

U3A WEST WALES NETWORK

Minutes

Date: Tuesday 17th June 2025

Time: 14:00 - 16:00

Venue: Bro Myrddin Indoor Bowling Club, Carmarthen, SA31 3BS

1. Apologies and Welcome

David Grindrod (Chair)	Carmarthen
Phillippa Verity Davies (Secretary)	Carmarthen
Jan Manning (Treasurer)	Pembrokeshire
Peter Loughran (Webmaster)	Carmarthen
Colin Luker (u3a Council Rep)	
Carol Matthews	Pembrokeshire
Howard Lillyman	Cardigan
Paul Cullen	Llanelli
Kay Howells	Narberth
Julia Pearson	Newcastle Emlyn
Ruth Smith	Newcastle Emlyn
Hazel Towle	Newcastle Emlyn
Paul Reynolds	Cefn Sidan
Jackie Brown	Narberth
Gwyneth Grindrod (Observer)	Carmarthen
Sharon Swift (Observer)	Cardigan

- I. No apologies received, and the Chair stated that this was the first meeting for a while where all member branches were represented.

2. Minutes of AGM

- II. Paragraph 4.D needs correction to say JM is happy to continue as treasurer not AH as currently noted. The minutes then can then be signed off.

Action:2506.01 PVD Correct minutes and get them signed by DG

3. Matters arising

- I. None identified

4. Reports

a. Chair

- I. There was some discussion at the last meeting about the constitution and, going forward, it is suggested that, given that all members are invited to every meeting, not just the AGM, changes could be proposed at any meeting and formally agreed at the following meeting. This was accepted by the meeting informally without objection or comment.

Decision:2506.01 Changes to the constitution can be proposed at any meeting, members will have the chance to review and discuss within branches and correspondence and a formal agreement to the change, with any adjustments following consideration, will be on the agenda for the following meeting.

- II. The decision at the last meeting was that until the next AGM, when it will be reviewed, all meetings will be held at the current venue. Meetings will also continue to be PM while at this venue.
- III. Authority for PVD to claim expenses for the biscuits was agreed.
- IV. As no vice chair has come forward, in any absence by the chair, the proposal is that the role will be shared between the secretary and treasurer, there were no objections from the meeting to this proposal.

Decision:2506.02 No Vice Chair will be appointed, when needed other officers will step in.

- V. The Chair outlined a plan for the three network officers to visit branches, by invitation, during either their monthly meetings or committee meetings, as they prefer. This is intended to address questions from members such as: What does the network do? What can the network do for us? We've tried to address the answers as best we can on the web site home page but are also keen to engage directly. PL stated that the objectives were on the web site and could be seen there.

Action:2503.02 All Those present to discuss with branch committees whether to issue the invitation.

b. Treasurer

- I. JM reported that £132.75 is our current balance. Our only expenses are venue hire and the last of these was Cardigan, as Narberth met the cost of the AGM venue. Hosting branches have often met such costs while meetings were rotated across the network. Now that we plan a fixed venue and, as after today's costs the balance will fall below £100, we need to agree a capitation of 10p per member across all branches. As per the constitution this can be raised in July. After discussion this will not become a fixed annual charge but only as required by the financial position.

Decision:2506.03 A Capitation of £0.10 will be made in July. This was proposed by HT and seconded by KH carried with no objections

- II. List circulated within the meeting for email addresses for the formal request for funds to be sent to. The request will include BACS details for payment. It was also noted that HT is still the third signatory for the bank which needs to be kept under review as she is no longer a branch Chair.

c. Secretary

- I. PVD reported that there is now a specific gmail address for the secretary with an associated google drive where all network documents are being

stored e.g. minutes and constitution. She also stated that she was happy to share the documents on that drive with any one who wished to have 'commenter' access, which would allow them to review and suggest edits to the documents.

Action: 2506.03 All Provide email addresses with a google account to PVD so that she can share documents with you, if you wish to review using Google facility.

