

MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

held at 2pm on Thursday 3rd September 2026.

3152	Present: Doreen Pascall DP (Chairman); Peter Bradnock PB (Treasurer); Marianne Bradnock (Communications); Jenny Ruffles (Membership Secretary); Paul Frost PF (Technology); Helen Wood HW (Secretary).
3153	Apologies for absence: None
3154	Chairman's Introduction: DP welcomed us all. Identified Social Committee and Celebration lunch for discussion later.
3155	Minutes of the Meeting held on 28th May 2026 These have been agreed by email.
3156	Chairman's Report: The role of the Kent Network was discussed in view of its failure to circulate our Science Day flyers this year. It appears to lack purpose. How does it fit with SE Forum? HW noted there had been problems with bereavements and reallocation of duties. A new committee is available for election but the AGM was not quorate. It costs nothing so worth continuing to support for now to see if it becomes more relevant again. DP would like to find three couples to lead a new Social Committee . Joyce Allen can help with ideas but after many years organising trips feels it is time for others to take this on. PB reminded us that £1897 was transferred from the Social Fund account to the General account before it was closed and some of these funds could be used as "seed" money to establish a new Social Committee. One or two members may be asked to organise individual trips and an appeal for volunteers will be included in the next newsletter. Action DP, Newsletter team.
3157	Finance: PBs finance report and update on online subscriptions were noted PB had circulated a table of income and expenditure for the period to 30 August. He noted that there were a number of large expenditure items for TAT capitation, Third Age Matters magazine, and the Beacon fee. These were all provided for in the budget. Deficit expected this year but we have adequate reserves to cover it with or without £1897 transferred from the former Social Committee. On Line subscriptions – Pilot – See PB report on moving towards members paying their subscriptions online. The new Beacon /PayPal link went live August 19 th and in the absence of PB on holiday, PF and DL reconfigured Sevenoaks u3a link. This will enable members to renew their membership on line via the Su3a Membership Portal by debit or credit card or by PayPal if they have a PayPal account. Subscriptions paid this way are recorded immediately in the members Beacon record. PayPal manages the payment process and charges a fee. The fee charged on credit card payments is slightly higher than the fee specified on the PayPal website. TAT Beacon team and PB are querying this with PayPal. However, the difference in the total fee if all members were to pay this way by credit or debit card would be £61 and not considered a deal breaker. Benefits will include the facility for new members to join immediately directly from a revamped website, attracting younger recruits; members will also be able to update their own records themselves. It will also significantly reduce the workload of the Membership Secretary and the Treasurer and would eventually allow members to download their own membership cards reducing printing and distribution costs. The new payment system is only an additional option for members to join and renew. Application forms will still be available as an alternative. It will be made clear which process is needed to join and which to renew to avoid potential issues with multiple entries on Beacon.

	PB's report describes a phased approach proposed by the working party. A limited trial has already taken place with eight members to date successfully renewing their membership but with varying charges applied. He lists Next Steps as follows: Step 1 Current instructions on how to register on the Members Portal to be reviewed. Agreed EC. Action PB. Step 2 Invite via email some 170 members who pay by Faster Payment "BACS" or by cheque the option to renew via Beacon for 26/27. Provide them with the updated instructions as Step 1. NB Do not include those joining since April. Agreed by EC. Action PB/working group. Step 3 Email will offer options to continue to renew via Faster Payment or Cheque. Jennifer Ruffles (JR)'s name and address will be provided for receipt of cheques. It is assumed those paying by Faster Payment will have Su3a bank details saved. Agreed by EC. NB HW has these deleted after 6 months so suggests including them. Action PB/working group. Members should receive an automatically generated email from the Treasurer rather than from the EC confirming their renewal payment has been made. Personalised messages preferred. Action PB. Steps 4 and 5 were noted and further action will be determined in due course. May take several years before a high percentage of members are using the Membership Portal to join or renew. However, other u3as have achieved this. Action EC.
3158	Membership Secretary: JR's Report was noted – Currently 774 members New Members' Meeting – Booking made for the morning of Friday October 16th with 35 to 40 invited. Membership cards – MB is updating the members leaflet and DL will arrange for this to go to the printers along with membership cards for posting to members. Cards will be of limited term for who have not renewed by the end of September and full term ones for those who have. Actions MB/JR/DL. A note will be sent out in the new year via Beacon introducing the new online system. Action JR.
3159	Group Development – MB's report was noted. Group Organisers Meeting – Only 29 GOs have responded to date perhaps due to summer holidays. Plan to use round tables to make group discussions easier. Pat Lowe will come prepared to talk about organising trips. Risk assessments will also be on the agenda and showing GOs how to check on Beacon if people are paid up members. Will also discourage signing members from other u3as as we cannot check if paid up. New groups – a new Local History group is getting together. Money Matters Group – MB has agreed Debbie Magness can advertise this group in the Knole handbook. Open Afternoon – Details for discussion at November EC. Action MB/HW.
3160	Communications – MB's report was noted. Newsletter – No complaints have been received on the new format but there have been positive comments. PF helped with resolving issues and provided a pdf version for Bob Ruffles to store in the cloud. It is now edited on line. Jerry Gunnell will be on holiday in November so MB will continue to produce it for the time being. It is hoped that Jerry can take over more of the process from the Winter issue. David Taylor will take on the same training that Jerry has already done to enable him to continue to support the team. Actions News team. Unfortunately John Maughan has now left the CommsTech team as he is relocating abroad.
3161	Technology – PF's report was noted. Beacon Administration – DL has provided PF with some training to enable him to take on the Administrator role. It is proposed that PF is registered as the Beacon Trustee Administrator with Administrator rights and

