

Bu3a Committee Meeting, Thursday 9 October 2025, 10am

Friends Meeting House, Bakewell

Minutes - revised

Present: Peter Holt - Chair, Phil Clarke, David Hardman, Kath Hopkins, Sam Lewis, Glenys Moore, Richard Tucker

In attendance: Bernard McMahon

1. Apologies: David Thornton, Ainslie Kelly, Pam Walker

Peter explained that Ainslie wanted to step down from his role as Groups Coordinator as soon as convenient as he felt he was not having 'a significant impact' in the role. It was noted this was a tricky role, including supporting those starting a new group. David H was due to meet Ainslie shortly.

2. Minutes of meeting on 10 July 2025. These were approved as a correct record.

3. Matters arising:

3a. Beacon roles and Secretary's access to Beacon

Phil agreed to give Richard access to Beacon. PS: Now arranged, thank you Phil.

Every committee member had access on Beacon to members' contact details. Group leaders could get a preset package of tools, including membership lists and finance. Phil agreed to draw up and circulate a set of roles and info sets to group leaders.

ACTION PHIL

3b. Financial policy

Groups were encouraged to use Beacon for their finances, but could not be forced to, and some did not need it. Some groups, such as Meg Laird and the Bridge group, had their own bank accounts with large balances. These should at least be part of the annual Bu3a audit. It was asked whether we could set a minimum level of expenditure or balance that needed to be entered into Beacon. Also: would credit cards be useful? Kath said she paid all transactions online by BACS. The Cooking by Men problem was unique.

It was agreed that Kath and David H should produce a draft financial policy, with guidelines for groups, before the next meeting on 27/11. ACTION KATH AND DAVID H
There was discussion of the filling of roles in case of stepping down, illness etc. appointing 'shadows' would be the ideal, but may not be practicable.

3c. Charity Commission records

It was noted that David H had taken necessary action; also that the Annual Report was due in 23 days from the meeting date. It was agreed that David H would enter Phil Clarke's name as a Trustee on the Charities Commission website.

3d. Cooking by Men cash flow

Kath reported she had reimbursed £739 to Ainslie from central funds. This transaction had been brought 'vaguely under Beacon'. CbM were required to reimburse £489 to Bu3a within the near future.

4. Treasurer's report

Kath reported there was £1545.63 in the main account. A £300 invoice from Chatsworth was expected, and there would be transactions for the Christmas dinner. She pointed out that expenditure had exceeded income by £1000+ in the most recent year. Peter asked whether a subscription increase was needed. The consensus was that we should draw down deposit accounts rather than increase subs. Where groups held large account balances, these could be drawn upon for Bu3a use with their consent.

5. Membership Report

Peter, on behalf of David T, reported that (at least) 261 members were registered on Beacon. Some wives of members were not separately registered on Beacon and had not received circulars such as the survey. ACTION KATH AND DAVID T to investigate

6. Group Report

Peter said that the promised report had not arrived. In its absence, brief oral reports were taken from groups. The Chatsworth group was operating effectively. Bernard had accepted a significant management role. Finances were OK, but the group had lost money on the latest event. The 2026 programme had 6 main events in the pipeline. Glenys reported that the Meg Laird group was doing OK and the 2026 programme was being prepared. Alison Stuart had joined the committee. Sam said the Environment group 'does exist.' The Philosophy group was 'sort of OK' but was not doing advance planning. The Big Issues group run by John Hooper was running OK, with numbers limited to 10. Peter said that Ainslie hoped to step down from running the Cooking by Men group during 2026, but the group had 3 potential new members.

David H circulated thoughts about a new **Theatre Group**, drafted by Lindsay Jackson, who runs the Chatsworth Players, and to be run by her. She wanted an activist group, who would read through and discuss plays as well as seeing them. It would meet monthly and go to see shows about four times a year. It was agreed she should discuss her plans with Jan Chappell and Diane, who ran the previous theatre group, which had been rather passive. Glenys offered to put a spread in the November Gazette if plans were ready.

