u3a Perth

Minutes of Perth u3a Committee Meeting

Held on Tuesday 28st April 2026 at 10am in Unit 7

Present

Richard Coles	RC (Chair)	Wilma Coleman	WC
Irene Twinn	IT	Yvonne Connell	YC
Sue Hendry	SH	Ray Hodgson	RH
Anne Rutherford	AR	Dave Smith	DS
John Seavers	JS	Jon Babb	JB

1. Apologies and Introduction

Apologies received from Trevor Abell. RC noted that Don Deeney has resigned from the Committee due to personal reasons.

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting on Tuesday 31st March 2026 were approved - proposed by DS, seconded by RH.

3. Matters arising

a) WC: Book St Matthews for Registration Day - DONE

b) IT RBS Social Account – IT has received a couple of suggestions from our external examiner for alternative banks to try, and is still trying to establish why our application to the RBS failed.

c) IT to add Siteworks to the 2026/27 Budget - DONE

d) YC to email 40th anniversary programme to members etc – DONE

e) IT to email Group Leaders regarding display boards at 40th anniversary - DONE

f) YC to invite John Andrews to this meeting - DONE, though he was unable to attend

4. Admin Matters

a) **Treasurer's report**

IT reported that all invoices and other outgoings for this session have been settled, except TAT, which will be paid when the invoice is received. IT anticipates a 'float' of around £10,000. Anticipating higher costs next year due to an increase in membership and groups (and thus, for example, higher accommodation costs), the Committee considered this reasonable – ie, there was no need to reduce the membership fee, and we will still be meeting the regulatory requirements/guidance from OSCR.

RC noted that the rateable value for Unit7 has been revised upwards, resulting in a rates charge of £320. IT advised that she will apply to the small business bonus scheme, which should reduce the cost to zero.

Action: IT as above

b) Group Co-ordinator's Report

The Committee has approved the re-formation of the Nature Strolls 1 Group, to be led by Yvonne Connell and Joan Fraser. The Nature Strolls 2 Group will be renamed the Dog-friendly Trails Group, and thus the re-formed group will be simply called Nature Strolls.

Both of Christine MacDonald's groups – Scrabble 2 and the Art of Conversation – have closed.

This puts the total number of groups at 75.

RC noted that Technical Photography may also close as the leader is stepping down and no-one has come forward to take their place.

JS enquired on progress towards showing which groups meet over the summer on the website. RH said that Anne Trant (website administrator) is looking into the best means to do this.

IT noted that there's been a rise in people joining in the summer, from roughly 2 to 10. Perhaps this is a result of the new 'summer membership' rate? There were some concerns that, although the website makes clear that the summer rate just covers them up to August, some may still be surprised when asked to re-subscribe in August.

A non-member had recently asked to join a group waiting list, but was turned down as they would have had to join Perth u3a first. JB suggested we consider inviting people in this situation to one group meeting, on a 'try before you buy' basis.

Action: YC to rename Nature Strolls 2 groups as above on Website and on Beacon, and set up the re-formed Nature Strolls group on both systems.

c) Membership Report

DS reported 562 members including 2 life members. Otherwise, there were no changes other than the summer membership figures as mentioned above.

It was noted that, with regard to u3a insurance, members who don't renew promptly could be at risk if they're participating in group activities during the summer – particularly in August. YC will alert walking group leaders to this small risk – they should look out for group members highlighted in red in Beacon. JS will add a similar note in his membership renewal notice.

Action: YC and JS as above

d) Accommodation Co-ordinator's Report

The cleaners aren't really needed over the summer months, but WC was concerned that, if we cancel them, we may lose them altogether – ie, they might find steadier work elsewhere. WC will consult with Dave Kettles (building management).

An informal booking system is now in place for Unit7 throughout the summer – ie, a clipboard in Unit7 on which to write bookings.

Action: WC to consult Dave Kettles on how to manage cleaners across the summer months – perhaps he could give them some work to fill the gap.

e) Events

JB has provisionally booked a trip to the Scottish Parliament in September (up to 40 places). He may investigate using the PKC minibus – will need to confirm that Peter Cookson still holds a licence to drive it.

He's been pondering as to whether smaller events for 12-14 people were appropriate, as he has a potential small-group whisky tasting event in mind. The Committee advised that this would be suitable.