- II. The plan is for the minutes to be with the chair for his review within 48 hours and to the attendees within the week. Corrections and omissions should be emailed back so that the final corrected version can be circulated to attendees and branch chairs and published on the website in a timely fashion.
 - III. PC thanked the secretary for her efficiency and the chair concurred.
- d. Webmaster
- I. The network's site uses Siteworks and is up and running. All 4 Welsh networks are on a shared hosting platform. There are some differences about how the networks use the site. South Wales have a lot of publications there, the others publish less, some with minimal information.
 - II. There was some discussion of the content on our page and a view that it is mainly one for use internally. PVD reported that she had had some recent contacts of those offering services via the site.
 - III. Currently officers' contact details are on the home page, the email addresses are not accessible but open a contact page which will then send an email.. The phone numbers are also currently published, after discussion it was decided that that information should be removed. PVD said she had noted a number of junk texts and whatsapp messages since her phone number had been published. The meeting felt that we should recommend to branches that all personal phone numbers are expunged from their web sites. Secretaries note: I have not recorded this as an action in the minutes, this is up to the attendees to make the recommendation to their branches if necessary.

Action: 2506.04 PL to remove officer phone numbers from WWN site

Action:2506.05 CL to circulate the link to the Wales Network site

e. Branch Reports

- I. These are appended to the minutes. Note these are not simply the original reports as submitted but contain additional notes made by the secretary during the meeting.

5. Constitution

- I. This item was deferred

6. Peer Support Groups

- I. This was discussed briefly and there were a couple of suggestions to note: Those holding roles could document what they felt was good practice which could then be shared. It was pointed out that with more technical roles this may not be a good fit.

Attendees could share details of those in their branch that were good contacts for specific topics (with their permission of course)

- II. CL pointed out that there are resources at national level that can help on most topics
- III. It was agreed that this was something that could be exploited further and for suggestions to come to the next meeting. It appears that Speakers may be a particular point of interest.

7. Meeting Objectives

- I. This item was deferred

8. Involved Holidays (walking)

- I. PVD will circulate this information to the attendees in parallel to the minutes.

9. AOB

- I. There was no time to take this item but earlier, following the branch reports, it was clear that unless we wish to have a much longer meeting the format needs to change with branch reports being circulated in advance and each branch only having a short slot to expand on any points on which there are queries or to provide updates.

Action:2506.06 Officers To review and propose an alternate time table for meetings and reports

10. Date, Time and Venue of next meeting

- I. This venue, 2:00 - 4:00 Tuesday October 21st

Branch Reports

A. Newcastle Emlyn

- I. Membership = 211. July is the start of our membership year and we are currently up on last year's figure of 198. We have had a few members move away during the year and 3 leave due to disagreement so our current number shows we are still increasing at a steady rate.
- II. There are currently 31 groups. We have lost the singing group because the group leader left and, so far no one else has taken it on, and we've also lost the gardens group because the group leader stepped down and no one else has taken it on. There is talk of starting a second wine appreciation group and a second "Don't get me started" group. Also a local history group is beginning.
- III. Our AGM is in July. HT is stepping down as chair but is willing to stay on the committee. We currently have one nomination for the post. The secretary is also stepping down.
- IV. We celebrated our 30th anniversary on 11th June with lunch at The Cliff in Cardigan and members provided house entertainment. There were 80 attendees at the lunch and the entertainment included a conjurer and some recitation plus the committee acted out a murder mystery type poisoning. Members made their own way to the venue, though there was some ad hoc car sharing.
- V. We are again arranging a trip for our August meeting. This year we will be going to Picton Castle, including a conducted tour round the castle and optional buffet lunch
- VI. CL is arranging a craft display in September as an open day
- VII. The branch has submitted its Charity commission application and is awaiting feedback.
- VIII. We have large meetings in the rugby club, and use a mixture of venues including homes for groups.

