

Yate and Sodbury District Executive Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 5th August 2026 at The Ridgewood Community Centre room 8/9, 244 Station Road, Yate, BS37 4AF.

Present: John Wilkinson (Chair), Ian Merriman (Vice-chair), Cat Riley (Secretary), Rod Dewey (Treasurer & IT Administrator), Craig Hodges (Meetings and Event Planner), Lesley Holman (Membership Secretary), Lutie Van der Park (Assistant Secretary), Vasu Patel (Facebook Coordinator), Robert Cole (Webmaster), Paula Young (Publicity & Newsletter Editor), Janet Smith (Co-Group Coordinator).

1 Apologies:

Julie Spooner (Co-Group Coordinator).

2 Minutes of the Meeting held on 1st July 2026 were approved.

3 Review of Previous Actions.

Month	serial	Who	Action	Status	Progress
2603	05	All	Provide a couple of sentences as a statement about yourself, and send to Cat to collate for website.	Ongoing Closed	04/05/26: A few received. 01/07/26: Ian, Lesley, Paula outstanding. 05/08/26: Majority received.
2605	01	John	Simplify and rationalize the Executive Committee roles, and synchronise website and constitution statements.	Ongoing	30/06/26: No progress this month. 04/08/26: Further work documented in a note entitled 'Yate & Sodbury District u3a Roles & Responsibilities', and presented to August meeting for committee discussion/approval.
2605	03	Lutie & Paula	Agree a new job description to define the Media Manager Role.	Ongoing	30/06/26: Initial thoughts developing, but not yet concluded. 05/08/26: Paula will write up her conclusions shortly.
2605	07	Rod, Ian & Lesley	Define requirements to make the joining and renewal processes more user-friendly. Write to TAT requesting appropriate Beacon amendments.	Ongoing	05/08/26: New system developed and will be available for testing soon. Rod will then need to make some changes to make this active for members.

2606	03	John	Check the source of the tax & insurance requirement for fee earners, and whether it is a necessity.	Ongoing Complete	30/06/26: Investigations have revealed contradictions in insurance advice. Endeavouring to get a ruling from TAT. For Tax, a comprehensive professional invoice is sufficient. 05/08/26: Tax - a UTR is not required. PLI - paid tutors require insurance; it is preferred that paid speakers have their own insurance, but not essential.
2606	04	Rod	Investigate non-zero final balances, and decide the correct course of action for the GLs.	Ongoing	30/06/26: Investigations have resolved some items, including write-offs, but are ongoing. 05/08/26: Largely complete, but Rod is experiencing difficulty with getting a response from some GLs. To discuss with John and determine a means of closing out this action.
2606	05	Ian & Rod	Add the Beacon Guide to the website, but Ian to review titles of the guides relevant to GLs, and rename if necessary to avoid confusion.	Ongoing Complete Ongoing	
2607	01	John	Seek an unequivocal statement from the TAT regarding Tax and Insurance for Fee earners, and/or a copy of their insurance policy.	New Complete	03/08/26: Addressed by action 260603.
2607	02	John & Rod	Produce some practical guidance on PAT certificates.	New Ongoing	03/08/26: Guidance note started. Thus far only contains information available from u3a.org.uk website.
2607	03	John	Update Provision of Services agreement re UTR Number.	New Ongoing	03/08/26: The form has been updated regarding this specific point; a UTR number is not required. Notwithstanding, other aspects of the form require amendment before it may be considered complete.
2607	04	Rod	Review and amend Finance Policy as necessary, regarding signatories.	New Ongoing	03/08/26: Policy updated and sent to Cat and John - their review still to be completed.
2607	05	Julie	Arrange to get 'No Photos' signs increased to A3 size.	New	
2607	06	Rod	Establish if BACS transfers are feasible, and define a process as necessary.	New Complete	05/08/26: Investigation shows that BACS payments can be made, albeit with Treasurer support. Detail in document on Dropbox.
2607	07	Rod	Develop a proposal on variable membership rates.	New Ongoing	03/08/26: options considered and provided on dropbox for discussion.
2607	08	John	Agree with Paula which Anniversary photos she wishes to use for publicity.	New Complete	03/08/26: Photos provided to Dropbox, and Paula has chosen some.
2607	09	John	Create a record of organising the Anniversary event, to assist with any future similar events.	New Complete	03/08/26: Note added to Dropbox 29/07/26 (cursory review done by Lutie).