ACTION David H with Lindsay, Jan, Diane, ACTION GLENYS: Gazette
Glenys also proposed a 'Sharing your Garden' group to start in the spring. This would include visits to each other's gardens, tea and cake etc.

Comment [1]:

I am not sure we said we would draw down from the amounts held by groups. If a group has funds then, in the first instance these funds are available for that group's use. Only with the groups agreement, or in the event of the group folding, would such funds become available for Bu3a use.

7. u3a Elections

David H reported that Sheila Crawley of Ashbourne u3a had been elected the new national Vice Chair. Peter commented that Sheila had grown the Ashbourne branch by use of social media. The AGM of Third Age Trust was in 3 weeks, and David was registered to vote at that meeting.

8. Survey - results and implications See below, after items 9&10

9. **Thermal imaging camera:** proposal to allow it to be loaned to Councillor Andy Douglass, Great Longstone Parish Council. **It was agreed** (a) that the tic could be loaned to Andy Douglass without deposit, so that he could check on those in fuel poverty, and (b) that it could be loaned to others trusted by Sam as responsible persons.

ACTION SAM TO TAKE MATTERS FORWARD

10. Proposal to **invite Phil Mulligan**, CEO of Peak District National Park Authority, to address a meeting on the global climate and nature crisis, along the lines of one he had addressed in Hayfield in the spring. Sam reported that the Environment group were all keen. **It was agreed** to invite Phil, and to make this a Bu3a event, with invitations to Bakewell folk generally. Date and time: an afternoon meeting, prob. in early 2026. Venue: Medway Centre or Town Hall. Expenses of venue hire to be covered by a collection, not asked for from PDNPA. ACTION SAM, TO LIAISE WITH PETER

8. Survey - results and implications

Bernard reported that the survey had had a 30% response rate, which was good. Results were based on 77 responses – now 79. The findings had been circulated with the agenda; Bernard showed them as Ppt. He agreed to circulate a summary of the results to members, along with a note of thanks to those who had taken part. ACT BERNARD

David T's SWOT analysis was shared on paper.

Discussion: 80% of respondents had said they would be interested in a monthly central event. The aim was to organise these, probably starting in the new year. It was suggested that fostering a feeling of belonging was more important than sharing information. It was also suggested that small group meetings may be better than larger gatherings, when some attendees may be out of their comfort zone. Peter pointed to the success of the coffee morning in Baslow with tables arranged to sit at. There had been interaction and new leaders had been recruited. U3a needed to be welcoming to new attenders, just like a church did. This needed a deliberate act; it did not just happen naturally.

It was agreed that the membership secretary should develop and provide a welcome pack for new members. ACTION DAVID T

It was asked: Would we consider paying someone to do the admin work for theatre outings etc? Answer: we would not be permitted to find a member who would be paid to do this.

Besides, companies organised trips and we would not want to compete with them.

11 survey replies had said they'd be willing to lead a group. Could we find out who they were? Bernard could not correlate replies, so we'd need to ask them to get in touch.

ACTION BERNARD/PETER

We needed first to look at the feedback from the group leaders' survey. Peter then planned to have a group leaders' meeting soon, to plan ongoing actions. To get as many leaders as

possible of the 21 groups together, we needed them to ask: what's in it for me? A possible answer was to serve lunch. ACTION PETER AND DAVID H
Peter, Bernard and David H were formally thanked for their hard work. Bernard agreed to write an article for the Gazette, deadline end of October. ACTION BERNARD

11. Date of next meeting and dates for 2026

The next meeting was on 27 November (a fourth Thursday). The AGM would be on 26 March (ditto). Peter would circulate proposed dates for 2026. ACTION PETER

Dates for 2026 are: Jan 22, March 26 (AGM), May 28, July 23, Sept 24 and Nov 26

RT 15/10/25 revised 26/10/25