



Thames Valley Network

**A MEETING OF TVN REPRESENTATIVES HELD ON
7th February 2025, at 10.30 a.m.
on ZOOM
Minutes**

Apologies for absence – Fritha Irwin (Bourne End), Shelagh Richards (Bracknell Fell), James Cadle (Chess Valley)

Members attending – Fay Sinai (Chair), David Morton (Vice-Chair), Stephanie Steevenson (Note taker), Derek Randall (Treasurer), Chris Field (Banbury), Carol Morgan and Robert Goddard (Bracknell Fell), Howard Mordue (Buckingham), Ian Wright (Carterton), Annette Dearmun and Sarah Jones (Chinnor & District), Kath Oldham (Didcot), Peter Foot (Faringdon), Celia Barnes and Janet Carr (Goring Gap), Janet Mill (Haddenham), Patricia Lee (Headington), Michael Wright (High Wycombe), Jenny Alder (Maidenhead), Frank Parisi (MK), Mary Blake (Newbury), Valerie McCarthy (Oxford), Maggie and Joseph Needham (Princes Risborough), Mary Butcher, Avis Furness, Rosalind Luper and Jacqui Weiss (Reading), Annette Thompson (Ridgeway), Peter Beesley (Slough), Anne Hughes, Mike Price, Nigel Webb and John Sutton (Thame and District), Neil Kelly (Thameside), Ann Dibble (Thatcham), Ian Crookall (Wendover), Susie Wood (Witney), Patsy Thornton, John Waddington (Wokingham), Susan Blackshaw (Woodstock)

1. **Minutes of the last meeting** on 26th July 2024 were accepted.
2. **Matters arising:** None raised.
3. **Chair's Report** – Fay's report was attached to the agenda email. Fay explained the long break since the last meeting, which was due to the Christmas and New Year holidays as well as the sudden passing of Susie Berry in October. She introduced Sally Ingeldew, who will be representing the area on the Council starting in April. Fay then asked for any queries from her report.

5. Treasurer's Report - Derek Randall

Financial Statement was distributed by email. Derek had technical difficulties and was unable to communicate with the Reps meeting. There was a query re the administration fees, mainly expenses for Chair to attend u3a AGM.

6. Discussion – Communications 'officer' as suggested by Kent Network.

Fay led a discussion about the proposed idea of having a communications officer for the southeast region, who would gather and disseminate information from our various counties. The idea was brought up by Kent Network and Rob White. The idea would be that the communications officer would collect queries and information from u3as within their county and pass them to Sally, who would

then discuss them with the u3a Council. The discussion was then opened for feedback and opinions.

Sally discussed the importance of communication and the role of the Comms Team in overseeing communications with members and the public to increase membership. She emphasized the need to impress on all members the role of the u3a in the region and to promote the mutual aid principle. Sally also expressed her desire to have a team to help with this task, and she encouraged members to offer their expertise. She mentioned the need for a list of all u3as in the South East region to ensure all are included in communications. A member asked about two-way communication, to which Sally responded that they would be asking members for their ideas and listening to their suggestions.

Sally proposed various methods to increase awareness and involvement in the organization, including direct contact with members, raising awareness at monthly meetings, and encouraging members to volunteer.

Leafletting would be cheaper for charities if they got together with other charities to aim at new estates for example. Gravesend Chair has put together a PowerPoint presentation for local councils briefing them on the u3a. Avis said that people feel they do not have the confidence to volunteer for positions within the u3a. They probably can, and just need their confidence boosted. It was suggested to encourage mentoring by more experienced members. Fay interjected that they had been to have an afternoon, after the Reps meeting, where all the Peer groups could get together to enable members to assist and give advice. This did not take place as the October meeting had been cancelled but a future date will be organised. One u3a group offers meetings for specific people, e.g. Treasurers as a Peer Group network. There was the criticism of the u3a that there is now too much entertainment and not enough education. (It was explained that the word 'university' actually means 'a gathering of persons of like-minded interests',

Sally Ingledew needs volunteers to join the Comms Team from the Network and to sort out the remit of this new team and meet occasionally to discuss this. It was agreed that a brilliant idea would be to have reps from each county as we are in such a large region. The County rep could get to know the u3as within their areas. So, the first meeting is in the week after Half Term to see if the new members have ideas on how to run the Comms Team.

Peter Foot of Faringdon said that failing to get volunteers is a systemic issue across society. He asked for an explanation of what is required by Sally, and he said how well Susie kept us all thoroughly informed of the new developments. How would a new Comms structure fit in here? Sally said the SE region is very strong and she would like a system before the new Council is in place. She felt that the South East Region should have greater representation running itself and only needing assistance when it requests it.

7. **SERN** meetings are held on Zoom, and everyone is invited to attend. This is open to all members not only committee members.

How to contact Sally was raised and she put her email in Chat:
(u3asallyingledew@gmail.com)

8. **Network Link** – Avis had sent her written report before the most recent Network meeting took place. John Butler gave a talk on ‘Let’s Talk Tech’ for which there are slides, if required. Avis will send those to anyone who wants them. Do join his FB page. The 2nd presentation was given by Iain Cassidy the new CEO of the u3a who answered many questions. He is trying to visit all u3as and networks. People are impressed with the way he dealt with questions and his willingness to engage. He has been invited to TVN AGM.

There were the Hustings for the new members of the Board with 100+ attendees. 1 candidate not there, 7 of the 9 were there, one virtual. Voting closes on 29th Feb.

9. **Events Team Report** – Fay Sinai

Talks already booked:

- 1) Tuesday 18th February – Gaudi- talk given by Keith Appleby
- 2) Friday 7th March – Spring quiz- Avis
- 3) Tuesday 11th March – Rewilding – talk given by Ruth Nobbs
- 4) April (date to finalised) – Photography – talk given by Alun Morgan
- 5) April/May (tbc) – AI related to Photography – talk given by Alun Morgan
- 6) Tuesday 3rd June – Petra – talk given by Jill Evers

Events Team Report: Fay has taken over as leader of this team and will look after the calendar. In April the photography and the AI in photography have been swapped around, otherwise the speakers have been confirmed as above. Please tell the network if you have knowledge of any good speakers. All meetings have been successful with nearly all bringing in over 120 subscribers.

9. **Information:**

List of Interest Groups – info to Fay Sinai Please tell Fay of the details of the groups you run in your u3a as people look for particular skills/interests to help decide which u3a to join so all the info goes onto the TVN network site.

TVN Contacts list- now on Beacon. All info to Fay Sinai/David Morton Give names to either Fay or David (who does the website) to put on Beacon.

Events contact list -info to Mike Price

Website www.u3atvnetwork.org.uk - maintained by David Morton

10. **Any Other Business:** None

11. Date & Venue of next Reps' meeting –

Friday 2nd May 2025 at Benson Village Hall (AGM + reps' meeting) A call for all Reps to attend please.

Friday 25th July 2025 at Benson Village Hall

Friday 24th October 2025 at Benson Village Hall