

Minutes of Perth u3a Committee Meeting

Held on Tuesday 11th August 2026 at 10am in Unit 7

Present

Jon Babb	JB (Chair)	Sue Hendry	SH
Irene Twinn	IT	Yvonne Connell	YC
Trevor Abell	TA	John Seavers	JS
Anne Rutherford	AR		

1. Apologies and Introduction

Apologies received from Ray Hodgson and Wilma Coleman.

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting on Monday 15th June 2026 were approved – proposed by SH, seconded by AR.

3. Matters arising

a) JS: consult TAT regarding liability insurance for non-renewed members – TAT advised that we are not covered for any members who haven't renewed after 31 Jul (our membership year-end) and are still participating in Perth u3a activities, such as with the walking groups. There is provision within the insurance policy to allow a guest to attend one session of a group before joining, but this shouldn't be relied upon to cover us for non-renewing members. In light of this, JS proposed that we move the membership year start from 1 August to 1 September. This would place it just after Registration Day and, as well as removing the insurance gap from the summer recess, would hopefully reduce the number of members who hadn't renewed as we move into the new session. Following a discussion as to how such a change might be managed (for example, the first year of the change would effectively be 13 months long), the Committee agreed the proposal.

b) YC: invite Alan Tailford and Vicky Gardner to join the Committee. NOT DONE YET (waiting until nearer the end of the summer recess).

c) YC: register objections to PKC swimming pool plans etc – NOT DONE, but the Committee was confident that there have been plentiful objections raised by others.

4. Admin Matters

a) Treasurer's report

IT reported a healthy financial position, even without taking into account membership renewals. To date, we have taken over £2,000 in membership fees, and this has accumulate much more quickly than in previous years. We have also received a £200 donation from Riviera Travel. We

have a residue of £9,000 to go forward into the new membership year, £4,000 of which can be regarded as contingency and £5,000 as a float.

IT and Wilma Coleman recently met with Unit 7 Building Management (Dave Kettles) and have negotiated a rental rise of £10 per month for 2026–27, and a rise of £12 per month for 2027–28.

IT noted that we are liable for rates for Unit 7, but that we've been able to bring this down to zero by applying for a charity deduction via Perth & Kinross Council.

There was a short discussion regarding the cost of u3a magazine subscriptions but no significant concerns were raised.

IT noted the various transaction fees we now have to pay for our use of SumUp, Paypal, and the Social Bank Account. She proposed that we include these as an admin fee in the prices we charge for social events. YC asked that it not be shown separately as an 'admin fee' but just included in the stated price. JB noted that we'd need greater transparency in the case of bulk ticket purchases, as we already pay an admin fee to the venue, and would then be adding a further admin fee of our own. The Committee agreed to the proposal with the caveats noted.

Christmas lunch – IT had obtained costs and a proposed menu from last year's venue, The Royal George Hotel. The lunch cost is £35 and she proposed we charge £36.50 to cover transaction fees. The Committee agreed that last year's event at the venue was well received and therefore it was acceptable to book again this year, and that IT's proposed charge was reasonable. As last year, this will include up to 3 courses, with no reduction for those who take fewer courses. As we are ahead this year in terms of arrangements, it was further agreed that JB would send a Christmas lunch email to the membership before Registration Day (RD), and take names of those wishing to book on Registration Day. The lunch will be booked for 1pm for 1.30pm and the Semi-Tones Group are keen to provide entertainment again.

Action: JB to send Christmas lunch email to membership before RD

b) Group Co-ordinator's Report

The total number of functioning groups had shrunk further to 72 but with the recently approved History of Culture Group, is now up to 73. RH isn't aware of any other groups staring into the abyss (yet). The recruiting embargo policy from 4th July until Registration Day produced some interesting correspondence from the community of group leaders. In RH's view, the policy, if continued, needs to be enshrined as a piece of standing legislation on our website (suggest Governance).

