

Furness U3A Committee

CONFIRMED MINUTES of the Meeting held at the Bedford Room, Ulverston Methodist Church on 14th April 2026

1 PRESENT:

Committee Members

Richard Lewis, Linda Marshall, Neil McLaughlin Cook, Adrian Morris,
Dawn Morris and Duncan Platts.

By Invitation

Simon Baxter.

2 APOLOGIES:

Harry Knowles and Gary Thompson.

3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10TH MARCH

The Minutes (previously circulated) were formally agreed.

ACTION

Neil to send the Minutes to Simon, for uploading to the website.

4 ANY MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES THAT ARE NOT COVERED IN THE AGENDA

4.1 Neil confirmed that Peter Quiggin is storing an old u3a laptop, a u3a projection screen and a u3a projector.

ACTION

Neil to advise Peter that the laptop can be safely disposed of.

Neil and **Harry** to liaise about future storage of the screen and projector.

4.2 Chris Butler had confirmed that she was prepared to continue to play a role in ensuring that catering was available for Monthly Meetings, but she would not be able to organise catering for any other events.

4.3 Richard was still not receiving authorisation requests from The Cumberland.

ACTION

Gary and Richard to continue to liaise with The Cumberland to resolve this matter.

4.4 Harry had not yet collected the banner from Linda.

Harry to collect the banner.

4.5 All other Actions had either been undertaken or were discussed under items 5-10 below.

5 REVIEW OF THE APRIL MONTHLY MEETING

Numbers were slightly down on recent months. There were fewer questions than normal, which may have reflected the topic.

Before the meeting, Linda had obtained the table signs that had been held by Ann Wilson. The Committee **AGREED** that these were useful to members.

ACTION

Linda to bring the signs to future meetings.

6 FURNESS u3a 20TH ANNIVERSARY

Duncan had circulated the Minutes of the Steering Committee held on 1st April.

The anniversary event will be held on Tuesday 29th September in the Coronation Hall. The venue has been booked for the full day. Precise timings for the event are to be decided, but it would include lunch, which the Steering Committee proposes to take the form of a *Jacob's Join*.

Entry would be free, but ticketed to ensure that numbers did not exceed 200. It is proposed that, on entry, each member would receive a souvenir lanyard in exchange for their ticket.

It was expected that the programme would include a talk on the founding of Furness u3a [by Diane Hill], stories of the early days [by long-standing members], a talk on Furness u3a now [possibly by Neil], and entertainment/displays by our Activity Groups. The event would need a compere [possibly Adrian]. The Mayors of Barrow, Dalton and Ulverston, and local media, would be invited.

Although a budget of £500 had been mentioned in an earlier meeting, this was not fixed; the final budget that the u3a Committee would make available would be dependent upon consideration of a costed proposal from the Steering Committee.

ACTION

Duncan, on behalf of the Steering Committee, to submit a costed proposal to the May u3a Committee meeting.

7 VOLUNTEERING FOR FURNESS u3a

This is a Standing Item; there was nothing to report.

8 FUNDRAISING AND DONATIONS AT u3a EVENTS

This issue was raised in relation to the English Country Dancing Group's intention to hold a joint event with their counterparts in Grange u3a, which had been warmly supported by the Committee.

However, it was noted that attendees would be asked for donations to cover costs, and Neil had explored with the Third Age Trust how to proceed in the event of donations exceeding costs, bearing in mind that, as charities, no u3a can donate funds to another charity.

The Committee **AGREED** to offer the English Country Dancing Group the following advice:

- [a] asking for donations to cover costs is fine in principle, but
- [b] attendees should be informed that any surplus would be shared between the 2 u3as, to be used to further the aims of the u3as, and
- [c] if the organisers decide, say, to have a collection box for a charity other than Furness or Grange u3a, this would be legitimate, but only as long as it was made clear to attendees that any donations are not from a u3a as an organisation, but from attendees as individuals, and would not be channelled via a u3a bank account.

ACTION

Neil to offer the advice to English Country Dancing.

9 NORTH WEST REGION AGM: 23RD JUNE

This event will be held online. The Committee **AGREED** that Neil would be the Voting Delegate.

ACTION

Neil to register for the AGM.

10 REPORTS

10.1 Chair

Nothing further to report.

10.2 Treasurer

Gary had emailed a written report. All accounts were balanced and reconciled, and the net cash position was £19842.00.

10.3 Secretary

A member who had recently resigned had contacted Neil and Linda to request Complete Erasure of her records under Data Protection legislation. Neil was liaising with Tisha about how she could agree to this request whilst retaining information needed for Gift Aid purposes.

ACTION

Neil to give an update to the May meeting.

The North West Region were holding a workshop on AI and how it can support learning, creativity and u3a activities.

ACTION

Neil to draw this to the attention of Group Leaders.

10.4 Groups Liaison

Duncan had emailed a written report. A meeting of Group Leaders is being planned for 26th May.

10.5 Membership Secretary

Linda had emailed a written report. At the time of writing the report, 261 fee-paying members were still to renew; a substantial number had subsequently renewed at the April Monthly Meeting, but that still left over 200 still to renew. Further communications would be issued, but Linda anticipated that a substantial number of members would be lapsed due to not renewing by the final deadline. A Group Leader had contacted Linda at the April Monthly Meeting to say that members of her group were not renewing because Furness u3a was “not what it used to be”. It was **AGREED** that, in order to get a fuller picture of why members might not be renewing, the matter would be raised at the forthcoming Group Leaders meeting.

ACTION

Duncan to seek, at the Group Leaders meeting on 26th May, the views of Group Leaders, about why members might not renew.

10.6 Speaker Finder

Harry had emailed a written report, which was received without further discussion.

10.7 Welfare and Inclusion

Dawn had emailed a written report. She will have a slot in the Group Leaders meeting on 26th May.

10.8 Website Editor / Newsletter Editor

Simon circulated a breakdown of the number of visits to the webpages of each group. As referred to in previous meetings, walking groups tended to receive a large number of visits. It was not clear why this was the case, although it was suggested that most visits might be from potential members of the groups, and so the large number of walking groups in Furness u3a might lead to potential members visiting several webpages to decide which group to join.

A couple of issues were raised relating to Group Leaders' use of the website and Beacon: [a] it was likely that some Group Leaders are not using Beacon to add members to their group, and [b] the number of groups on Beacon does not perfectly match the number of groups on the website, presumably due to Group Leaders not informing Simon that their group had been established.

ACTION

Duncan to raise these issues at the Group Leaders meeting on 26th May, and then ensure that all Group Leaders receive a copy of the Minutes of that meeting.

About 500 members had viewed the Newsletter in March.

10.9 Publicity Officer

Harry had emailed a written report, which was received without further discussion.

11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

12 DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held at **1200 noon on Tuesday 12th May.**