Open Meetings for 2026-27: following Don Deeney's resignation from the Committee, it has become apparent that no speaker bookings were made for next session's open meetings. JB and AR have kindly agreed to take this on, working from a list of potential speakers which JB gave DD some months ago. All agreed that assembling a complete roster of speakers in time for the programme to be printed on 1 June represented a considerable challenge. JB and AR will make best endeavours to book the first 2 or 3 speakers by 1 June and, if this proves impossible, there will be a holding page in the programme.

Action: JB and AR as above

5. Perth u3a Chair

RC noted the failure to recruit a Chair for the next session, and invited views on how a shared or joint Chair arrangement between office bearers might work. It was recognised that this was not a desirable way forward but that there seemed little alternative.

JS proposed a system whereby each office bearer takes it in turn to act as Chair. Each person would act for 6 months, allowing the system to remain in place for up to two years if necessary.

RC proposed a system whereby the Chair tasks are divided between the office bearers – chair of committee meetings, chair of open meetings, external communications, and strategic direction. The result might be called the "leadership team," a common term used by other organisations.

RC's system was preferred over JS's proposal. RC noted that such an arrangement is not covered by the Constitution and would need the approval of the AGM. Accordingly, an additional AGM Agenda item had been added.

After the meeting took a break for coffee and biscuits, RC announced that JB had just volunteered to take on the Chair role. This was in part prompted by the meeting's discussion on the division of tasks and a perusal of the Chair's role description as documented on the website. The meeting unanimously accepted his offer, and his nomination form was amended accordingly. It was noted that this will leave the position of Vice Chair vacant, and that efforts should continue to recruit more Committee members in order to (ultimately) fill this role and that of Don Deeney.

Item 8 was taken out of sequence due to IT needing to leave promptly.

8. Finance Policy

IT has made the amendments discussed at the previous meeting, and YC has tidied up the formatting. The resulting document was then re-checked by IT, AR and JS. The Committee approved the document.

Action: YC to publish the Finance Policy on the website

6. AGM

RC requested that items 8 (AOB) and 2 (Announcements) be removed from the Agenda. His reasons were that, for an AGM, AOB should only be notified in advance in writing, and there were no Announcements to be given. YC pointed out that the membership hasn't been given an opportunity to propose AOB items, and so it was agreed that she would invite them to do this when distributing the final agenda. If no items are proposed, AOB will be dropped from the Agenda.

RH gave apologies for the AGM. YC agreed to read out his report at the meeting.

Action: YC to amend AGM agenda as above, and email members as above. RH to send YC his report.

7. 40th Anniversary event

RC will step down as Chair during the AGM, after the election of officers. Assuming he is elected, JB will take over and invite AOB (if any is pre-notified), and thereafter at 11.30am introduce Robert Proctor to begin the 40th anniversary event with his talk.

WC confirmed that she and/or John Andrews will ensure that groups performing in the afternoon don't overrun etc. Otherwise, arrangements are in hand. 33 members have booked the light lunch.

WC proposed we give Plaidsong flowers and a £25 book token as a thank you. This was agreed (NB: after the meeting, one of the two Plaidsong members told WC that he can no longer attend, so WC will just purchase flowers and no book token).

RC explained that the Photography Group will be displaying photos on a loop on the screens in the Sanctuary. Would this be distracting when groups are performing? It was agreed that he would ask John Paton (church AV) if the main screen could be excluded from the display during the performances.

11. AOB

JB enquired as to how we are notified of the death of members. It was explained that the information comes via various routes – most often to the Group Leader, Secretary, Membership Secretary or Chair. Condolences are tendered as appropriate to the message received and any knowledge we have about the member and/or their family. This might come from the Chair and/or from the person who first received the information. Endeavours are also made to inform other members if and as appropriate. There was a brief discussion about creating a written procedure; IT suggested making pre-printed cards.

JB suggested that the Committee meet halfway through the summer as well as just before Registration. Dates were agreed: 10am in Unit 7 on Monday 15 June and 11 August.

In his closing remarks as Chair, RC recommended that JB carry forward the work on the Perth u3a Strategy to the next session. He also suggested we give serious consideration to a public celebration of our 40th anniversary, sometime before the end of 2026. This would be an opportunity to increase our profile in Perth – the public and press would be invited. Planning would need to commence soon – potentially at the 15 June meeting. Finally, he gave his thanks to the Committee and, in particular, DS and Don Deeney. JS gave thanks to RC on behalf of the Committee.

Next Meetings: Monday 15 June 2026 and Tuesday 11 August 2026, both at 10am in Unit 7