B. Carmarthen

a) Current Membership

- I. There were 156 members just before the AGM and they are increasing slowly, even though there were a few nonrenewals

b) New Groups

- Philosophy
- Singing Together
- Start Speaking Welsh

c) The committee

The following stepped down at the AGM

- Ann Kitchen
- Ann Tyson
- Eleanor Baird
- Phillippa Verity Davies

- I. Les Murphy was nominated and appointed to the committee and also accepted the role of Vice Chair.
 - II. Richard Swann is the new Chair and Susan Edwards the Secretary, a Network Rep is yet to be appointed.
- d) Points of Note
- I. The new Welsh beginners group have had an article published in Cwlwm about the group.
 - II. Ann Kitchen was able to get a significant amount of craft courses funded by Pendine Enterprises, including bread making.
Action:2506.07 PVD To ask Ann Kitchen to provide contact.
Secretary's Note: Ann has asked that people contact her for the information on 1annkitchen@gmail.com or 07968 352969
 - III. In addition, visits to the Cross Hands depot of Castell Howell and Cwm Environmental at Nant y Caws have been made in the last few weeks and were both very interesting according to attendees.
 - IV. There was also a visit to the Escape Room in St Clears.
 - V. We also had a presentation from Nigel McCall the photographer, though his talks are chargeable so we asked for a contribution from attendees.
- e) Any current issues or concerns.
- I. Lack of members willing to step forward to the committee or lead groups.

C. Cardigan

- I. Our numbers are 184, a drop on last year's peak but we have just started the new membership year.
- II. We have a number of new groups started recently. Desert Island Disc, Welsh conversation, Art and MOTO. First and last of these were established as a result of hearing about them in other branches at the network meetings. Desert island discs had a slow start but the MOTO group has really taken off with cinema trips and coffee meetups.
- III. We are holding our Open Day this month on Thursday 26th June at 2.00pm in the Guildhall. Any member of the network is welcome to come along. A grant was received from the national organisation, thanks to CL. This will pay for hire of the venue and the refreshments Other branches welcome to come and get ideas for their own recruitment events.
- IV. We held an event on April 8th, called draw a bird day for members. There were 136 entries, some of which were excellent displaying a wide range of talent. This celebrated a national day little known about commemorating a child who visited veterans after WWI. That exhibition was held in Rhosygilwen Oakhall and was open to the public to see entries. We invited Carmarthen u3a to join us and that was well received by them. We secured the venue FOC as there was an expectation they would gain income from providing refreshments to visitors. We have made the same arrangements for next year. The event was well attended and appreciated by all who came.
- V. As usual our main problem is getting members to lead groups, they are happy to come along but do not want responsibility and any work involved organising them.

- VI. We are looking to take some initiatives in the areas of Castle bagging and standing stones.
- VII. Ceredigion car park charges are almost certainly going to impact attendance at the open day and probably also at the monthly meetings

D. Pembrokeshire

- I. Total Membership is 445 which is made up of 374 members who pay by cash/cheque, 59 who pay by bank transfer and 12 Life Members (over age 90 who do not pay).
- II. We have just one new group, Embroidery and Quilting, a small group which is held in a member's home.
Our Local History group is proving to be very popular and the Group Leader has suggested that any new members to the group should be directed to a new group, so we are currently looking for another Group Leader. The original group has proved popular because the leader organises a visit to a place of local interest preceded by an optional lunch all of which involve a lot of hard work and dedication.
- III. We recently held a very successful event entitled 'The Graham Goodeve Day' which was very well attended, the event was catered so although it involved a considerable amount of planning at least the committee didn't have to cook, serve and wash up afterwards! The presentations included one on Farming in Pembrokeshire in the morning and a member who was a musician, historian and author gave a talk about connections to music in the county in the afternoon. There was also a video of the founders of the events. As only 10 percent of members attended it was a little disappointing
- IV. Our Committee was appointed at the AGM in December and there have been no changes since then.
- V. Our new Site Works website is now up and running and has helped to attract new members, many of whom complete the application form on-line and e-mail to the Membership Secretary.
- VI. The wind ensemble are playing at the Haverfordwest festival, but at the moment the dates keep changing.

