

**Thames Valley Network**

**A MEETING OF TVN REPRESENTATIVES**

**2nd May 2025, at 10.30 a.m. after AGM**

 **MINUTES**

**Committee:** David Morton, Chair (Reading), Stephanie Steevenson, Mins. Secretary (Thatcham) Rod Ellis Treasurer (Thame), Patsy Thornton (Wokingham), Avis Furness (Reading), Mary Blake (Newbury), Sarah Jones (Chilton), Fay Sinai, (Abingdon), Derek Randall, (Thame & District)

**Representatives:** Chris Fieldsend, Patricia Foster and Elizabeth Rowe-Jones (Banbury); Garth Perkins (Bicester); Robert Goddard and Shelagh Richards (Bracknell Forest); Ian Wright and Josephine Wright (Carterton); Valerie Smith and John Krushner (Chalfonts); James Cadle (Chess Valley); Peter Foot (Faringdon & District); Celia Barnshaw and anet Carr (Goring Gap); Janet Mills and Elaine Parks (Haddenham); Patricia Lee (Headington); Michael Wright and Rosemary Byrne (High Wycombe); Katherin and Richard Daking (Hungerford); Wendy McClure (Maidenhead); Roger Shipton (Marlow); Joseph Needham (Princes Risborough); Robin Blake (Newbury); Valerie McCarthy (Oxford); Mary Butcher and Jacqui Weiss (Reading); Annette Thompson (Ridgeway); Peter Beesley (Slough); Anne Hughes, John Sutton, Kathleen Randall, Raymond Muller and Mike Price (Thame & District); Neil Kelly (Thameside, Wallingford); Graham and Marilyn Randall (Tring); Ian Crookall (Wendover); Beverley Birmingham (West Oxford); John Waddington (Wokingham); Sue Blackshaw and Susan Brett (Woodstock)

 **Apologies:** Graham Tabersham (Abingdon); Fritha Irwin (Bourne End); Christine Clinch (Chipping Norton); Frank Parisi and Gloria Chew (Milton Keynes); Linda Cole and Jane Sellwood (Reading); Ian Shipton (Thameside); Simon Evers (Turville); Shirley Williams (Woodley)

**Welcome: Apologies for absence** -

1. **Minutes of the last meeting:** (7th February 2025 – attached to agenda, also on TVN website) Accepted, except the error of listing Bracknell Fell instead of Forest.
2. **Matters arising** (Not already on the agenda) None.
3. **Chair’s Report –** David read his report in response to a question from Woodstock at the end of the AGM, including asking how we envisage TVN going forward. David explained the fact that we have National and Regional organisations. Below them are our networks but they have no particular status and no formal governance. Sally Ingledew is our new Regional Representative.

Faringdon explained that his u3a have been very interested in the reorganization of the national organization and have found the TVN meetings useful in this matter. He believes that TVN are useful for the dissemination of information and secondly for the events they organize. He believes the committee is well informed. Ridgeway mentioned that most members do not show any interest in TVN, but that their committee does. Most members do not need TVN in their lives, but Ridgeway committee do. Thameside find it difficult to include information that arrives in the middle of the month as it doesn’t fit into their newsletter schedule. This was noted. Thameside asked if there were any notes on how many attended events and David said he kept an analysis, and on average 100 attendees came to the events.

Mike (Thame) took everyone back to years past and how it was difficult to be in contact with other u3as. Only a few members of each u3a have ever been interested in keeping their u3a going. TVN has attempted to face these problems and brings 50 people together to share their concerns at these Reps meetings.

Carteton asked how many u3as are in the network, as he understands some are not members of the TVN. The numbers fluctuate but 49 are participating u3as. Carteton asked if all the u3as in Thames Valley are members, and the answer was yes.

Oxford said some other organisations do not need participation by members but the u3a is not such an organisation. David (Chair) said the ethos of the u3a needs to be stressed again. Thame attend the meetings to find out what other u3as are doing, and particularly contending with change within society. David (Chair) stressed that we discuss things openly and he asks for all TVN Reps to send comments to the committee.

Goring Gap asked if Sally Ingledew would attend our meetings. Avis responded by saying communication between the new Council and u3as is being discussed at present and working out how communication can be carried out both ways. Sue Russell is still involved with networks. Avis can act as a channel to Sally and indeed can ask her to attend our meetings. David asked Avis to act as a channel to and from Sally to TVN.

Faringdon said in the past that questions from TVN had been shut down and, with Susie, communication was always in all directions. Goring Gap also asked Avis to be a two-way channel to and from Sally. Avis agreed to this. Regional Reps are no longer on the Board, and this is a huge change. Avis said opinions on this matter would be welcome.

