

# u3a SWN – What next for SWN?

## Meeting Notes – 23JUL25 at 6pm Zoom

### Present :

Ken S (Chair), Derek S (Chepstow), Nicky L (Council), Adrian KJ (Swansea), Anthea W (Torfaen), Kate T (Crickhowel) Averil M (Monmouth), Ian W (Maesteg), Julie K (Newport), Lyn S (Newport), Michael F (Usk), Rhiannon W (Gilwern), Valerie A (Crickhowell) David H (Gilwern), John W (Bridgend)

### Key takeaways

- The South Wales Network (SWN) agreed on its primary purposes: sharing best practice, identifying common problems and solutions, facilitating collaboration between U3As, and acting as a conduit between U3As and the Council.
- Derek S volunteered to become Treasurer and proposed closing the SWN Lloyds Bank account and transferring funds to Chepstow U3A's Activities account, which was approved.
- John Williams confirmed he wishes to step down as Minute Secretary; a replacement is needed.
- The next SWN meeting is scheduled for **Monday, October 20th at 6:00 PM** via Zoom.
- An All Wales meeting will be held in Newtown on **October 6th** with the CEO of the Third Age Trust attending.
- Derek S will host a meeting for U3A secretaries on **October 2nd** to share best practices and discuss common issues.

### Topics

#### Purpose of the South Wales Network

Ken: Proposed three main purposes for the SWN: sharing best practice, identifying common problems and solutions, and finding ways for U3As to work together.

<https://wales.u3asite.uk/south-wales-network-home/>

- **Discussion**

- Lyn: Suggested SWN could serve as a conduit between U3As and the Trust
- Nicky: Confirmed this would be useful, particularly for disseminating information
- Rhiannon: Shared that Gilwern U3A found the network's best practice sharing invaluable, especially regarding Beacon implementation
- Ian: Added that facilitating contact between U3As is important, especially for smaller U3As
- Derek: Noted that sharing best practice has been one of the main points of the network over the past 3-4 years
- Nicky: Suggested setting specific topics for meetings would encourage attendance from U3As interested in those topics

- **Conclusion**

- General agreement on the three proposed purposes plus acting as a conduit between U3As and the Council
- Setting specific topics for meetings was considered a good approach

### **Executive Officers and Resources**

Ken: Asked for volunteers to fill executive officer positions, particularly for a secretary to replace John.

- **Discussion**

- Adrian: Expressed interest in joining the committee but noted he was new and would be wary about taking on the secretary role immediately
- Derek: Volunteered to take on the treasurer role if the committee approved closing the SWN bank account
- John: Clarified he is the Minute Secretary, not the full Secretary, and wants to step down

- Ken: Noted that with Derek as treasurer, himself as chair, and a vice chair already in place, they only need someone to take over from John
- **Conclusion**
  - Derek was approved as Treasurer
  - Still need a replacement for John as Minute Secretary
  - Adrian may help identify potential volunteers from Swansea U3A

### **Banking Arrangements**

Derek: Proposed closing the SWN Lloyds Bank account and transferring funds to Chepstow U3A's Activities account.

- **Discussion**
  - Derek: Explained the account hasn't been used in about 4 years and might be closed due to inactivity or start incurring charges
  - Nicky: Confirmed banks are now charging community groups £5 per month
  - Lyn: Asked if the SWN funds would be ring-fenced within the Chepstow account
  - Nicky: Explained that Beacon's finance system effectively ring-fences individual funds
  - Derek: Estimated there is about £350 in the SWN account
- **Conclusion**
  - Proposal approved to close the Lloyds account and transfer funds to Chepstow U3A's Activities account
  - Derek to become Treasurer of SWN

### **Communication and Data Privacy**

Ken: Discussion arose about communication methods and data privacy requirements.

- **Discussion**
  - Ken: Suggested he could use a template email with the network contacts

- Derek and Nicky: Insisted Beacon must be used for networks due to GDPR requirements
- John: Noted there's a distinction between GDPR regulatory framework and the Trust's data privacy policy
- Nicky: Emphasized the Trust requires secure communication platforms
- Derek: Clarified that the South Wales Network has Beacon for Networks, regardless of whether individual U3As use Beacon
- **Conclusion**
  - SWN will continue to use Beacon for communications
  - Ken can be given access to the SWN Beacon account to send communications

## **Officer Meetings**

Derek: Proposed reviving meetings for specific officer roles across U3As.

- **Discussion**
  - Derek: Explained that officers (chairs, vice chairs, secretaries, treasurers) change regularly and meetings to discuss roles, problems, and successes would be beneficial
  - Derek: Offered to host a meeting for secretaries in October
  - Nicky: Suggested the Council could help find speakers for topic-based meetings
- **Conclusion**
  - Derek will host a meeting for U3A secretaries on October 2nd via Zoom
  - Similar meetings for other officer roles could follow

## **Council Updates**

Nicky: Provided updates on Council activities and upcoming events.

- **Discussion**

- Nicky: Announced two upcoming cross-Wales Zoom FAQ sessions – one on the Constitution and another on Facebook led by Sheila Crawley
- Nicky: Announced an **All Wales meeting in Newtown on October 6th** with the CEO of the Third Age Trust attending
- Nicky: Noted the Trust will pay travel expenses for attendees
- Adrian: Committed to attend and will try to bring others from Swansea
- **Conclusion**
  - All U3As will receive invitations to the All Wales meeting
  - The Council can help find speakers for topic-based network meetings

#### **Action items**

- **Ken**
  - Create a synopsis of the Secretary/Minute Secretary role to be distributed to network members
  - Email all U3As in the South Wales Network to seek a webmaster
  - Send Nicky a topic list for potential speakers
- **Derek**
  - Work with Michael Young to close the Lloyds Bank account and transfer funds to Chepstow U3A's Activities account
  - Host a meeting for U3A secretaries on October 2nd via Zoom
- **John**
  - Send out meeting notes from this meeting
  - Clean up the mailing list by sending confirmation requests to current contacts
  - Continue as Minute Secretary until October 20th meeting
- **Nicky**

- Send out invitations for the All Wales meeting on October 6th in Newtown
- Organize cross-Wales Zoom FAQ sessions on Constitution and Facebook
- **Adrian**
  - Discuss with Swansea U3A committee about potential volunteers for SWN roles
  - Attend the All Wales meeting on October 6<sup>th</sup>

## **COMMENTS**

### **Derek S – 30JUL25**

The u3a Secretaries Meeting is confirmed for **October 2nd at 6pm on Zoom**.

All SWN Secretaries are welcome to attend. Details and an Agenda will be sent out in due course.

Note – it is a Secretaries meeting, not a Treasurers meeting as stated later in the minutes.

Chepstow u3a will not support any plans to reduce our representation on Beacon to only one representative.