2607	10	Janet	Discuss member issue with new Art Group GL, with a view to maybe joining once the trial period is over.	New Complete	03/08/26: Contacted both the new GL (Sue Sellars) and the individual, who seems to accept the proposed solution, although has not yet asked to join the new group.
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4 Matters Arising

4.1 Important Information about AGM Resolution

The Trust issued a request that all u3as review a Motion from two branches regarding the activities of the Trust. The documentation also included a proposed Resolution and u3as were offered an opportunity to submit amendments to the Resolution.

The documentation was circulated to the full committee and all responses agreed with the stated Resolution. There were therefore no amendments to submit from Yate & Sodbury u3a.

4.2 Review of the Yate & Sodbury District Constitution

John discussed some potential improvements to the constitution as written, which have been highlighted by his work on Committee Roles & Responsibilities. The Constitution and the desired Committee structure need to be aligned. It was noted that changes to the Constitution are likely to need agreement from the TAT and the Charity Commission.

John requested that everyone review the Constitution and identify any items that they consider need revision.

Action 260801 – All: Review Y&S Constitution, and provide comments on suggested updates to Cat for collation prior to next meeting.

5 Chair's report (John Wilkinson).

5.1 Access to NW Bank Account

- Patrick Mills has been removed as a signatory to the account.
- Tony Sarafian, our previous secretary, and I believe a previous signatory, was erroneously reinstated as a signatory by Nat West (who when contacted claimed that it was a glitch!) He has now been removed.
- Lesley advised her full permissions on the account are in hand, pending submission of a form.

5.2 Simplify / Rationalise Executive Committee Roles

John has completed further work has been done and produced a paper entitled 'Yate & Sodbury District u3a Roles & Responsibilities'. The existing committee structure has been considered and amendments proposed to ensure consistency with our constitution and alignment with our policies, i.e., specifically that it is apparent which individual members of the Committee "own" and take responsibility for the implementation of, and compliance with, the policies.

The paper was discussed at length during the meeting, and the committee was broadly in agreement, however it has led to a need to review the Constitution – see above.

John's paper will be available on dropbox.

5.3 Source of Tax & Insurance Requirement for Fee Earners

5.3.1 Tax Requirement - Need for Unique Tax Reference (UTR)

For tax purposes we are legally bound to check that any service provider we pay is *self-employed* (a sole-trader or limited company). Initially, and arguably somewhat naively, we believed that if a service provider had a UTR HMRC would know their employment status and accordingly that obtaining the service provider's UTR was sufficient. However, it is not, since all taxpayers, whether self-employed or an employee or worker, have a UTR. This part of the action is thus "null and void".

Work is being undertaken to establish exactly what is required for us to check that a service provider is, by HMRC's definition, self-employed. HMRC provide an official tool: CEST (Check Employment Status for Tax) – This is a flow-chart type questionnaire. Ian and I are looking at the tool, and finding out what other u3as do, to determine the simplest and most practical means of satisfying our legal obligation. It is intended that the outcome of this work is a 'Y&SD u3a Guide for Hiring Service Providers' and an update to our 'Provision of Services Agreement between the Y&SD u3a and a Paid Tutor / Instructor / Guest Speaker (Service Provider)' form => New action required.

5.3.2 Insurance Requirement - Need for Public Liability Insurance (PLI)

Currently on our 'Provision of Services Agreement between the Y&SD u3a and a Paid Tutor / Instructor / Guest Speaker (Service Provider)' form we state:

"To complete this form the Service Provider will need a copy of their public liability insurance, a copy of Portable Appliance Test (PAT) certificates as applicable, and their Unique Tax Reference (UTR) number".

The insurance arrangements (cover) note from Gallagher (22/12/2025) does not identify paid tutors, etc. as insureds. Moreover, the u3a's insurance policy is not available on the u3a's website (u3a.org.uk) but, nevertheless, the following information is published in the 'u3a Insurance FAQs':

9. Paid speakers/employer FAQs

9.1 Do we have any cover for Employers' Liability?

No. The basis of the policy is that u3as do not have any employees. This type of cover is very different to public liability and is in fact compulsory for all employers so you must not get yourselves into a situation where you could be judged as employing people. If in doubt, please consult the National Office.

