

Leek u3a

Draft Minutes of AGM, 2pm 6th May 2026, Leek Town Football Club

1 Welcome

Welcome everybody to the 2026 Annual General Meeting for Leek u3a. This event is mainly to carry out the formal business of the local group of the national u3a charity.

2 Apologies

Ann Baxter, John Bradshaw, Jan Cresswell, Brenda Morris, June and Trevor Siggers, Marion Smith, Mary Wilson and Oenone Wollaston.

3 Approve minutes of 2025 AGM

An amendment was received from Ivan Smith, to change the incorrect street name for Norton House.

Approval of minutes proposed by George Philips; seconded by Mick Burmeister. Passed by a show of hands.

4 Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

5 Treasurer's Report

Treasurer's report on u3a summarised accounts for the year ended 31st December 2025.

The accounts have been prepared by an independent examiner (Mr M. Snape), Bennett Brooks (Leek) Ltd. and approved by your committee in April. The summarised accounts before you have been prepared from these accounts. Before taking you through them, can I say a thank you to:

Cashiers, Brenda, Eric, Rosie, Joan and Suzanne, who do a tremendous job, it would help them if groups could deposit the cash collected weekly and always complete their card confirming the required information. There is a lot of cash, including (SMALL) change to check and bank.

Now, the accounts, if anyone has a question, then I will attempt to answer them.

You will see that they show a loss of £11,247, however this isn't as bad as it looks, as a loss like this was planned and expected. In 2024, the committee made the decision, based on our assets, which stood at £36,830 to reduce these to a more realistic figure and so the annual membership fee was reduced to £10 for each full member and the required use of additional venues for group meetings would mean additional costs.

I do not intend to take you item by item but to say the majority of the £11,247 is from the reduced annual membership (£5,021) and increased rent and room hire (£6,376) which is what your committee expected/anticipated.

They also decided to keep Class fees at £1.00. However, some groups who have found their “running costs” increasing have collected additional cash to the class fee to help subsidise it and this is included in the income as “donations”.

You will also notice that both sundry creditors and debtors show an increase, this doesn't mean that Leek u3a owe more money or are owed more. It is mainly due to the Torquay trip, which as you know occurred in 2026 whereas the majority of income and costs were incurred in the year 2025. As an accounting function it is necessary to move these to next year's accounts, the year they took place.

Although the accounts show the loss, your trustees continue to work hard to maintain the trust's, still, strong financial position.

5.1 Approval of Accounts

Proposed by Ivan Smith, seconded by Jean Dale, and accepted by a show of hands.

5.2 Re-appointment of Accounts Examiner for the year: Bennett Brooks

Proposed by Ian Cantrill, seconded by Keith Potter, accepted by a show of hands.

6 Chairman's Report

6.1 Committee Members

Your committee members bring great experience to the general running of your u3a.

Treasurer (Ian), Groups management (Dawn), Membership (Ann), Pastoral and Group feedback (Sheila), Vice-Chair and Safeguarding (Rob), Petty cash and event housekeeping and support (Carol). A round of applause was given for the committee.

A lot of work goes on in the background to make Leek u3a work. If you don't notice it, it means that it's all working properly. So, I'd like to thank the leaders (too many to name individually but rest assured we are very grateful for your continuing efforts); the cashiers (Joan Hobster, Rosie Skinner, Brenda Morris, Susanne Dawson, Rob Roche and Eric Bennison); the housekeepers (Elaine Turner, June Siggers, Gill White); the newsletter editor (Chris Thomas) and the Norton House Committee for their continuing support. Plus anyone else who works to make it all happen and who I might have forgotten. A round of applause was given for all helpers.

6.2 Membership

As of the time of writing we have 984 members. This is a great number and shows the appeal of u3a across the area. We have a steady trickle of new members joining every week. At the end of 2025 we had reached over 1000 members so we are very confident that this year we will go well beyond that. Many of our new members hear about us from friends and family who are already members, so keep up the good work broadcasting the merits of u3a.