1. **Treasurer’s Report -**  Derek Randall/Rod Ellis
* See Financial Statement (attached to agenda, not on website) Rod ran through the last 4 months: £882 income, £682 expenditure, £8540 opening amount, £8740 balance now, of which £3K is reserves. Basically - sound accounts.

**5. Network Link** – Avis Furness said Karen Green will hopefully be appointed to Chair Network Link. 9th June is the next meeting. Avis has emailed her contact details to all Reps. TVN support the Network. She mentioned how AI can help networks and advisors and that events will be held soon explaining these topics.

Network Link started, as twice-a-year meetings for Chairs of networks, in 2019. After COVID intervened Zoom was introduced. It is now more of an Open meeting for anyone interested. The Chair of Network Link sits on the Council and is a way for Networks to get together and to encourage the setting up of networks where they do not exist. It is not part of Governance, but the present Board are very interested in the business being conducted by Network Link. Avis explained to High Wycombe that the Chair is not an elected post but is approved by the Board. This relationship might change in the future.

**6.**  **Events Team Report –** Fay Sinai

 Past events: Gaudi, quiz and Rewilding events all very successful.

 Talks already booked:

1. 30th April – AI – talk given by Alun Morgan – 130 were registered and about 100 attended.
2. 14th May – Photography – talk given by Alun Morgan
3. Tuesday 3rd June – Petra, the Red City – talk given by Jill Eyers (archaeologist and historian)
4. Friday 6th June – Summer quiz set by Avis

Average attendance is 100. We will be holding only ONE talk a month, but Fay said the committee needs help in finding speakers with interesting topics to deliver. Fay has taken onboard when notices need to be sent out. End of May is the next Events Team meeting. No talk is ever offered in August.

Does Fay need the Programme Secretaries’ contact details? She stated that the speakers really need to be unknown, so they haven’t already spoken at u3as. Fay asked for Reps to send Secretaries details to her. TVN database of speakers is on the website and is emailed out regularly. Fay confirmed it is not possible to record the talks.

Faringdon suggested a meeting between the Events committee and all the Programme Secretaries to discuss these talks. Fay explained how complicated it is now organising the talks. Faringdon said we Reps are not the right people to talk to.

Thame said perhaps a meeting on Zoom of this type could be arranged. He asked that any u3a speakers who are particularly good, need to be asked if they would talk on Zoom. Some are okay to transfer to Zoom and some aren’t, e.g. some cannot talk on camera and some need audience feedback. The limitations of the Chat feature were stressed.

Banbury said that, as a speaker, gaining advice from other speakers would be welcome. High Wycombe said many of the speakers offer several topics.

Avis confirms that she normally sends out the database of speakers and the latest will be sent out soon. She believes her list of Speaker Secretaries is out of date so please send her the info she needs. *Please tell her of any speakers who are good and some who aren’t good anymore.*

 **7. Information:**

* List of Interest Groups – info to Fay Sinai to be sent please.
* TVN Contacts list- now on Beacon. All info to Fay Sinai/David Morton
* Events contact list -info to Mike Price
* Website [www.u3atvnetwork.org.uk](http://www.u3atvnetwork.org.uk) - maintained by David Morton

**8. Any Other Business:**

Info – Iain Cassidy to visit Meeting on 24th October

Bicester asked ‘How do we network’? Are we networking as individuals at this meeting? How do we motivate members to do more jobs within their u3a. A Forum on these matters would be very helpful. David, the Chair, said we have 4 annual meetings, and he wants us to have different ideas about topics that would be found useful. Thameside said that the most important part of our meetings is now! How do other u3as deal with Membership Renewals - after several reminders members eventually are left off the list if they fail to renew – is this the norm? In Newbury they use Beacon and give reminders every Friday for two months. After the end of Feb they are considered to be new members not returners - Newbury are very strict. Tring keep a list of those needing to renew, to pursue. Thameside need to get Beacon was the solution suggested, but it was agreed that his method is fair. Bicester uses Beacon and they also try to find out why people leave.

Bracknell Forest said the workshops after lunch were always useful.

David confirmed that we will discuss all this in October when Iain Cassidy is due to attend.

**9. Date & Venue of next Reps’ meeting –**

 Friday 25th July at Benson Village Hall

 Friday 24th October at Benson Village Hall

**The meeting closed at 12.22.** The meeting was followed by a free lunch. Reps’ views were sort on the new caterer and for those views to be passed to Patsy.