9.2 Does this policy provide cover for outside speakers invited to general meetings or on occasions to specific interest groups, whether paid or not?

Yes it does cover paid speakers at general or interest group meetings but it does not cover paid tutors. Paid speakers and paid tutors are also expected to have their own insurance.

Section 9.2 is relevant. It may, at first sight, seem to be somewhat contradictory as it initially states that the u3a insurance covers paid speakers but then says that they're expected to have their own insurance. It is interpreted as follows:

Paid speakers are covered by the u3a insurance but nevertheless it is preferred that they have their own insurance (since that is the insurance that would be invoked, in the event of an incident, thereby not placing any unnecessary burden on the u3a). So, in practice we'll simply need to ask service providers if they have PLI insurance and make a note of it.

5.4 Main Upcoming Events this Year

Open Day (9th October: Julie, Rod).

Guest Speakers & New members Forum – Monthly

All events are posted on our website.

6 Meetings and Event Planning (Craig Hodges)

- Nothing to report

7 Group Coordinators' reports

7.1 A to O (Janet Smith)

- Art Group 2 – The response for this new group has been excellent. The group has 25 members and more on the waiting list so we are fairly confident that this is viable going forwards. It will start on Thursday 3rd September at Yate Bowls Club and is being led by Sue Sellers. Mike Hayward (Art Group 1 leader) has provided invaluable support to help get this group going. We will still review each month to see where we are with the 3-month trial. The group are having a grant of £50 and a loan of £40 to cover the costs of the first month of room bookings. The group is charging £2 per week in line with Art Group 1. With the numbers they have, the loan should be able to be repaid fairly quickly – I will work this out with Sue. I contacted the person with whom there seemed to be an issue and reassured her that she is in no way being blocked from joining any future Art Group run by our u3a. She seemed happy to have had her opportunity to speak. She has not so far asked to join or go on the waiting list. I also discussed this with Sue.
- Creative Writing 2 have a change of leadership – Beacon has been updated.
- Patchwork – beginners – I had a meeting with Jacki Hebblethwaite on 14th July. She is keen to run a series of workshops for complete beginners to Patchwork. She sent out an advert via Lutie and received more than 20 responses. They had an initial meeting on 30th July and the first group is starting on Thursday with 9 people for 6 weeks. There is no charge for this as Jacki is running it from her home.
- Badminton Group – there are new leaders for the Friday group. They have completed a new Risk Assessment.
- French – had a lovely chat with Jean Powell on the French classes and finances. These classes have been running for many years so she was puzzled why the way the finances are being dealt with was suddenly an issue. I explained to her how it might look from our side and how it was different to most other groups. She agreed to talk to Mary and find out what the room hire cost is. She confirmed that all attendees are u3a members and that Mary has provided Insurance and Payment information – I haven't been able to find these on Dropbox so would like some assistance with this please. I will follow up with her in September after her meeting with Mary.

Janet explained that the arrangement is that Mary (the paid tutor) collects the subs from members, and pays the venue hire and herself. Discussion in the meeting accepted that this issue is not as serious as had previously been thought, as Jean is actively involved in organising the Group, apart from the finances. It was suggested we could liken it to 'outsourcing' the finance element, and are therefore comfortable that it is a u3a group. It was also suggested that perhaps an annual invoice/statement would formalise the situation.

PMN: John suggests the Beacon group records be updated with an appropriate note.

- Book Club 1 – Jean confirmed that there are no associated costs for this group. Room hire is free and the book loans from the library are also free.
- Calligraphy – after chasing Fiona Mitchell (the previous tutor) I received enough information for Lutie to put out an advert for me last week. I can't believe the interest – I have received more than 90 replies! I had a meeting with Fiona last week and we have an idea to run three 2-hour workshops in September/October and then assess the interest for a regular group. She currently teaches other groups and also has successful groups using Zoom which could also be an option for us. Depending on location, she would be happy to have 16-20 people at each workshop. I'd like to get some information on venues and costs if the Committee can help me please? (*NB: details of venues and contacts are listed on the website*). I would be happy to set these initial workshops up with a view to finding a Group Leader if a regular group materialises.

There followed some discussion and advice on initial finance options for the new group.

7.2 P to Z (Julie Spooner, by email)

Nothing significant to report this month.

Janet mentioned that Kevin Kemp will be setting up a Padel group, as following Lutie's advertisement there are already 95 interested.

