Hastings and Rother u3a

Minutes of 2026 Annual General Meeting

2.00pm 27th July 2026

Held at St Peter's Community Centre, Church Street, Bexhill, TN40 2HE

82 members attended the meeting which was therefore quorate.

1. Welcome

Chair of H&R u3a, Richard Stanton, welcomed members to the meeting and introduced the current committee. He asked that attendees switch off or mute their mobile 'phones.

2. Apologies for Absence

Bob Baker, Maggie Henderson, Sally Phillips, Hilary Rhodes, Denise Leary, Valerie Sprott and Lindsay Sprott

3. Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting

The minutes of the AGM held on 28th July 2025, which were on the website and had been distributed with the AGM notice, were presented as a true record of the 2025 AGM.

The motion to accept the minutes was proposed by Robert Hadland, seconded by Richard Collisson and carried unanimously by a show of hands.

4. Matters Arising

None.

5. Treasurer's Report and Accounts. Josephine Noyce

The Treasurer's report was distributed at the AGM.

(Copy attached as a separate document).

The majority of trips and events had been self-funding. The Christmas Party had been subsidised from our reserves.

Capitation is the amount of the membership fees that we pass on to the u3a nationally. The costs for the direct mail of the TAM magazine will reduce in future years, as fewer members opt to receive it; we now charge £4.50 as a separate cost to members.

Costs for room hire such as St Peter's and The White Rock have been increasing.

We are also now being charged by the bank for processing cheques, even though we are a charity. There is no charge for bank transfers or card payments this should be the preferred method of payment for members to help reduce costs.

We spent £3,485.50 on equipment this year. The main cost was the purchase of laptops for 6 committee members. This was essential to ensure that when a committee member retires, the replacement officer has access to the essential information needed.

We also purchased a second SumUp machine for £130, for collecting fees and the costs of trips.

There was a deficit of £3,263.41 for the year. (£35,064.52 In and £38,327.95 out). This was met from our reserves.

At the committee meeting in September, recommendations will be put to the committee about future spending and the level of reserves we need to maintain.

There was a question from the floor.

Derek Hussey asked if we will need to increase membership fees?

The Treasurer explained this will be considered for 2027/28 year. The Chair stated that more information will be given in the autumn newsletter after the committee meeting.

There was a comment from the floor.

Richard Collisson, who completes the Gift Aid return on our behalf, stressed the need for members to tick Gift Aid on the membership form, if they are a tax payer, this adds significantly to our income.

The Treasurer thanked the Assistant Treasurer, Ewa Goulding, for her support and help, particularly in regard to processing cheques using the mobile phone banking app.

The Treasurer also gave special thanks to Caroline Brewer, the Social Team Convenor, who was thanked for her organisation of the trips and events we have enjoyed. None of them ran at a loss.

There was a question from the floor. Do we have Public Liability Insurance?

The Treasurer explained that this was included in the capitation we pay to the u3a nationally.

There was a question from the floor. Thank you to the Treasurer for the detailed accounts, but could the accounts be issued in advance of the AGM, so that members had the time to review the information?

The Treasurer apologised for the late delivery of the accounts.

Also, would it be possible for the social events to be grouped under one heading?

The Treasurer explained that this would make it difficult to keep track of individual events, particularly when several were being organised at the same time.

The Chair thanked the Treasure and Assistant Treasurer for all their hard work.

Acceptance of the accounts was proposed by Derek Hussey and seconded by Ken Saunders and accepted unanimously.

6. Chair's Report Richard Stanton

The Chair's AGM report is the opportunity to reach out with an update to the whole membership rather than just those in attendance. No matter our role within H&R's u3a, we are all volunteers. Other than reimbursing out-of-pocket expenses such as food and drink at the AGM, Speaker meetings and other social events, no payments are made to the convenors, the meeters, the greeters, or the event helpers. All of them in their own way help to keep this u3a ticking over and I wish to put on record my personal thanks to all them.

There is another group which I must also sincerely thank – the committee. Throughout the past year they have managed to keep me on the straight and narrow despite my several wobbles. To summarise my first year as Chairman: it has been an interesting one. A number of things have happened which have needed the collective experiences of the committee to resolve and I want to record my special thanks to them here.

In the past 12 months committee membership has seen a number of changes and, at the time of drafting, I am happy to report that H&R u3a is once again compliant with its constitution – the plea for a volunteer to act as Vice Chair has been answered. During the course of this AGM, I hope you, the members, will ratify the committee membership. Two new roles have been added. There is now a Welfare Officer and an Inclusion Officer; the former has been taken on by our Minutes Secretary but the latter, added almost a year ago, still awaits a permanent holder. Because of access shortcomings at the White Rock Hotel, we have changed the Hastings coffee morning venue to the White Rock Theatre just next door.

