proposed later within the Committee without further reference to the membership.

Finally, the Chair informed the Members that Malcolm Wetherill had completed three years as President of our u3a, and that he was willing to serve for another three years. This proposal was endorsed unanimously and enthusiastically by those present.

#### **7. Any other business**

AnnChadwick proposed a vote of thanks to the Committee and all the other volunteers who had made 2025 such a good year for Wantage and Grove u3a.

The Chair closed the meeting at 2:53 pm.



# Treasurer's Report



## Final Accounts 2025

### Income & Expenditure 2025

In year receipts and payments	- £314.60
2026 Subs paid in 2025	+ <u>£1,436.00</u>
I& E surplus for 2025	£1,121.40

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Operational Fund 31/12/25      £3937.04

(includes funds bought forward from 2024)

Reserve Fund 31/12/25      £5,350.74

Fixed Assets      £576.00

(only one item, all others fully depreciated)

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**TOTAL ASSETS 31/12/25      £9,863.78**

(2024    £9429.76)

NB This does not include balances held by u3a groups

**NOMINATION FORM FOR THE COMMITTEE OF WANTAGE AND GROVE U3A FOR 2026**

**NOTES**

- A. Nominations of members prepared to stand for election to the Committee for the coming year should be made, in writing, to the Secretary by Friday 16 January 2026, using the form below (secretary.u3ainwantageandgrove@gmail.com).
- B. Motions for discussion at the Annual General Meeting should be submitted in writing to the Secretary by Friday 16 January 2026 (secretary.u3ainwantageandgrove@gmail.com).
- C. Should anyone need to 'Vote by Proxy', please contact the Secretary. Further copies of this form are available from the Secretary.

We nominate PAULA CORFIELD  
For position of MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY  
Proposer Ann Chadwick Seconder J. Denton  
Nominee's consent [Signature] Date 9/1/26

We nominate Marion Mills  
For position of Beacon administrator + assistant webmaster.  
Proposer Ann Chadwick Seconder J. Denton  
Nominee's consent M E Mills Date 6/1/26

C. Should anyone need to 'Vote by Proxy', please contact the Secretary. Further copies of this form are available from the Secretary.

**NOMINATION FORM FOR THE COMMITTEE OF WANTAGE AND GROVE U3A FOR 2026**

We nominate HAZEL TOWNSEND  
For position of SIGs <sup>Coordinator</sup> ~~COORDINATOR~~ ~~FACILITATOR~~ <sup>Coordinator</sup>  
Proposer Linda R. Thompson Seconder [Signature] (JOAN FORD)  
Nominee's consent [Signature] Date 6/1/26