u3a Thorley

MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING
Thursday 17 September 2026
At Bishop's Stortford Baptist Church

Committee Members

Chair Nigel Varnam (NV)
Vice Chair Linda Ketteridge (LK)
Business Secretary John Acklaw (JA)
Treasurer Ryland Perrin (RP)
Assistant Treasurer Tony Clark (TC)
Membership Barbara Jacobs (BJ)
Groups Alistair Curbbin (AC)
Communications Carmen Knopka (KC)
Speaker Co-ordinator Barry Maxwell (BM)
Events Co-ordinator Chrissy Thear (CT)

Chairman welcomed visitors Ken Blethyn (KB) and John Bailey (JB)

Apologies

John Acklaw and Linda Ketteridge

Tony Clark has resigned from his position of Assistant Treasurer. The Chair and Committee thanked Tony for his service and wished him well for the future. John Bailey will attend the Committee to give support to the Treasurer duties and the Committee thanked him for volunteering.

Minutes of Last Meeting

Agreed. To put on drive (JA)

Matters Arising and Committee Matters

15th Anniversary celebration was considered successful and attracted good publicity in the local press.

No further action needed on the Third Age Trust AGM

BM has completed the review of the Safeguarding policy paper and reported that it is entirely consistent with the TAT central guidance. It was agreed to insert this new review date on the website. Familiarisation of the policy is a requirement for the Committee members and Group leaders and it was agreed to mention the completion of this review in a future newsletter. BM will endeavour to review other Thorley U3A policy documents on a rolling programme.

KB reported that progress had been made with securing back up to the position of Gmail administrator and that Nick Ambrose might well agree to be a second point of contact for this. KB to report at the next meeting and demonstrate the process.

Business Secretary

JA submitted a written report for the meeting. The Committee agreed with his view that the current document on the website entitled Risk Assessment was no longer relevant as it primarily related to Covid issues. The Committee considered that a generic Risk assessment document should replace it and that a template from TAT would be preferable and then Group Leaders could adapt and use it, when appropriate, to suit their circumstances. Action JA.

Speakers Co-ordinator

BM reported that he only had 3 monthly slots left to fill in the 2027 programme and one of these was being held pending advice from the Cultures and Customs and History Groups which had expressed a desire to see a session on the swinging sixties, although they might prefer to organise that themselves as a Groups event. The September speaker complimented our U3A for being such a friendly, welcoming and appreciative audience.

Membership Secretary

We now have 677 members. Since the last meeting 10 new members have joined. The two payment issues reported at the last meeting have been resolved. The end of October is the cut off point for renewals.

Treasurers

Balances healthy. Co-op Bank will merge with the Coventry Building Society and we await developments on how that might affect our account. Some Groups are carrying a surplus on their activities and this needs monitoring. RP hopes to complete the preparation of accounts by the end of October ready for audit. When the Committee attempts to recruit new Trustees it was suggested that we also seek volunteers to “shadow” Committee members and attend meetings as observers. Some positions, like Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer, need support in this way just in case existing officers are unable to undertake their role for any reason.

Groups Co-ordinator

On behalf of AC an update was provided by KC. It may be possible to look again at a sign language session and carry on the work started by Annie Compton. A line dancing workshop is being established as a one off event. AC to report at the next meeting.

Communications Secretary

KC said that there would be no October newsletter as she was on holiday. In 2027 it would be appropriate to examine the frequency and length on newsletters. A shorter and less frequent newsletter might be the right approach.

Events Co-ordinator

The price of the Christmas lunch was fixed at £40. A deadline of 6 November was agreed as the cut off date for attendance requests. A menu was agreed. CT said she was endeavouring to source raffle prizes from local businesses. A notice will go out in Beacon, JB to arrange. An update was provided on Quiz Night, the venue is booked 18.30-20.30 and CT is dealing with the food arrangements and acquiring wine for the prize. There are likely to be 7 tables in total.

Diary/Calender Check

All in order.

A O B

LK had suggested that a poster be organised to seek nominations for the Chair and Vice-Chair places. The Committee welcomed the proposal but felt that a more effective and immediate approach would be to personally approach selected individuals. NV to take this forward.

JA to book meeting venues for 2027.

January 2027 might be the optimum time for the next new members coffee morning.

Date of Next Meeting

10.15 am Thursday 15 October at Bishop's Stortford Library