

Minutes of the U3A Clitheroe Committee Meeting

14th May 2026

Present: Maureen Pickup, Jacquie Melia, Christine Snape, Ann Ward, Denise Hayton, Jenny Pek, Jenny Bank, Su Penson,

In Attendance:

David Grimes, John Wilson, Robin Taylor, Liz Wolstenholme

1. Apologies: Ruth Mason

Minutes of the last meeting held on 12th March 2026 (previously circulated) were agreed

2. Co-opting members

Jenny Bank, Ruth Mason and Jenny Pek were co-opted to join the Committee until the 2027 AGM

3. Correspondence (previously circulated)

4.1 An email was received from Iain Cassidy with the April updates for u3as. Maureen will complete a digital survey on our behalf. A contact is needed for the portal, there is a link on the website.

4.2 We have received an email from Blackburn Cathedral regarding their Centenary, asking if we want to take part in their fund raising events. We are not a fund raising organisation, we need more details of what, when and where. John commented that at Todmorden U3A 10 minutes before the main meeting were used to update members and he would look into whether it was possible for their representative to attend one of our Main Meetings. It was thought that David does a splendid job of informing members of events taking place, by sending regular emails.

5 Governance/Administration

5.1 Trustee Induction

Trustee Induction for our four new trustees has been arranged at Barrow Village Hall on 27th May.

5.2 Update on Simple Membership

A presentation on the Simple Membership system was shown at the Convenors' meeting on 12th May. We have a test system if anyone wants to find out more. The system is very easy to operate and will be of great benefit to our members and group leaders. It is possible to download to a smartphone, a pc is not necessary. David has uploaded all members and group information to the new system. When it goes live members will have to set a password to access the system. It will take the hassle out of updating members, for large groups with waiting lists, it will allocate the next on the list when a vacancy becomes available. Training will be given, we have to create a domain name eg . Google workspace is free for charities to use to set up their domain names. Simple Membership has been running for 17 years with no issues. It needs rolling out as soon as possible.

5.3 Proposed informal session - report circulated

As our committee meetings only take place 6 times a year, it was suggested that we hold an informal session, to discuss new ideas as there is no other forum to do this. We agreed to meet on 15th June at Barrow Village Hall. Please see report Conduct of Meetings – January 2026 (previously circulated).

The current ratio of our number of groups to members is low. Ann had looked at the Lancashire website, there are some very diverse groups such as maths for beginners, and armchair travellers. She said she would like to have a Gawthorpe History research group. Jackie pointed out that we do need people to run these groups.

5.4 Succession Planning

At the next AGM there will be a large number of vacancies. We have to start planning for these now. Some members think the committee is a 'closed shop' or 'secret society'. We need more transparency - should we have sub committees to involve more members? We need a brainstorming group – possibly at the informal session. Su pointed out that we need a publicity team, one person is not enough. At the main meeting should committee members move round the tables to talk to members. Ann said that the Arts Society sent out a survey using survey monkey. Members should be encouraged to start groups in something they are interested in. Our membership form needs revamping to include skills and interests. A Theatre group was suggested, but it never got off the ground. Should we get new members together so they can meet others?

6 Chairs Report (circulated previously)

Cluster Group Meeting 23rd March 2026

Attended by Burnley, Clitheroe, Todmorden and West Pennine Villages. Hyndburn and Longridge did not attend. All u3as seem to have difficulty recruiting committee members.

North West Regional workshop

Maureen attended a North West workshop together with Marjorie and Robin Taylor. The key point raised were: A clear decline in the use of cheques and cash. Beacon uses PayPal but there is a general reluctance to use this. Bank charges per cheque are £3 each cheque, Co-op; Virgin; Natwest do not charge charity accounts. Some u3as use Standing Orders or Direct Debits for subscription payments. Paying in cheques is problematic due to the closure of many high street banks. Some u3as use Banking Apps to pay in cheques.

7 Treasurers Report

7.1 The accounts for March and April were previously circulated. Any queries should be raised before the committee meeting.

7.2 As there is now a bank charge on all cheques we have decided to accept card and BACS payments only. Any monies accrued is to be used for the benefit of the members. There is £100 set up fee available to anyone who wishes to set up a new group.