E. Narberth

a) Membership (May-April)

- I. 148 renewals , 19 not responded as yet & to be followed up , 16 leavers (1 deceased) .Since Dec 2024 19 we have had new members and a number of enquiries still in pipeline. This is roughly similar to most years.

b) Groups

- I. New groups include
Reality Book Group (non-fiction), which has quarterly meetings. People talk about the books they have read to spark other people's interest, rather than everyone reading the same book.
Short Walks & Photography, in combination, to start soon
A planned 6 month course Short Story Writing to start in September This is being run by a member who is a published author and has run similar

courses previously. This may be opened up to other branches, depending on take up.

II. Some groups are taking an extended break over the summer.

c) **AGM in May**

I. new chair - Kay Howells, new Treasurer - Red Cottam, membership secretary - Ann Maidment, Secretary - Jackie Brown. 1 new committee member elected but subsequently stepped down, 2 previous committee members stepped down, total committee members is currently 5

d) **Current issues .**

- I. We are in the process of moving onto the Beacon System. Those of us attending the network meetings have really pushed this within the branch because of what we have heard about the system from network members.
- II. Concern about lack of interest to be committee members, and more broadly in the membership, how do we engage more men. There was a fair amount of discussion around this and the pitfalls associated with gender specific groups.

F. Llanelli

I. This report is for the activities of the Llanelli U3a from January 2025 to end May 2025

e) **Membership:**

I. 87 May 2025, (90 January 2025).

f) **Committee**

- I. The Llanelli AGM was held on 4th March 2025. Two committee members stood down; having served the time allowed by the constitution. Three new committee members have come forward. Committee standing now is 9 committee members (6 in 2024). The vice chairman vacancy is now filled.
- II. Membership development subcommittee formed in April and has made a great start with ideas to make the Llanelli U3a more well known in Llanelli. Last year's open day did not result in any new members, despite a lot of work and costs, including a wide circulation of leaflets and posters. Based on discussion around the table Llanelli may consider a different timing for a recruitment drive this year

g) **Past Activities**

- III. Links with Pontarddulais U3a have been established. Sharing of events started in January 2025. Llanelli members from a previous survey (November 2024) wanted to have events on weekends and evenings. The Pontarddulais U3a walking group meets on Saturday, twice a month and the monthly meeting/lecture is an evening event.
- IV. The above mentioned survey resulted in several requests for activities. However, finding people willing to lead the activities has been a problem. To incentivise new leaders and as a way of showing appreciation to existing group leaders, a tea was held in Llanelli House.
- V. Beacon has been adopted by Llanelli U3a, membership cards and lanyards have been provided to members. This enables members to be identified when attending any Pontarddulais events. Group leaders are not using it as yet.

- VI. The April coffee morning was attended by Rhian Bowen-Davies, Older People's Commissioner for Wales. Her talk about the commission was well received by members. She is highly recommended as a speaker to other branches.

h) **Future Activities**

- I. The June coffee morning will be attended by Dŵr Cymru, who will explain their outreach programme aimed at helping customers save water. This may be of interest to other branches as there are some associated giveaways. To Engage with them for your own branch look for the outreach program on the website.
- II. Planning for the annual lunch is underway.

G. Cefn Sidan

- I. We currently have approximately a little over 50 members. 9 of whom are on the committee.
- II. We continue to offer a variety of activities such as Coffee Morning, and our Main Meeting which always has a guest speaker. There is an Historical Group, again for this we have a guest speaker, a Thursday Luncheon and Sunday Luncheon Groups that visit eateries near and a little further. We have a Craft Group, two Walking Groups offering different levels of challenge, A Bus Pass Explorer Group, Discussion Group and Musical Treats Group and a monthly Quiz. There's a book swap every meeting. We also have a Gardening Group and a Bucket List Opportunity where members can add their wishes to a list and we try to arrange an activity based on this eg a visit to The Royal Mint
- III. A survey related to an application to be the Carmarthenshire town of culture identified 84 different groups within Burry Port, so lots of competition for members. So happy with membership numbers because of that in a community of only just over 4000. We offer 16 or 17 regular events a month and a wish list generated by members for one off visits or events