# Minutes of Monmouth u3a Committee meeting: 20th Jan 2026

Committee Member's Home : 11.10am – 13.15 pm

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| 1 | **Present** (Alphabetical order) | Frank Birch, Jo Handley, Neil Hines, Phil Hewitt, Aidan Hodgson, Monica Lofgren, Averil Macdonald (chair), Jan McLagan, David Milledge, Linda Wright + Clive Buckley (newsletter editor) |
| 2 | **Apologies** | Phil Chadwick |
| 3 | **Minutes of previous meeting** - these were approved. | |
| 4 | **Action Grid – outstanding actions update**<br>**12.4.1:** previous wellbeing officer has been consulted, will review and provide feedback on whether Safeguarding documents require update.<br>**Action 1.4.1:** confirm result of this review.<br>12.5.1: pointer device has been purchased for use with laptop.<br>12.8.1: re-engaging lapsed members – deferred to agenda item 8<br>12.10.3: arrangements have been made for providing tea/coffee at the upcoming convenors meeting.<br>10.8.1 – "Finding missing members" – search has been completed to the extent that is reasonably possible – action discharged.<br>10.9.4 – Classic cars group – this is really a fine weather activity and information will be provided for information emails when relevant – action discharged.<br>10.9.6 – "outreach for well-being grants" – suggested that we should focus on hearing disabilities and investigate whether, or to what extent if hearing is a problem. Depending upon the outcome it may be appropriate to apply for an a grant to support the purchase of relevant portable equipment.<br>**Action 1.4.2:** raise at convenors meeting with a view to requesting convenors to discuss within their groups whether any participants are having hearing related issues affecting their participation.<br>**Action 1.4.3**: based on feedback identify a group that would be suitable for a pilot study<br>**Action 1.4.4**: engage with local providers of hearing equipment to ascertain whether and to what extent they would be prepared to engage with such a study<br>**Action 1.4.5:** introduce a new potential advisor to Bridges on hearing disabilities. | |
| 5 | **Community benefit v Charity Law**<br>**Agreed**: it is acceptable for Monmouth u3a to encourage its members to raise funds for appropriate charitable causes.<br>**Agreed:** that where possible such donations should be made direct by the member.<br>**Agreed:** that under no circumstances should such donations be made via the central committee fund.<br>**Agreed:** care must be taken with wording in information emails and other documents to make it clear that donations to charities are coming from members rather than Monmouth u3a. | |
| 6 | **Charity Commission (CC) Annual Return** | |

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| | Noted that this needs to be completed by April 30th and as our declared income will now exceed £10,000 there are a substantial number of questions that the CC require answers to that have not been provided previously.<br>Action 1.6.1: consider what information needs to be collated to complete the CC return. |
| 7 | **Monthly report – Finance** |
| 7.1 | **Groups N-Z : bi-monthly report**<br>**Noted:** treasurer is still awaiting feedback from Science and Technology on their latest finance report. |
| 7.2 | **Central receipts and payments report**<br>There is currently a surplus of approx. £10,000 which is broadly in line with expectations. A few major bills are outstanding and it's intended to compare actual with projected status at the February meeting. |
| 7.3 | **Use of surpluses from one-off activities**<br>Surpluses in general were discussed.<br>**Decision:** Strength training surplus should be used to reduce class fees for members of group until surplus used.<br>**Action 1.7.1**: Discuss how best to organize this with Lucas Gym<br>**Decision:** Groups such as Theatre and Classical Concerts should use any surpluses accumulated from a trip towards subsidising future trips<br>**Action: 1.7.2:** Discuss how to organise with relevant convenors |
| 7.4 | **Miscellaneous**<br>No response has been received from Bridges yet, re: query on "Dishwasher tea" invoice, so this remains unpaid.<br>Changes to signatories on CCLA investments have been completed. |
| 8 | **Monthly report – Membership**<br>Membership now stands at 985, with 28 members since December committee meeting and 23 so far in January.<br>Attendance at December and January new members meeting( NMM)s was 9 and 20 respectively. Current venue in Library is a little small with 20 attendees. There will be no NMM in February with the next scheduled for March 6th.<br>Feedback from NMM – we could make cost of an activity more visible by placing with date/time/location information top-right.<br>**Action 1.8.1 :** Investigate making this change on the website.<br>Discussed feasibility/value of obtaining information about why members leave. Felt it might be useful to poll members who do not renew at end of subscription year for feedback. Decided to revisit this issue June/July as subscription renewals approach.<br>**Action 1.8.2** : Include item on June agenda. |
| 9 | **Monthly report – Groups**<br>New Spanish beginners group not proceeding due to lack of numbers.<br>New pickle ball group is having its taster/initial session on Saturday.<br>New sewing group has 17 potential members coming to startup meeting.<br>After initial meeting of both pickle ball and sewing, request will be made for a convenor(s) and in the |