The poetry group is looking for a cheaper venue. Money from the geology group comes in less frequently than other groups. We used some funds to help the play reading group to pay for expenses. They also needed help finding a suitable venue. John pointed out that Whalley Grammar School has a variety of rooms of different sizes and costs. Denise reminded everyone she had emailed all Convenors with a list of venues available for use by our U3a.

7.3 Janet Rees will be substituted for Julie Whitehead which will mean Janet along with Christine Snape and Maureen Pickup will be able to authorise payments from the u3a bank account.

7.4 Gift Aid

It was thought that Gift Aid was too complicated for us to implement, at the present time.

7.5 Late Payment Policy

Reminders are sent out towards the end of the year regarding paying subscriptions by the end of January. It was decided that 2 reminders would be sent, one in January and one in February. Late payers would be moved on to a 'lapsed members' list, until they notify us of their intentions. There are insurance implications if members have not paid. The Simple Membership system should be able to handle 'anniversary members'. Who would challenge non payers? The convenor should contact the membership secretary, and they would then lapse the member and contact them. We have 6% lapsed members at present.

7.6 Welcome drink at Christmas

It was stated that the cost of a welcome drink at the Christmas lunch was around £500, the venue decided on the type of drinks. If instead we gave a token for the bar, the bar staff would not be able to cope. This needs to be discussed further.

7.7 Equipment and Asset Register

It was decided that a new pc for the NewsFlash Editor should be purchased, up to the value of £1000.

We need a programme for replacing older pcs in use by committee members as required.

8 Group Co-ordinators Report

A report was distributed outlining matters arising from the Convenors meeting on 12th May. It was noted that the Strollers group has no convener, also Singing for pleasure is in need of someone to teach songs. Adverts have gone out and all members contacted, there has been no response.

Denise has been approached by a lady with regards to starting a Spanish or Italian group. She is meeting with her in June.

9 Membership Secretary's Report

A document was circulated with the membership figure. We had 5 new members in April, bringing the total up to 482, 27 have not paid or lapsed, 3 have been suspended, 34 are not renewing for 2026. In total we have lost 61 members and gained 57.

10 Speakers Secretary Report

A document was distributed outlining potential speakers for 2027. It was agreed that John had done a good job, and was to go ahead and confirm with the proposed speakers the dates they would attend. The Webmaster should also be contacted to make any changes to the website.

11 Publicity

The Third Age Trust have hired a marketing manager. They have publicised a cartoon which is thought to be patronising and dreadful. This is to be discussed at the next informal meeting.

11.1 We need a contact for the u3a portal

11.2 Facebook

It was decided that facebook was not the way forward for Clitheroe u3a.

11.3 Royal Lancashire Show

Marjorie had suggested we had an information stand at the Lancashire show. This was considered to be too much for Clitheroe U3a to undertake and it had been suggested Marjorie (who is a North West Region Representative) should raise it with the North West Region.

12 NewsFlash

Denise commented that Robin does a splendid job and our NewsFlash is colourful and informative. Robin regularly asks for support in preparing the News Flash it was suggested that we go to a two monthly edition possibly in booklet form. Some unnecessary questions do get asked because members do not read their NewsFlash.

13 Website

We require a webmaster – it is Franks intention to step down as soon as possible. It was pointed out that the u3a is for us and by us. A few members have no pc or mobile. Those affected should identify someone who will pass information on to them.

14 Special Events Team

14.1 The Summer Lunch is on 14th July, tickets are available at the next meeting. £25 a head, 2 courses and entertainment. The committee members should strive to promote this.

14.2 U3a week is 19th to 27th September. We need to decide, what, if anything we propose to do celebrate U3a week.

14.3 A fashion show has been proposed for 28th September in the evening. It was thought that this would alienate the male members. We need to find a suitable venue. Would enough tickets be sold to cover the costs? The suggested boutique was thought to be not up market enough, and a social event that appealed to all would be more suitable. Nothing has been booked as yet.

14.4 30th Anniversary – 2028

We need to decide how we celebrate our 30th Anniversary.

15 Reports from other meeting/sub groups

15.1 Interactive Sessions

Information has been publicised in the NewsFlash. In March 26 people came to the computer talk, 13 people came to the talk in April. Ability.net have now run out of funds. The next date is 28th May, Regional Fraud Protection, volunteers are needed to help. Su Penson and Janet Rees agreed to help.

At next week's Tuesday meeting people are needed to help 'on the steps' as several regulars will be away.