

South Wales Network meeting 11th February 2026

Notes of meeting

1. Present

17 member U3a's represented

Kenneth Syme (Chair / Forest of Dean) Lyn Street (Vice-Chair / Newport) Chrys Short (Secretary / Abertawe) Derek Shottin (Treasurer / Chepstow) Nicky Lee (council member) Sue Hawking (Sully) Rhiannon Willaims (Gilwan) Karen Green (Network Link) Derek Pope (Abergavenny) John Davey (Cynon Valley) Anthea Wellington (Torfean) Avril MacDonald (Monmouth) Helen Kircaldy (Chepstow) John Williams (Ystradglynais) Micheal Faraday (Usk) Elizabeth Eustace (Cowbridge) Julie Kennedy (Newport)

2. Apologies - Val Adams

3. Permission to record. Agreed.

4. Notes of meeting 20th October 2025. Accepted as an accurate record

5. Matters arising. None

6. Officer Reports

A. Chair – A meeting of the network officers will be held in the spring.

- Proposal that the network consider running a study day, possibly on the subject of Welsh Culture. Members to consider this proposal. Please send any suggestions to Ken and for discussion at our next meeting.
- Welsh Language groups - Would there be potential for Welsh language groups to work together? How to make use of the National subject advisor? For further discussion at our next meeting
- Is there potential for members from one u3a to join a group in another u3a if there are not enough members in their home u3a to form a group. How could this be facilitated. For discussion at our next meeting

B Secretary

- Notes will be sent to the chair within 3 days and then sent to members for corrections on matters of accuracy.

C Treasurer

- No change in the Network financial position. This includes £119 towards the Eisteddford to be held in Newport in 2027. (Newport u3a is making contact with the organizers to explore how they can be involved)

7. Reports from u3a representatives.

Chepstow -3 new groups established and away days planned. A very successful Christmas party and coffee morning

Newport- Held a craft fair and concert. Celebrating VE day by compiling members personal accounts. Members showing a lot of interest in Spanish, Also have established a pottery group.

Girwan – an item in Third Age Matters (TAM) on Genealogy. Making links with wider community and recruiting committee members remains a challenge in common with most u3as.

Usk – recent AGM – but no-one has come forward as chair yet. But a very successful puppet show held. Raised a query regarding insurance cover for guests of members ? Are they covered? Requesting clarity regarding 'Canva design products' Confusion about whether u3as would be eligible for the charity version. Nicky Lee will raise this with the Third Age Trust (TAT).

Torfean -Reported that their new constitution only took three days to be approved. A new coach outing group has proved very popular and they want to develop this further. Newport and Monmouth who have experience in running coach trips offered to support and share their documentation.

Monmouth - now have 1,000 plus members. Have put focus on social activities and the needs of solo members. Also negotiation of discounts for members. Have now 104 special interest groups (from a base of 40) Also raised money to contribute to flood relief. Those present at the meeting suggested that this should be featured in TAM. Karen Green stressed the importance of us showcasing what we are doing and would like to include this in the National Network newsletter. Hobby Corner - has proven a good way of getting people connected – not a special interest group but just people who are interested in a particular hobby

Cynon Valley – challenges in recruiting a new chair and treasurer but have now succeeded. Lot of activity and people getting engaged to 'make it happen' Also stressed how important handovers are – esp for Treasurers (Nicky confirmed that shadowing to support new treasurers is acceptable)

Cowbridge -On Facebook now. Quiz on 23rd – invite has gone out to other u3a's. New groups table seems to be working well new groups such as family history and Spanish – trying to merge fluent and new speakers. Looking at reasons why people leave or do not renew their membership.

Ystradglynais - is a potential new u3a. John Williams reported they are planning their first meeting soon. Support from our network was offered and Ken will make further contact.

Forest of Dean - members seem reluctant to engage with social media so look at alternative ways of encouraging engagement

8. Report following SW Network Treasurers meeting on 15th Jan

- 13 members attended and discussed amongst other things 'Financial Matters 2025' (which is currently being updated) and what needs to be submitted in the annual report to the Charity Commission. It was noted that Gift Aid submissions are increasingly under scrutiny. All present agreed this was a very useful meeting which allowed treasurers to share best practice and challenges.

9. Report from Wales Council Representative

- New national constitution – is due to go before the board
- All Wales meeting – 30th of March in Newtown. No invites sent yet as more work being done on finance arrangements and the format of sessions
- The council focused its January meeting on small U3a's and trying to identify their needs and what TAT can do to support
- The existing role descriptions are not that clear or helpful and are being reviewed.
- Health check has been distributed and has proved very useful
- Website – the new map has gone live . Please let Nicky know if there are any issues with this

10 AOB

Network link – now using Network page to help link members

Speakers -any lists need to specify how far the speaker is prepared to travel

Days out - suggestion that when a u3a is planning to visit another town they contact the local u3a to explore whether there is potential to meet or do some joint activities.

11 Future meeting dates

SW secretaries – 7th May 6pm via Zoom

SW Network AGM – 13th May 6pm via Zoom

SW Network Autumn meeting – 22nd September -6pm via Zoom

As it had previously been agreed the network would meet four times a year, Ken will look to add an additional meeting