



Thames Valley Network

Minutes of a meeting of TVN Representatives
on 25th July 2025 at 10.30 Benson Parish Hall,
MINUTES

1. **Committee:** Fay Sinai (Acting Chair) (Abingdon), Stephanie Steevenson Mins. Secretary (Thatcham) Rod Ellis Treasurer (Thame), Patsy Thornton (Wokingham), Avis Furness (Reading), Mary Blake (Newbury), Sarah Jones (Chilton)
2. **Representatives:** David Herbertson & Graham Tabersham (Abingdon), Patricia Foster & Elizabeth Rowe-Jones (Banbury), Fritha Irwin (Bourne End), Robert Goddard & Janet Russell (Bracknell Forest), Anne Marie Lord (Chinnor), Christine Clinch (Chipping Norton), Kath Oldham (Didcot), Peter Foot (Faringdon), Celia Barnshaw & Janet Carr (Goring Gap), Janet Mills (Haddenham), Patricia Lee (Headington), Michael Wright (High Wycombe), Wency McClure (Maidenhead), Roger Shipton (Marlow), Mary Blake & Robin Blake (Newbury), Valerie McCarthy (Oxford), Mary Butcher & Jacqui Weiss (Reading), Annette Thompson (Ridgeway), Peter Beesley (Slough), Anne Hughes, John Sutton, Ray Muller, Mike Price (Thame), Neil Kelly (Thameside Wallingford), Alex Brown (West Oxford), Martin Pritchett (Windsor)
3. **Apologies for absence:** Shelagh Richards (Bracknell Forest), Ian Wright (Carterton), James Cadel (Chess Valley), Sarah Jones (Chiltern), Derek Randall (Chinnor), Katherin Dakin (Hungerford), Frank Parisi (Milton Keynes), David Morton (Chair)(Reading), John Waddington (Wokingham), Sue Blackshaw (Woodstock)
4. **Minutes of the last meeting: 2nd May** – emailed before the meeting. No queries.
5. **Matters arising from the Minutes not discussed elsewhere:** Thameside requested to be told when the Minutes are put up on the website.
6. **Chair's Report** – David Morton emailed before the meeting. Fay discovered that 3 x u3as had not received today's paperwork and she promised she would send them after the meeting. Fay read out David's report. Queries need to be raised with David himself.
5. **Treasurer's Report** - See Financial Statement – emailed before the meeting. The Summary of the almost seven months activity in his report shows an Income of £1422 and an Expenditure of £2024 resulting in a Deficit to date of £451. Allowing for the Surplus carried forward from 2024, the net Balance in our accounts is £7939. This should be adequate for any purposes that the network would like to consider.
6. **SE Region Report** – Avis Furness: Apologises for not sending out her written report before the meeting but it will be sent it out with the minutes. It contains infographics of interest.
 - The Network Link and the Communications team have met recently. Sally Ingledew (SER rep. on the new Council) ensures her new ideas are not set in stone and putting too much work onto networks is considered not fair, but she would like volunteers who might go around to u3as to talk to them about the Region. Sally is very keen to hear from every u3a in the South-East. There will be a Facebook page for the SE Region, open to everyone once it is working. SE Region website needs work and this is being done. Maidenhead asked about Sally's ideas of communicating across the Region, both up and down - don't we want the comms to come to this group – TVN?
 - Huge success at the summer school in Chichester and first time of using Beacon has been a success.

- 270 people attended the last Network Link meeting – AI drew people in. Karen Green is the new Chair of the Network Link. Next meeting due on 9th Oct and will be on the Resolution on gaining 500,000 members by 2028.
- Sue Russell Chairs the new Council and they have had one formal meeting and several Zoom informal meetings. They are producing ideas at present. They have a Task and Finish group looking at the working of the strategy groups and will report in August. Setting up communication channels is also being investigated.
- 7th Aug and 7th Sep is the gap for u3as to be able to vote for the Vice Chair of the Board.

Avis asked for feedback on this report to see if it is what we need and want.

- Chipping Norton asked about Sally's original idea on visiting all the u3as and isn't that the job of the networks
- Goring Gap asked if there are too many access points for information. This is being discussed – all the different types of information, including newsletters. There are criticisms of the national website, and it is being looked at.
- Facebook: There had been much discussion regarding FaceBook. Various comments and opinions were voiced by u3as such as Reading and Goring Gap. A few u3as stated they used WhatsApp between groups and communication. Other u3as were sceptical.
- Fay stressed the importance of the reps who attend these meetings should be reporting back to their membership not just their committees. Mike (Greater Thame) has found members who have never even heard of the Third Age Trust – we need to surely get more info out to members. Thame member asked for a visual on our organisation structure. TAT do not have details of all our members.

7. Events Team Report – Fay Sinai read out her report. Two talks on AI, Petra and the Future of Warfare were events given since the May meeting. Quizzes continue. A gift to the u3a speakers has been agreed, to the value of £25. Fay is keen to set up a Zoom meeting for Programme Secs – should she set up a.m. or p.m meeting? A simple design software package called CANVA and a talk may be set up through TVN to see if there is any interest in this. The speaker is a member of Bourne End. This package is a modern form of Publisher, for example.

8. Discussion – (i) Proposal from Thame u3a: That they will organise and run a networking and discussion meeting one afternoon after the reps' meeting.

(ii) TAM – Discussion from Faringdon & District. Peter said at his last AGM members were not happy that they pay for TAM and very few actually read it After much discussion, very little was agreed about the issue of TAM in the u3as

(iii) u3a community engagement and associations with other charities Chinnor u3a. The discussion was to find out how u3as spent their charity monies e.g. that received from Riviera Travel. Various ideas were put forward. E.g. supplementing members' fees, hiring of premises. Anything to benefit all members.

9. Information:

- Database of Speakers (maintained by Avis Furness) Most recent database came back with a lot of 'undeliverable' email addresses, so Avis is investigating.
- List of Interest Groups (maintained by Fay Sinai) Keep Fay informed of all changes and she puts all the info up on the TVN website.
- TVN Contacts list (maintained by Fay Sinai) Let Fay know.

10. Any Other Business:

- Thameside cannot find the AGM Minutes on the Website after 3 weeks.

We should add the reports to the Minutes they refer to. Financial information is not on the website

- Abingdon asked the reason why TVN does not buy its own microphones. Mike Price said plugging into the Hall system with our own is not simple. Costs need to be investigated.

Chipping Norton informed the meeting a sound system had been trialled successfully.

Unfortunately it could not be mobile. .

- Thame asked if there ever had been a reciprocal arrangement whereby members can go to other groups in another u3a. Fay described a situation whereby Associate Members are allowed. Thame asked if this was a widespread agreement.

Bourne End said this was discussed some years ago and every u3a is a rule to themselves and can decide how to play this.

11. Date & Venue of next Reps' meeting –

10th October 2025 at Benson (**new date**) and we have yet to confirm if the CEO will be there. The meeting closed at 12.28.