

AGM

Pembury u3a

Minutes of meeting held at 2.00pm on Wednesday 1 July 2025

Present:

71 plus members signed in, making the AGM quorate.

Apologies:

Lin Wilkins, Rick Lawrence, Janet Ditchett

Minutes of 2 July 2024 meeting:

These were approved and agreed by the membership. Our Chair will sign these following today's meeting.

Matters arising:

There were no matters arising

Chairs report Maggie Hall

This has been another lovely, busy year for our u3a. New Interest Groups have started up, plus IT Drop In sessions and there have been several very enjoyable holidays and days out. We continue to have a very good number of people at our monthly meetings, in fact we sometimes struggle to find enough chairs!

We continue to welcome a steady trickle of new members joining and now our u3a numbers **355** members. I have a clear memory of our 300th member being celebrated!

I am frequently told how friendly and welcoming our u3a is and I think this is a compliment to be highly valued.

Although there is no Coffee Shop in Pembury, there are several coffee mornings on different days in the village and our own coffee mornings continue to be very popular. Sometimes just half a dozen people, other times we search for more chairs but whatever the number, it's always a lovely chatty occasion.

I am really thrilled that we have managed to revive the u3a BBQ. Our grateful thanks go to Lin and Ian Wilkins for lending us their gorgeous garden as a venue and also for being such wonderful hosts.

We have decided not to have a Quiz this year but the musicians and the hall are booked for a New Year's Eve party!

Claire has come to the end of her term of office as Newsletter Editor and I would like to thank her for all her work in producing a lively and interesting bi-monthly newsletter and for her gentle reminders of the need for items and photos to be sent in for her to include.

I am grateful to Linda Arnsby for agreeing to take over this role but I would like to remind members that the Newsletter can exist only if articles and photos are sent in.

I am coming to the end of my official term of office. I have considered it to be a privilege to be your Chair and I must give grateful thanks to the Committee and Group Organisers for all their support and hard work. I am also very grateful for the teams who have helped me to bring in new events and ideas during my term.

I firmly believe that the true spirit of the u3a is based upon team work and the volunteers who come forward to work in those teams. We willingly give our time to support this great u3a but it's important to remember that any u3a can exist only if a changing cycle of volunteers come forward.

I sincerely hope that this rolling programme of members stepping up to take on responsibilities for a set time, will continue.

Membership report Annie Partridge

Membership as at 1st July 2024 Membership as at 1st July 2025 % increase approx. 327 355 8% . We have had another busy year in the membership department and have welcomed a net increase of 28 new members. This is great news and we hope that many of the new members will be integrated quickly and become part of our volunteer team who help to keep the u3a going. Without their help, our u3a would not be able to operate, so we urge everyone, new or old, please, to help whenever they can. We are delighted to announce that the subscriptions will remain the same for next year - £17 for individuals and £30 for two people at the same address. Traditionally, we have offered a reduced fee for new members joining after 1st July each year of £8.50 for individuals and £15 for two people. This is only fair, and we will be repeating the same offer again this year. We have been able to keep the subscriptions at the same level partly because so many of you answered our request to participate in the Gift Aid Scheme. Many charities use this government scheme to supplement their income. If you were unable to join the scheme previously but find that you do now qualify, please do speak to either myself or our Treasurer Trudy. It costs you nothing and does what it says on the tin - it's a gift from the taxman to aid charities. A reminder that annual renewal subscriptions are not due until 1st January

and I will be writing to you all in early December with details of how you can renew your subscription. Thank you all for your continued support.

Report accepted by members present

Interest groups report Trish Dyson

At present we have 69 active groups, and, as always I would like, on your behalf to thank all those who volunteer their time to make our u3a such a success.

New for this year has been the table tennis group. We have a new organiser for the second Sunday group, making it easier to book tables. Members of both Sunday groups are able to attend the monthly coffee morning at the Camden Arms.

The three Painting-for-Fun groups have had to be suspended for the time being, as the organiser is unable to attend at present. We still have a Paint and Natter group and a Drawing group, but there is scope for someone with painting expertise, or even just an interest, to provide something for those painters who are not able to get together at present.

One of our recent new members, with a background in Geology, is happy to organise a new Geology group, starting in September. This would most likely take the form of visits to places of geological interest.

I have updated the Guidance for Group Organisers this year as well as our procedures for reporting medical incidents. These documents can be found in the Members section of the website.

Our next Sign-up Day will be in the Village Hall from 2 till 3.30pm on Tuesday 2nd September. Before that group organisers are asked to check with their group members to ascertain if they still want to be in the group. It is important that we keep our group details up to date to ensure that places are not taken up by people no longer attending. Whether or not you want to join a new group, do come along, as it is a good opportunity to meet up with friends and see what is going on in our groups.

If you have an interest that is not included in our range of groups, please let me know. It only takes two or three people to form a group, and I will give you as much support as you need to set it up. We do have funding for equipment, if necessary.