	the focal point for TAT. Whilst PF will have overall responsibility DL should continue to have Administrator Rights with the same access rights except for the ability to unblock emails. EC agreed. Action PF/DL/HW.
3162	AGM – Review – It was a very hot day and the AGM was uneventful with all voting all more or less unanimous. No challenges or questions from the floor. Almost all the attendees had been to a recent monthly meeting and were therefore listed as paid-up members so membership cards were not required for voting. MB provided copies of the AGM papers for those not on line but few of these were taken. PF felt it was a non event and could have been used to get more feedback from members. However, to ensure we have a quorum to meet our legal obligations as a Charity we need to rely on the draw of an interesting speaker rather than a members’ discussion. Trustee Roles – It was agreed that MB’s role should be known as Communications Trustee and PF’s role as Technology Trustee in keeping with their email addresses. PF was appointed acting Vice Chair to stand in for the Chairman where necessary until a VC is identified. It was agreed that we needed to bring potential VCs into the EC via other roles. JR and MB have a list of more contemporary EC roles/titles for consideration. HW requested a copy in advance of the next EC meeting. Action JR/MB. Strategic Review – PF proposed our next EC meeting should be focussed on a strategic review, establishing a mission statement related to what members want from the organisation and how we measure success. Also look for solutions to the issue of recruitment. We have a real problem in finding someone to do something from VCs even down to teas at monthly meetings. PF will provide a template to guide our discussions. Suggest we ask a few “keen people” who might bring new ideas and even be willing to join the EC in some capacity. To accommodate the additional numbers JR suggested the meeting might be held at the hall at Dunton Green where the Art Painting 2 Group used to meet. PB to investigate availability. Actions PF, PB.
3163	TAT AGM 14th October – DP will attend and vote on our behalf. HW reminded the EC that there are two motions tabled 1) calling on the Third Age Trust to carry out a formal consultation within 6 months with u3as on Trust involvement in advocacy, campaigning and public policy outside the promotion of lifelong learning, education and support for member u3as. 2) NB. There is also a second alternative motion calling for the formal consultation only if and when the Trust considers this activity in the future avoiding tying up resources unnecessarily now. We are asked to support this amended version. See notices in emails from Iain Cassidy Action DP.
3164	Kent Network EGM 16th September – DP will attend this and vote for the new committee members on our behalf. Action DP
3165	Welfare and Wellbeing Guidelines from TAT – To be discussed at next EC. Action HW.
3166	Review of Constitution – Since the AGM HW has received approval from the Charity Commission for the three changes to Part 1 of our Constitution. HW has put forward to TAT the additional amendment to Part 2 to change the length of time after which membership lapses after non-payment of subs from one to two months. She will submit Part 2 changes to the Charity commission anticipating these will be approved in time for 2027 AGM. Actions HW.
3167	Social Events (No Report) Celebratory Lunch – To be held as the Winter Lunch at Wildernesse Golf Club in February ‘27. Action DP. New Social Events Committee – Recruitment is to be discussed in detail at the next meeting as part of long term strategy. Guidance for organising trips – will be on the agenda at GOs meeting. Action EC.
3168	Meetings and Talks: Barbara Coleyshaw’s report was noted including speakers to March 2028.

	Speaker for 2027 AGM – Barbara has engaged Adrian and Jane Smith who will be giving us a light-hearted talk about their lives in the music profession and the famous people they’ve met and worked with. The stories will be illustrated with relevant pieces of music.
3169	Smartphones Tablets Computers (STC) Group: Mike Davies’ report. NB Another meeting has been arranged with Sevenoaks School.
3170	Science Open Group: Bob Ruffles’ report was noted.
3171	Technical Support: Bob Ruffles’ report was noted.
3172	Risk Management Policy Review risk register at next EC meeting. HW will circulate her rather longwinded policy and risk register. MB indicated relevant information is available for GOs on their Webpage. Action HW.
3173	Any Other Business
	Date of next meeting Thursday, November 5th, 2pm provisionally at Dunton Green Hall. Other dates: January 7th/14th 2027, March 4th 2027, May 6th 2027. Times to be agreed.

Distribution: Doreen Pascall, Jenny Ruffles, Paul Frost, Peter Bradnock, Marianne Bradnock