Dacorum u3a

Minutes of the 35th Annual General Meeting held at 10:30 am on Monday 4th August 2025 at the Boxmoor Playhouse, St John's Road, Hemel Hempstead.

Attendance

There were 106 members present, and a further 11 on Zoom. Proxy votes were submitted by 177 members (all online and none posted) for the motions and election of Trustees and Officers.

Those present included the following Trustees:

Jane Campbell	Vice Chair
Ellen Duffy	Secretary
John Dodkins	Beacon Admin and Digest editor
Lee Pace	Groups Secretary and Speaker Secretary
Henry Wallis	Treasurer
Carolyn Wallis	Chair

Also present were the following Committee associate members:

Terry Thirlwell	Equipment Officer and Web Admin
Lesley Drake	Minutes secretary (shared role)

1 Welcome

Carolyn Wallis welcomed all those members attending the 35th AGM.

2 Apologies

Apologies were received from the following:

Heather Al-Jawad	Anne Menzies (Web Admin)
Wael Al-Jawad	Alan Osborn (Group News)
Judy Baldwin (Photocopying)	Mike Sapsard (Web Admin)
John Coe (outgoing Trustee)	Jean Sniders (Membership secretary)
Peter Marshall	Margaret Taylor (out going Halls Secretary)
Chris Watson	Deborah Porter

3 Approval of the Minutes of the 34th AGM held on 5 August 2024

3.1 There were no comments on the minutes of the previous AGM.

3.2 The motion to approve the minutes had the following votes:

Votes:161 in favour and 23 abstentions.

3.3 The minutes were therefore approved by a majority vote.

4 Chair's Report

4.1 Carolyn thanked the members of the committee for their support during the year which marked the 35th anniversary of Dacorum u3a. The organisation is thriving at just over 1200 members with Monthly Meeting attendance of more than 100 members due to the range of interesting speakers. Carolyn also thanked the coordinators and other members who support them for the ongoing success of the organisation.

4.2 To advertise our u3a we have taken a stall at Leverstock Green fete and Boxmoor Trust autumn fair and our Vice Chair writes a regular column for the Great Gaddesden Parish newsletter and occasionally other local publications. Our Rug Making and Calligraphy groups have also featured in the u3a East of England newsletter.

4.3 Carolyn thanked John Coe as a Trustee who reviewed and led us through an update of our Group Risk Assessments. Thank you to all the group coordinators who have completed the forms and to John for volunteering to continue to monitor the exercise to completion even though he has now moved out of the area. The Trustees continue a program of reviewing and updating our polices including publication of a new Safeguarding policy, available on our website.

4.4 Carolyn stressed that the u3a is run by a team of Trustees, currently seven supported by nine other Committee associates. The four Officers, Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary must be Trustees and can be in the same post for a maximum of three years only. This year, Ellen Duffy, our Secretary, has completed three years in the role and must step down. Carolyn thanked Ellen for all she has done to enable smooth running of the u3a. Unfortunately, no one has come forward to fill this essential role which gives us a serious problem regarding fulfilment of legal duties for the Charity Commission. Until someone comes forward the role will be shared amongst the rest of the Trustees, some of whom are already juggling two roles. This is not a long-term solution and Carolyn appealed for a volunteer to take on the role.

4.5 Carolyn thanked our minutes secretary, Lorna Grimes, who has stood down after 15 years to be replaced by Lesley Drake and Deborah Porter who share the role.

4.6 Carolyn also thanked our Halls Booking secretary, Margaret Taylor, who has decided to step down after five years in the role. Again, the role will be shared amongst the remaining committee members but a volunteer is urgently required.

5 Treasurer's Report

5.1 Henry stated that he was pleased to get a clean bill of health from the independent examiner's review of his first set of accounts. All members have had a chance to review the 2024/5 accounts and the changes in some of the numbers compared to last year's accounts are explained in the notes to the accounts.

5.2 In 2023 the examiner pointed out that our reserves were high, at £29k, compared to the target £9k stated in our reserves policy. Last year (2023/24) we reduced our reserves to £17k with the aim of reducing further this year. However, you will see from the accounts that we made a small surplus overall this year rather than the planned deficit. This was due to £1.3k income relating to the previous year and a compensation payment from our bank for poor service.

5.3 That we have more reserves than planned means that we can:

- hold the membership fee at its current level.
- continue with free monthly meetings, and
- continue production of the Digest in its current form for the moment, which we believe benefits all members.

5.4 As promised at the last AGM, we carried out a survey of coordinators regarding possible alternative methods of collecting fees rather than cash. Of the 40 groups meeting in halls, the vast majority were happy to continue collecting cash. One group has been trialling payment for several months' meetings in advance and we now have two groups who offer the option of paying by card or other electronic means. If any other groups are interested in card payment, please contact Henry

6 Group Secretary's Report

6.1 Lee reported that we currently have 79 Groups.

6.2 Lee appealed for volunteers to resurrect two very popular groups which have ceased this year, the News group and Short Day Trips. She stressed that the group coordinator roles could be shared and frequency of Short Day Trips was at the coordinators' discretion.

6.3 Literature C has now moved to Tring u3a since it met in Tring and comprised members who lived there.

6.4 Two new members who were recruited at the Leverstock Green fair last year have started a very popular Backgammon group meeting, in Leverstock Green village hall.

6.5 Lee stated that the committee would be pleased to assist anyone who is interested in starting a new group with herself as the first point of contact, details in the Digest.

7 Explanation of proxy voting

7.1 Ellen explained that members with access to the internet were able to vote on AGM matters online, which had proved to be popular. Postal votes were still available for those who had no internet access.

8 Appointment of Book Examiner

8.1 Appointment of Jane Seymour as Book Examiner for the 2025 – 26 financial year was proposed by Henry Wallis and seconded by Ellen Duffy. There were 167 votes in favour and 10 abstentions.

9 Election of new Committee Members 2025 – 26

9.1 The following were elected as Officers or Trustees

Post	Name	Yes	No	Abstain
Chair	Carolyn Wallis (3818)	174	0	3
Vice Chair	Jane Campbell (1873)	175	0	2
Treasurer	Henry Wallis (3819)	174	0	3
Trustee	Ellen Duffy (4064)	173	1	3
Trustee	Lee Pace (4083)	172	0	5
Trustee	John Dodkins (3276)	172	0	5
Trustee	Mary Wyon (3522)	172	1	4

10 Any Other Business

10.1 A member queried whether the constitution could be changed to alleviate the issue of officers having to stand down after 3 years in post. The committee felt that the constitution was appropriate, the issue is lack of volunteers. This applies to many organisations relying on volunteers.

10.2 A member expressed thanks to the committee and group coordinators on behalf of the meeting.

The AGM was formally ended at 10:54 am.