8 Secretary/Admin Report (Cat Riley/Lute Van Der Park)

Lutie has secured a further £500 grant – this time from Chipping Sodbury.

9 Treasurer's Report (Rod Dewey).

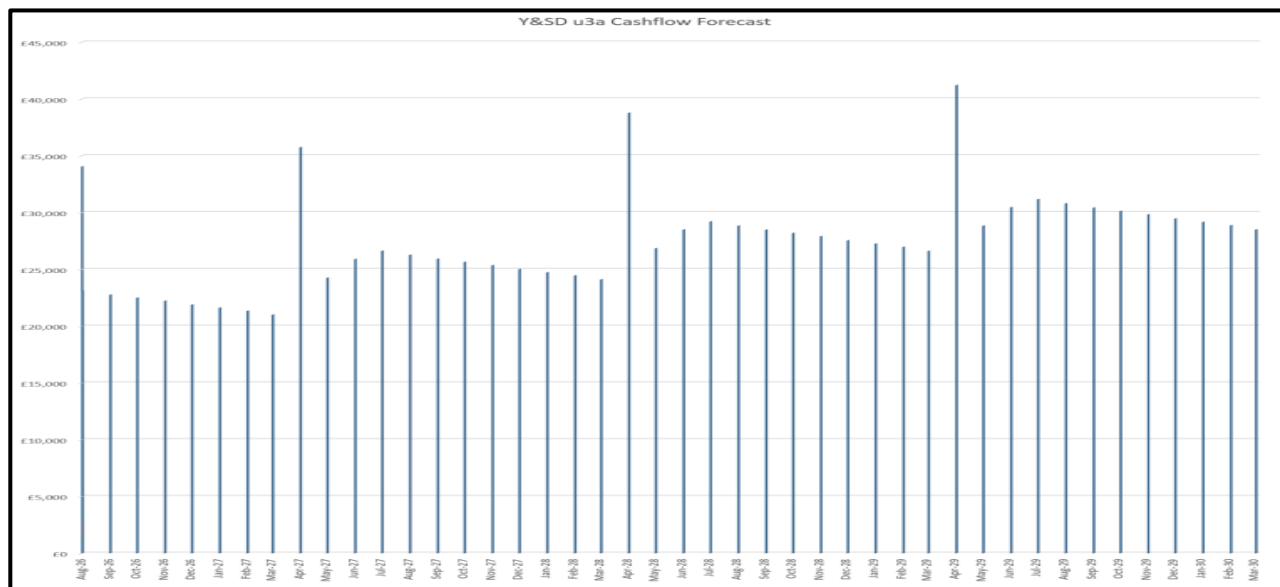
9.1 Funds

	Bank Accnt	Beacon	Delta	Reason(s) for Difference
PayPal:	£299.66	£299.66	£0	Last month's deviation corrected
Nat West:	£23,156.86	£23,206.86	£50	Membership fees to be paid into bank

Total:	£23,456.52
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HMRC have deposited a further £304.44 into our current account on 6 May 2026. Neither John nor I received notification from HMRC.

9.2 Cash Flow Forecast – Aug 26 to Apr 30



Assumptions: 3% inflation; No. of members ~ 2,000.
Healthy balance with a slight upward trend.

9.3 Miscellaneous

9.3.1 Group Accounts End-of-Year Audit

113 groups on audit list - 10 still in progress

Outstanding actions.

- French groups all three are not under u3a control as the tutor is paid by the members and tutor hires the hall. Janet had meeting wait for feedback.
- Quiz Group Low balance often in the red – Did Julie talk to leader?
- Short Mat Bowling Historical ledger balance of £682.40 requested spoke to them do not know about this balance, will send me last year's accounts
- Spanish Beginners No ledger entries – Leader PC crashed data lost, summary to be provided . E-mailed Leader
- Spanish Intermediate Historical £36.13 balance from 2019 - as above – write off the £36.13? E-mailed Leader
- Ukulele 5 – Conflicting replies from group leaders I need help to resolve. Two groups should there be only one. – Summary of problems shared with Julie and John. Need to plan a meeting – still to do.
- Walking – group holiday not u3a open to non-members- Closed

Audit 96% Complete.