The u3a is an organisation which depends on its members to volunteer to the organise groups and run its activities. This is how membership costs are kept so low. Without volunteers, there would be no u3a. If you have not yet contributed to the organisation of a group or its activities, please consider doing so. It is such a worthwhile thing to do, and rewarding when you see friendships forged and people living up to its mantra of Live, Learn, Laugh.

Report accepted by members present

Events and trips out report Bev Hougham

On 29th August last year, Valerie Marianni, Sylvia Russell and myself accompanied 47 members by coach to the Barbican in London to see the show, Kiss Me Kate. We arrived well before they started giving us time to explore the centre, eat lunch or sit in the glorious weather by the Barbican Lake with fountains, water lilies and dark green water, dyed to cut out the reflection of the surrounding buildings. The show was lively, colourful and we received very positive feedback.

In January 57 of us went to the Piccadilly Theatre and thoroughly enjoyed Moulin Rouge. Again we had a couple of hours before the show to eat or shop. As soon as we entered the theatre we felt part of the set as the spectacular scenery was not only on stage. Valerie, Cynthia and I are currently looking to see what we can book next so if there is a show you would particularly like to see, please let us know.

In August 54 of us went to Highclere Castle where much of Downton Abbey was filmed. We had a very interesting tour and the guides in each of the rooms told us some amusing stories about the filming etc. There were also large photos of the rooms as they were filmed with the characters in them. One guide pointed to a door used regularly in the show and a photo of the butler Mr Carson going through it. She then said it was just a cupboard which the actor had to stand in until he was required for the shot. In the basement of the castle was a very well presented Egyptian exhibition telling the story of how in 1922, Lord Carnarvon & others were there when the tomb of Tutankhamen was first broken into. The exhibition was so realistic, we could imagine we were there.

In December 53 of us went to Waddesdon Manor, decorated for Christmas with Sleeping Beauty as the theme. After leaving the car park we walked through a Christmas market which sold very nice mulled wine. Each room in the house was cleverly decorated with scenes from the fairy tale. There was so much to look at. When we finally came out of the Manor there was a spectacular light show projected on the whole building again telling the story of Sleeping Beauty.

In April, 57 of us went to Reading, again by coach. Some went shopping and others to the museum where we saw a full size facsimile of the Bayeux Tapestry. Some of us even had a laugh dressing up in medieval costumes. After a bite to eat, the coach took us to a river boat where we had a very enjoyable trip with an entertaining and informative running commentary by the skipper as we passed very expensive properties and other interesting landmarks. While travelling, we had a tasty, substantial cream tea.

On 7th July we are going to Leeds Castle and Maidstone Gin Distillery. For any different reasons, unusually we have not filled the coach but I'm sure those of us who are going will have a great time.

Angela Cartwright and Valerie Marianne arranged a wonderful winter break for us in Sidmouth. We stayed in the Victoria Hotel which was decorated for Christmas throughout. Many rooms had sea views, the Hotel being just across the road from the beach. As well as outings, we had time to explore the town and nearby the beautiful Connaught Gardens, even looking good in the winter. Some of us managed to climb the 60 steep, uneven steps of Jacob's Ladder after walking along the seafront, past the red stone coloured cliffs, which later featured in paintings done by Janet Richardson's art groups..

On 26th May Angela and Valerie escorted a group to Yorkshire in a Dunwood Coach. Unfortunately I couldn't go with them but I know they all had a great time.

I encourage you all to read the very interesting write up that Angela & Valerie have written for the next news letter.

Report accepted by members present

Treasurers report - Business account Trudy Donachie

In the last year we have continued to maintain a healthy balance in the current account. In April 24 the committee agreed to open an easy access savings account. Once this account was opened £2,500 from the current account was transferred to this account.

The purpose of this additional account was to gain some interest on our monies but also to put aside a reserve fund. This fund would ensure that should, Pembury u3a have to close, we would have sufficient funds to ensure all outstanding payments that needed to be made, can be made.

In the past finance year we have purchased a laminator for the use of the committee in promoting the activities on Pembury u3a and a lap top for the secretary.

The current account holds all the interest group payments so some of the balance of monies in the bank is held on behalf of interest groups. At the end of the financial year the current account held £2,205.48 of interest group funds. Thank you to all of the group leaders who pay me the donations collected, promptly, to ensure sufficient funds are in place to pay all the bills.

As the consolidated accounts show, the current account started the financial year with £7,629.89 and at the end of March 25 we had £6,330.86 in the account. We continue to maintain a healthy balance and budget for the year accordingly.

Last year we made our first application to HMRC for gift aid. This was a fairly painless procedure and resulted in HMRC giving us back £1,726.80. This first application was made for the two previous tax years, so we do not expect any future applications to have such a high return. An application for the tax year 24/25 will be made shortly. I am sure you will agree this a substantial amount and greatly helps us to do the things that we wish to do. A huge thank you for all those that gift aid their membership fee, it is greatly appreciated.