Action: YC to table a discussion on the embargo & summer membership

History of Culture Group: Beacon and website actions to be completed after Registration Day depending on the level of interest shown. Also, the leader, Donald McCrae, would like his new group, which I provisionally labelled History of Culture, to be known as A Decade in the Arts – the 1890s. RH had no objections but the Committee had concerns that this was a somewhat restrictive title – did Donald plan for the group to be convened just for one year whilst studying the 1890s, and might he then wish to convene a new group next year focusing on a different period of history?

Action: RH to raise the Committee's concerns with Donald McCrae

c) Membership Report

JS reported that we currently have 564 members, against a 2026–27 target of 520. However, renewals as on the date of the meeting stood at $368 + 33 = 401$ and $9 + 4 = 13$ new members. This means we're currently around 120 short of our target. 12 members have notified JS that they won't be renewing, with a variety of reasons cited. One person noted a wide variety in the quality of group leadership, with some excellent and others less so. Sadly, 4 members have recently died.

d) Accommodation Co-ordinator's Report

In absentia, WC noted that Book Group 4 wishes to move from being a house group to using Unit 6. WC has established that Unit 6 is available as they requested.

The Committee noted that Unit 7 which, unlike Unit 6, incurs no additional cost, is available on Monday mornings and afternoons in week 2. Although not the date and time when Book Group 4 currently meets, the Committee would like the group leader to consider this before incurring additional costs by using Unit 6.

Action: YC to ask the GL to consider Unit 7

e) Events

JB reported that a few concerts were recently proposed to the membership but take-up for most was low so these won't go ahead. The band Skippenish attracted over 20 members so this one will be booked.

Pitlochry Theatre, My Fair Lady – two members committed to attending but changed their minds after the tickets had been purchased. Fortunately, Pitlochry Theatre is unusual in accepting returns but JB will consider how best to avoid a similar situation in future.

The series of History Walks have been very successful. One walk further afield has had a slow take-up so far.

Other events planned or under consideration:

- Abercairny Estate walk in early October (normally closed to visitors)
- Innerpeffray walk
- Blair Atholl historic walk in Spring 2027
- Jade Garden meal and wine tasting in October, for a maximum of 50.

The popular Scottish Parliament visit on Tues 18 August is going ahead. Transport was offered but only 2 requests were received so the offer had to be withdrawn.

5. Registration Day

YC confirmed the list of volunteer helpers:

- Sunday set-up (23 Aug, 1pm – 3pm): JB, RH, WC, AR, YC, TA, SH, Dave Smith
- Reg day (24 Aug, 9am to midday): JB, RH, SH

JS gave printed docs for the day to YC

WC has confirmed that St Matthews is booked for the 2 days as above

6. Farmers' Market

This was tabled by YC but TA reminded all that we had previously decided that it wasn't worth doing, given the poor recruitment figures which resulted.

JB noted that he would endeavour to make a booking for next year's Rotary Club Charity Fayre, as this took place in the town centre and footfall was usually excellent.

Action: JB to book Rotary Club Charity Fayre 2027

7. Effective communication with 500+ members

This was tabled after correspondence with a member who was under the impression that Perth u3a hired paid teaching staff to deliver its 'classes'.

It was agreed that communication was particularly challenging with a large membership and a volunteer 'workforce'. The only communication which goes to almost every member is the News Roundup, so we should include short items on a variety of topics which members may not be aware of – liability insurance, Open Meetings online, the role of the GL (admin but not necessarily delivering some or all group content), how the u3a works (all volunteers).

8. AOB

JS noted that attendance sheets for Open Days are quite onerous and time-consuming to produce, and suggested we ask members to sign in instead. This would still provide both statistics and H&S information (eg for fire alarms). The proposal was agreed by the Committee. JS will provide blank forms for each meeting.

Next Meeting: Tuesday 22 September 2026 at 10am in Unit 7