9.3.2 Inactive Groups – Non-Zero Balances

- I resolved but £2651.88 still showing in ledgers.
- Nearly half of this is from one group leader.
- I think John has messaged the leaders but I can't find the replies

9.3.3 Other Groups – Non-Zero Balances

Several other groups have non zero balances from many years ago some have been on Beacon ledger since 2019.

9.4 Bacs payments, re action 260706

Proposal detailed and placed on Dropbox for review by Deputy Treasurer. All committee members may review if desired, and provide any comments to Rod and John.

10 Membership Secretary's Report (Lesley Holman)

We currently have 1878 members – 80 new this year.

Nothing else to report this month.

11 Publicity and Newsletter Editor's Report (Paula Young).

11.1 Newsletter

Email went out on Sunday 26th July to all Group Leaders with a deadline of 14th August for any articles. The newsletter will be issued on 1st September.

I have had 1 enquiry showing interest in the role however that person is not able to meet me until September so I will arrange a date to show them what is required, incl the laptop and software.

11.2 Publicity report:

- A short report about a specific group was not possible before the 15th July deadline for the Sodbury Voice Matters so I will pursue this after the summer.
- I have written something for the Boundary and centred it on the Anniversary event and used a photo.
- I sent a short item about the anniversary event with 2 photos to the u3a online Newsletter however think I missed their deadline so have emailed them for further information about the next issue.
- I have also prepared something to send to the u3a Matters magazine.
- I have not yet put pen to paper about the Media Officer role.

11.3 Ageing Better Festival report:

- Many thanks to everyone who came along to help on a very hot and breezy day.
- We had quite a few enquiries on the day and were able to answer any questions. People were signposted to the website for further information and we handed out plenty of leaflets. This will hopefully lead to more members and one lady joined on the day.
- Things to consider for discussion which arose on the day:
 - Should Exec members purchase a u3a t-shirt (like Patrick's and about £10) to wear at these type of events? I had a look on the u3a national website but there were none in their shop so where are they available? Ask Patrick?
 - However, this is the only type of public facing event we do so is it worth it?
 - Should we purchase a u3a branded gazebo and weights? We were very exposed to the elements and several other groups had suitable ones. BUT this involves storage somewhere and again, this is the only outdoor event we do at the moment so is it something to consider in future should the need arise?
- Paula completed a follow-up survey with the Council, where she suggested it would have been helpful if they had contacted contributors earlier, instead of leaving it to us to initiate contact after the advertising came out.

12 Webmaster's Report. (Robert Coles and Ian Merriman)

A new feature has been added to the website, where events can be exported and loaded into an Events Calendar. The calendar can be found as a drop-down menu from the Events tab.

Robert is exploring whether the calendar format can be shrunk down to facilitate individual groups' events.

It was noted that the information on some Groups is out-of-date, including both descriptive data, and also sometimes advertising events that have already occurred. There is also a need for GL's to check whether their member-list includes any lapsed members

Action 260802 - Janet & Julie: Email GLs requesting that they periodically review/update their Group entry on the website.

Action 260803 - Janet & Julie: Conduct a review of Groups with waiting lists, to provide data on numbers of members and numbers waiting, for each group.

13 IT & Beacon Administrator's Report (Rod Dewey)

13.1 Website

13.1.1 Documents added/to be added –

- How to renew online guidance
- Beacon Group leaders User Guide (3 versions, Portrait for printing, landscape for PowerPoint and PowerPoint). This is the training guide I produced but renamed for general use and to add to website.
- Beacon guidelines for Group leaders name change as this is what I sent to new group leaders.
- Awaiting feedback from Ian.

13.1.2 Updates

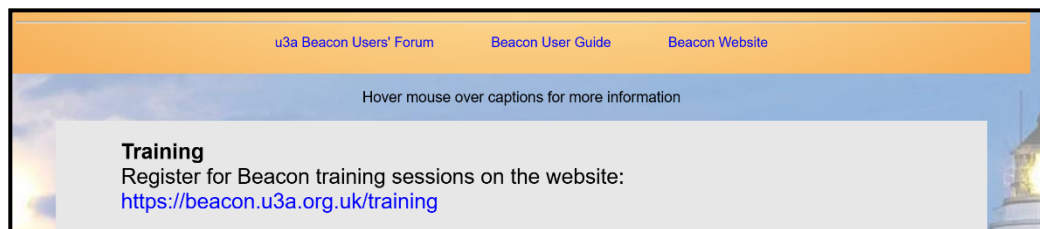
- Two new venues added – Yate Community Centre, Future Padel – Beacon and Website and Venues for Groups pdf.
- Tai Chi website updated, showed all active when all 4 have a waiting list. Text changed to give more info about the skill level of each group. Leader added info to Beacon but did not realise that the website is where members or potential members view the info. She also told me that the Tutor was going to join u3a and be deputy leader. I advised that u3a members cannot be paid for tutoring.
- Other webpages are not updated, i.e Science and Tech, leaders agree I proposed some changes but left it to them to sort out.
- The problem is outdated info is not good when we look at them during new members forum.