You have been sent a copy of our consolidated accounts and I will be very happy to answer any questions you may have.

Treasurers report – Activities account Graham Hall

Pembury u3a

Activities Account Report AGM 2025

I wish to start by thanking all the activities organisers and their teams for their efforts in both planning these activities and in efforts to budget well in anticipation of the take up by members. This is so easy to state but always an effort for the organisers.

Sometimes these activities show a small surplus and sometimes they don't!! REALITY!!! also wish to thank our auditor whom I have known for some years, for his tenacity in checking what I have presented to him. He never fails to point out how I can do better!

I wish to place on record how positive it is to have our main account treasurer, Trudy, working in tandem. We are able to share issues and sometimes work out our mistakes together. I trust the figures speak for themselves which indicates how each event collects income and the expenditure which results.

Finally, I am looking for a willing helper who could shadow me for a year or so in preparation for the future. I promise you do not have to be a MENSA mathematics graduate!!!! I look forward to hearing from you before I come searching.

Reports accepted by members present

The audited accounts were approved and accepted by the membership

Election of committee members

Chair: John Baker proposed by Graham Hall, seconded by Maggie Hall. agreed by the membership

Newsletter editor: Linda Arnsby proposed by Trudy Donachie, seconded by Angela Cartright, agreed by the membership

Both nominations accepted by the membership present

Resolution:

The management committee of Pembury u3a, having discussed and considered paragraph7iii of the Pembury u3a constitution, wish to present the following resolution

The temporary ill health of the vice chair results in his inability to take up his post as Chair when the present Chair terminates in July 2025.

We therefore propose that the present Chair remains in office until the Vice Chair is able to take up his position as Chair.

This was voted on and agreed by the membership

Response by John Baker

Last year at the AGM I performed a four-hat trick to profile some of the interest groups.

This time however I only have one hat; and I'm shortly going to have to take that one off.

I'm honoured to have been asked to be the chair of Pembury U3A however, due to ongoing medical treatment, I will not be taking up my duties until much later in the year when the course of treatment has finished and I am fully recovered. Thus, I'm going to have to take this hat off and pass the responsibility for chairing the group back to Maggie for the time being.

I would, however, like to take this opportunity to say a few words.

Firstly, I would like to say how grateful I am to Maggie for agreeing to continue to cover for me as chair on a temporary basis.

We will have a more formal transfer of power later in the year, however, as this is the AGM, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Maggie for all that she has done and acknowledge all that she has achieved as well as all the hard work that Maggie has put in over the last three years.

Maggie took on the role of chair in July 2022 and since then has been responsible for and overseen a number of initiatives including:

- Coffee mornings at the Camden arms

- New Year's Eve Party

- Quiz nights

- last Saturday's very successful BBQ

- IT drop ins

- New members welcome pack

- Upgrade of website

- Not to mention a reorganisation of this room for the monthly meeting and introduction of notice boards.

Also, over this period, we have seen an increase both in the membership and the number of interest groups, as well as attendance at monthly meetings.

I would also like to pay tribute to the U3A Management Committee. All the members of the Management Committee work extremely hard. In many ways the U3A looks a bit like a swan; it appears to glide slowly and serenely over the calm waters of Pembury, however, under the surface, there is a lot of very hard work going on. All

the members of the Management Committee are volunteers and without their dedicated contribution we wouldn't have much of a U3A. Indeed, the same could apply to all the interest group leaders.

I was first introduced to the U3A by my cousin's partner who is an active member of the U3A in Ballarat in Australia. I understand that they have around 1,000 members and approximately 100 interest groups. That, however, is in a town of over 100,000 inhabitants. We have a membership of over 350 and over 70 interest groups in a village of just around 6,000 people. I think that is a very impressive achievement.

My wife and I first moved to Pembury in December 2022. We really had no idea what to expect. Would this be the sort of village where after 20 years you are still regarded as being the newcomers. We have been amazed at how friendly the village has been and, in particular, at how welcoming the U3A has been. For me it has been a wonderful opportunity to get to know people in the village and also, via the various walking groups, to get to know the local countryside better as well as the local pubs.

Pembury U3A succeeds due to the number of people who are prepared to get involved as committee members and group leaders as well as those who take on responsibility for a range of other activities, leading walks, organising outings and such like. Once again, I would like to acknowledge the contribution of so many people who make the Pembury U3A such a friendly and welcoming institution.

It is important that we all understand that u3a only work successfully as long as its members are all engaged. I appreciate that many of you have other pressing and important commitments, but I would encourage all of you to get as involved as you can, as without a ready supply of volunteers there is always a danger that the u3a could wither on the vine.

I'm now going to take my hat off and, mixing metaphors, pass the baton back to Maggie.

AOB

Claire is stepping down from her role as newsletter editor. Linda Arnsby will take over this role. Claire was thanked for all the hard work she has done on our behalf.

The AGM was followed by talk on fire safety by the Fire Brigade.