The addition of new roles to the committee has triggered a long overdue review of job descriptions which we are slowly working through together with reviews of and updates to the policies and procedures. The essential four policies: Safeguarding, Health and Safety, GDPR and EDI have been completed and can be found on the H&R u3a web site.

For a long time now, the committee has heard (or not) comments about the noise level in the De La Warr Pavilion and a search has been undertaken to find a quieter venue. We think a more suitable venue has been found and hope to move there in August. An e-mail about the venue and its location (very near the DLWP) will be/has been sent out soon.

Throughout the year we have had an interesting programme of talks alternating between Bexhill and Hastings. A draft programme for 2027 has already been presented to the committee and will be published shortly. We are always looking for interesting speakers and if, through your association with other organisations, you come across such – please forward details to our Speakers Secretary.

Earlier this calendar year, many of you will have heard me promoting the need for ICE (In Case of Emergency) cards and you might also have read it in the Newsletter. There is a way of putting these details on the lock screen of your mobile ‘phone. However, successive versions of the operating system seem to make it harder and you will probably need a young teenager to sort you out. When all else fails, ICE credit card-sized cards which fit in your wallet or purse are available – just ask.

The committee is well aware of its GDPR commitments; however, we do need your contact details for the legitimate business of keeping you informed of H&R’s and other’s u3a activities. Unless you are really interested, I will not be forwarding e-mail offers of cheap digital post boxes in the City of London, or of lucrative pension arrangements, or of better funeral rates all of which I receive (as Chair) on a weekly basis.

Members without e-mail will, of course, still receive information through the post but we are recommending that wherever possible you get a young teenager to induct you into the 20th century (or better yet 21st) and set you up with the necessary ‘tech’ to receive and transmit e-mails. Postage costs are a not insignificant annual outlay.

In a similar vein, we made a decision last year to move away from cash, taking payments by bank transfer or card machine. We now have two card machines and at least one should be available at Coffee mornings and Speaker meetings. Your bank will have supplied you with a bank card which I would urge you to consider using when paying for u3a events. H&R u3a payments will rarely if ever be above £100 so a simple card tap on the machine will complete the payment.

Our membership numbers seem to oscillate annually around 500 and are served by some 80+ groups. Many have waiting lists especially the language groups (I am a language group convenor). If you have an interest in a language and are willing to lead/host/convene a group of similarly interested people, please contact our Groups Coordinator who will send out a suitable notice.

Looking forward to the next 12 months, I hope that you will continue to enjoy our u3a, its groups, its social events and other activities. If you have an idea for an event or a trip, please get in touch with our Social Team Convenor. I look forward to seeing and meeting you at our monthly coffee mornings or speaker meetings.

7. Election of committee 2026

The Business Secretary, Claire Williams, asked for agreement of the committee and trustee positions, as per the Nomination Form. See below.

1. In accordance with the constitution, members of the committee (trustees) are elected to serve for a period of up to 3 years. The following members have agreed to continue in their present posts:

POSITION	NAME	DATE ELECTED
Chair	Richard Stanton	2025
Business Secretary	Claire Williams	2025
Membership Secretary	Sue Shilstone	2024
Database Administrator	Dave Benton	2024

2. The following have served 3 years, but are willing to continue and need re-election

POSITION	NAME	PROPOSER	SECONDER
Treasurer	Josephine Noyce	Richard Stanton	Claire Williams
Assistant Treasurer	Ewa Goulding	Richard Stanton	Claire Williams

3. The following were appointed by the committee and are now standing for election.

POSITION	NAME	PROPOSER	SECONDER
Groups Coordinator	Carol Martin	Claire Williams	Vanessa Shaw
Newsletter Editor	Susan Firth	Vanessa Shaw	Claire Williams
Inclusion Officer	Vacancy		
Welfare Coordinator	Vanessa Shaw	Claire Williams	Richard Stanton
Vice Chair	Dorry Smallman	Claire Williams	Richard Stanton

These were all agreed unanimously by a show of hands.

8. Any Other Business

The Chair advised that there was a table at the back of the hall with information from the Welfare Coordinator.

Caroline Brewer will be able to accept payments today for the Vineyard trip.

There was no other business.

9. Date of next Annual General Meeting

26th July 2027

The formal meeting closed at 2.50pm

A presentation was made to longstanding member and volunteer Shirley Carey. She was awarded Honorary Membership. A certificate and flowers were presented by the Business Secretary on behalf of Hastings and Rother u3a.

A second Honorary Membership was awarded to Carol Crossley, another longstanding member and volunteer. Unfortunately, she was unable to attend today and her card and flowers will be passed on by Sue Shilstone, the Membership Secretary.

A card was given to Babs Spackman, a long-serving u3a member who has just celebrated her 90th birthday.