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| | absence of a volunteer(s) group will not continue.<br>Quilt, Yoga 3 and Strength Training all have additional members as a result of "advertising" in the information emails. This increase in membership has improved the long term viability of all these groups.<br>The Monmouth u3a Jazz Band have renamed themselves as 2RiversJazz. They have a Valentines-day gig on February 14th which is fully sold out. |
| 10 | **Finance for new groups**<br>There is a lack of clarity as to how taster sessions are funded. For new groups there are two cases to consider. (1) a group with a paid tutor (2) a group that simply needs a venue. There is also the case of a potential new member trying an established activity for the first time.<br>Financing of new groups is to be revisited over the coming month.<br>**Action 1.10.1:** provide thoughts/ideas special cases that need to be considered.<br>**Action 1.10.2:** collate the input from action 1.10.1 and produce a coherent policy for review in February. |
| 11 | **Newsletter discussion**<br>**Noted:** we now have 8 subscriptions for printed newsletters with 14 members not on email, and 3 of the subscription newsletters are probably shared with a partner.<br>**Noted**: the current content of the newsletter is divided between calendar information, replicated in emails, and articles (containing no time critical information).<br>Consensus seems to be that monthly newsletter should be replaced by a periodic magazine published when sufficient time independent material has accumulated to justify. A printed version of this could continue to be distributed by post. In addition, monthly/periodic what's-on information sheet could also be distributed by post.<br>**Decision**: (1) no change for February, (2) seek feedback from printed subscribers of what their requirements are, (3) rebrand "newsletter" as "magazine".<br>**Action 1.11.1:** produce a questionnaire to help establish what recipients of current printed newsletter expect/want from their subscription mailings.<br>**Action 1.11.2:** produce a mock-up of what the March printed subscription might look like. This is envisaged as consisting of a "what's on" sheet, the questionnaire (from action 1.11.1) and a letter explaining that a magazine will be mailed periodically as and when a new edition is available.<br>**Action 1.11.3:** formally inform printed newsletter distributor of imminent changes |
| 12 | **Bridges update**<br>This has been covered in the information emails. It was requested that guidance be given at the upcoming Convenors meeting on how far ahead we expected convenors to definitely need alternative accommodation to Bridges. |
| 13 | **Convenors meeting**<br>Group Coordinator, Finance and Beacon presentations have been finalized with an estimated time for delivering these (including related Q&A) being 1 hour 20 minutes. If Q&A looks like resulting in this being exceeded, further questions will be taken off-line.<br>Coffee/Tea to be provided to attendees as they arrive to avoid interruption during meeting. |
| 14 | **STAR Group going forward**<br>Postponed until February meeting. |

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| 15 | **National year of reading**<br>Monmouth u3a is participating in the "National year or reading" as promoted by the UK government and the National Literacy Trust. Participation is via its reading groups. |
| 16 | **Self defence sessions**<br>Still no response from relevant parties in police.<br>**Decision:** not to pursue this item further. |
| 17 | **Items for inclusion in newsletter**<br>Currently only one article available for February newsletter.<br>**Action 1.17.1:** article volunteered related to German group.<br>**Action 1.17.2:** invite convenors at Convenor meeting to submit an article by end of week. |
| 18 | **Confirm details for afternoon meeting**<br>This is taking place at the Savoy.<br>Tea/Coffee is being provided on the door by the Savoy.<br>We need to exit Savoy by 16.00pm so they can prepare for following event. |
| 19 | **Rolling Calendar –**<br>**Noted:** 2026 insurance cover note has been uploaded to website.<br>**Action 1.19.1**: Need to check insurance cover for Pilates is renewed – 28th January. |
| 20 | **AOB** – opportunity to join u3a delegation visiting House of Lords – March 16th<br>**Action 1.20.1**: consider whether to make a Monmouth u3a nomination for consideration. |
| 21 | **DONM –** Tuesday 17th February, 11.00am – committee member's home |