13.1.3 Website Group Categories

These are not consistent, some groups appear in sports and general but if more than one group i.e. Badminton this not the case.

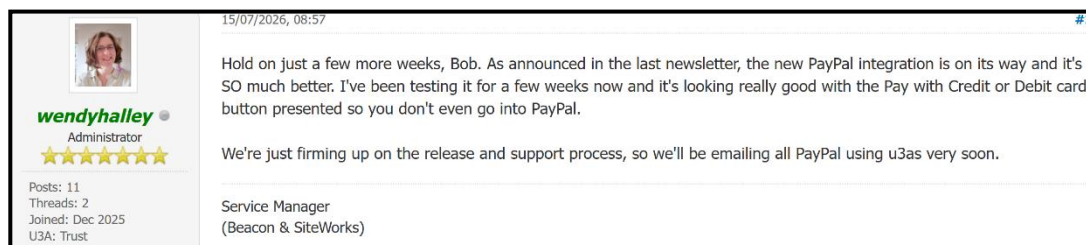
13.2 Training Courses

There is a link to new training site at the bottom of the Beacon Administration (home) page.



13.3 PayPal

Beacon about to be changed to make it clearer if you don't use PayPal –



13.4 Contacts

13.4.1 E-mail from members

- Members do not use the webpage links to contact us, they use the general address which is not monitored closely, and I try to check it regularly and reply.
- Info on Email accounts has been sent out to Committee – do we want to change the Website and/or the Portal contact address.
- File sent with info about our u3a Gmail accounts.

13.5 Variable Membership fees

There is an issue with new members who join in the last couple of months of the membership year.

Some of those joining in March did not realise that renewal action is required, after only being in for a couple of months. We have also had complaints from members who join (or some re-join) in March and some in February, as they are effectively paying £10 for just a couple of month's membership.

- We could extend the grace period by another month, and let members who join in March have the next year included. This is not good as members fees would be shown on the wrong annual accounts.
- There is also the possibility if someone complains I can manually change their renewal date to the next year.
- We could make renewals in March a lower fee say £5, then they would still have to renew in May.

TAT and Beacon charges of £4 + £1 = £5 are due for the current membership on March 31st.

Reduced fees in February or March (or before) should reflect this cost.

We would also need to decide what to do for paper form applications, perhaps they would still have to Pay £10 all year, thus encouraging them to join online.

PMN: These options were not discussed due to lack of time. Rod to propose preferred solution for next meeting.

13.6 Enabling delete on Group Ledger

Group Leaders are unable to delete entries in their accounts since Group Ledger was disabled. Request to restore that ability has been sent to Beacon support, and they have requested an amendment, but this may not be implemented.

14 Ongoing Items for Discussion

14.1 Open Day Planning (Julie Spooner by email)

I have a list of those committee members available to help.

Rod has sent out the invitation to group leaders and has had several responses already.

Craig has checked the venue and we have provisionally booked next year's event for Friday 8th October 2027, as it appears Chipping Sodbury Town Hall is getting pretty booked up. The committee supported this forward planning.

A poster has been provided for review by John, and Paula is adding this event to the Newsletter.

Rod has recorded responses to the invitation – 27 Yes and 15 No.

15 Any Other Business.

Cat asked for advice regarding a message sent to the Business Secretary. A company who have been organising group holidays for some branches of u3a asked that we advertise their justforgroups! brand. It was agreed that this would be forwarded to the Travel Group leader, for information on u3a specific group holidays, but not published to all members.

Action 260804 – Cat: Forward justforgroups! email to Travel Group

The meeting finished at 16.05 pm.

The next Executive Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday 2nd September 2026 between 2pm and 4pm at The Ridgewood Community Centre room 8/9, 244 Station Road, Yate, BS37 4AF.