



Wyre Forest & District Annual General Meeting
Held at Kidderminster Harriers Sports and Social Club
Monday 20th October 2025 at 2.00pm

MINUTES

Members present: 199

Apologies:- Tony and Jan Haylock, Caroline and Vincent O'Callaghan, Ann and Denis Plant,
Robert Lloyd, Balbir and Malcolm Currie

<u>Item No.</u>	<u>Agenda Item</u>
1.	<u>Welcome and Apologies</u> Elaine Yates welcomed everyone to the 2025 AGM, our guest speaker Allan Walmsley, past Chairs, Founder Members and Committee members who were also present. She advised of the Health & Safety regulations and highlighted the various fire exits for information within the location. Apologies were received as stated above and Sandra Phillips advised the meeting accordingly.
2.	<u>Approval of the Minutes from the 2024 Annual General Meeting</u> No amendments were received. For the record, this was proposed by Sue Langley and seconded by Bernard Page. The meeting agreed it was a true record.
3.	<u>Chair's Report</u> See attached.
4.	<u>Receipt and Approval of Annual Accounts from Year Ending 31 March 2024</u> The accounts for this period were previously circulated to all members in September 2025. No questions were received. This was proposed by Sue Cutler and seconded by Steve Archer. The meeting was all in favour and the motion was carried.

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5.	<u>Approval of the Appointment of an Independent Examiner</u> The new Treasurer will be responsible for locating a new examiner and therefore no vote was required at this time.
6.	<u>Election of Officers</u> Sandra Phillips announced the names of the officers seeking election – Bernard Feehan (Chair), Tony Haylock (Treasurer) and Val Hurst (Secretary). This was a block vote proposed by Roger Quiney and seconded by Tina Jenkins. The meeting was all in favour with no abstentions or votes against.
7.	<u>Election of Committee Members</u> Sandra Phillips announced the nominations of the members seeking election to the Committee – Ann Hill (Membership Secretary) Roger Quiney, Steve Archer, Ralph Bramley, Robert Lloyd, Trevor Boot, Balbir Currie, Jan Walton and Deb Richardson. These were proposed by John Watson and seconded by Julie Bouttle. The meeting was all in favour with no abstentions or votes against. Elaine advised that the Committee was now at full capacity with twelve trustees serving. At this point, Elaine thanked the outgoing Officer Sandra Phillips for her hard work and commitment as Vice-Chair for 2025 and presented her with a gift from u3a. She also thanked the second outgoing Officer, Ken Bell, Treasurer, and presented him with a gift for his dedication and excellent work during the past three years. He was departing as his term had expired. The Secretary, Val Hurst, thanked Elaine, The Chair, and presented her with a gift for all her support to the committee, her hard work and focus and for being the “mine of information” very much needed and valued by everyone. Elaine then introduced the succeeding Chair, Bernard Feehan, to the meeting and he gave a short speech. He felt honoured to accept the Chair position and gave thanks to the Committee and members paying special tribute to Elaine for her excellent work involved in supporting everyone to enjoy u3a under the motto Learn, Laugh and Live.
8.	<u>Formal Closure of 2025 Annual General Meeting</u> Elaine thanked Bernard Feehan for his words and she then announced that Allan Walmsley, Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Third Age Trust, would be speaking to the meeting and then the 20th Anniversary Cake would be cut by him and shared amongst the members, with beverages being served shortly afterwards. Prior to closing the meeting, she advised the next AGM will be held on 19 October 2026. The 2026 AGM was formally closed at 2.28pm.

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	<u>Bernard Page - A Founder Member of u3a</u> Bernard was then invited onto the stage to deliver a talk about how it all began. With his wife Ronnie, they had set up a meeting place in the local library having been interested in running a u3a as some of his friends had already done in Mansfield. Mainly groups then got together at the Methodist Church on Kidderminster ring road. They organised lunch or coffee visits to people's homes to begin with and he was very pleasantly amazed that over the past twenty years, the membership has now grown to over a thousand to date. There was a Steering Committee serving at that time. In the early days a lottery grant was obtained for handbells and the Handbell Group continues today along with so many other wonderful groups. <u>Visiting Speaker – Allan Walmslely, Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Third Age</u> Allan thanked Elaine for the invitation to attend the AGM and the opportunity to speak to the members. He stated he is a member of Kings Norton u3a and was involved with Wyre Forest & District at one time for 5/6 years and has delighted in watching the membership grow. He commented on how the u3a has grown as a charity with now 420,000 members in the country throughout one thousand u3a's in Ireland, Scotland and England. u3a is the third largest trust, not just as a company but also as a charity, and is the thirteenth largest member organisational charity in the country and one that speaks for this generation. Comparing some other u3a's with Wyre Forest & District, he went on to say he was impressed with how energetic and enthusiastic this one is with good quality individuals on the Committee who distil through and result in members wanting to attend their monthly meetings. It is largely independent on many issues due to the skills it has within. There are some u3a's which are fragile and some of their members in their seventies and eighties have lost their enthusiasm. They need more u3a trusts like this one. He advised structural changes were proposed for the National u3a. There are plans for a council of representatives to identify the views of u3a's around the country. This will be a major part of the future for the movement as this council will bring the collective view. Attracting the next generation of u3a members is important. A survey in 2019 revealed the average age of members is seventy-four and prior to that it was seventy. It is therefore necessary to start bringing in members at the younger end of the scale. Images in posters and u3a magazines can all help to promote a younger image for the organisation. Some u3a literature has not been changed for a long time and this needs attention. Gadget interest groups for example could be one idea to introduce for the next generation of say fifties, who are more text savvy and would be attracted to this type of group

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	The York Festival which is a national event for all u3a's is being organised again for 2026. 900 u3a's attended last year's festival and Allan was hoping for similar numbers again next year. He complimented the national learning programmes within all the u3a's on-line helping to add to the experience of being a member within u3a. Allan was asked a question from the audience as to where u3a originally started. He advised it began in France but was associated largely with universities for mature people. In 1982, four academies from Cambridge promoted self-help groups rather than academic ones which excluded exams and qualifications, and focused on people mainly sharing experiences of life. He finished his talk by saying u3a means learn, laugh and live and needs to move away from references such as university and third age which could possibly discourage potential new members believing that u3a is solely for the older university educated individual. Elaine thanked Allan for his talk and asked him to cut the cake, which he did. The Ukelele Group then entertained the members with songs they could all join in.