Can I request that any members who have not renewed do so promptly. We do depend on this income to be able to continue to provide our sessions.

6.3 Norton House

Leek u3a and Norton House are 2 separate charities but obviously work incredibly closely together for the benefit of the older people of Leek. We are very grateful for their work. The Norton House committee would like to ask for new volunteers to become committee members. If anyone is interested, please contact any committee member and we will direct you to the appropriate person.

6.4 Torquay

Once again Leek u3a ventured en-masse to Torquay, which was a great success.

7 Groups Report

Leek u3a goes from strength to strength, with more groups than ever. Currently a record 93 groups!

New groups in 2025 included:

- Dun & Dance, Teresa Patterson
- Political and Economic Discussion Group, bravely run by Beverley Foster
- Snooker at Leek Golf Club, run by Brian Bogie
- Trad Folk group, Mike Shadforth
- A second Strength & Conditioning Group at Fit Bodies Gym, run by Sue Turner

We also had quite a few changes of leaders, thanks to everyone who has stepped up to keep their groups running.

Several of our groups put on performances in the community throughout the year, which is great to see, notably the Singers, the African Drummers, Music Performance and the Trad Folk group.

It's been a difficult time for our Brough Park groups:

- Badminton
- Bowls
- Swimming
- Pickleball
- Walking Netball

who had to relocate to Cheadle or Biddulph while the Leisure Centre was closed for refurbishment. We're hoping that they will all be back in Leek later on in the summer. Thanks to all those leaders who've kept their groups going during this period.

We've got more members than ever, so pressure on groups is growing. Please always let me know if your group has spaces or not, so we can keep the list up-to-date.

Finally, thanks to all our leaders for the fantastic work you do keeping all our groups running!

8 Vice Chairman's Report

Thanks to Keith and all our committee members for all their hard work during the year, especially whilst some of us were gallivanting far away in the winter sunshine! My main areas of work during the past year have been on ensuring that Leek u3a operates with an up-to-date safeguarding policy and culture. It has always been very heartwarming to myself and the committee how caring for each other our members are. There is a caring culture of looking out for each other without being unduly nosy, which is quite a hard balance to achieve, so thank you all for looking out and caring for each other. During the year we have offered informal support and advice to members and have pointed people to outside help and agencies when it's been necessary. During spring of 2025 I ran three two hour-long safeguarding awareness sessions which were attended by up to 50 people in total – I hope that those who attended found them informative and useful.

I would like to hold some more safeguarding awareness sessions during the autumn – If you are interested please put your name and contact details on the sheet and I will organise some more sessions. We will have separate sessions for group leaders and for members as the sessions are slightly different, so if you care for somebody and you may have concerns about their welfare please let me know and I can give you confidential general advice. You do not have to wait until autumn if you would just like to have a chat and maybe some pointers about where to seek help. The Leek u3a Safeguarding policy is on the Leek u3a website if you wish to look at it. It has a lot of useful information in it which is covered in the Safeguarding sessions.

You may not be aware that I am also a committee member on the Norton House Trust committee. In that role I reviewed the building fire safety and evacuation policy in 2024, and I've had another look at it to make sure it still meets our requirements. I recently answered a query from a member who said they were unaware of the fire safety and evacuation policy. Hard copies of the policy are pinned to the Norton House notice board in the main foyer of Norton House and are included in the relevant group folders. Can I ask group leaders to please remind members of the existence of these policies periodically, especially when new group members join groups to ensure that everyone is aware of them and how to exit the buildings safely in the event of a fire or other hazardous incident. If you have any questions about these policies and procedures please ask me after this meeting.

Tech Support – we have been running tech support sessions on Saturday mornings over the last 2 years. Because of low attendances recently we have suspended the sessions and we are reviewing the need that members have for them. If you could leave a note for me in Norton House, or email me at robrocheleeku3a@gmail.com I will have a look at the feedback from you of how we can best support members with their tech.

In my Norton House Trust member capacity I would like to remind you that you are all welcome to join us at our AGM in the Watson Centre on Friday the 22nd of May starting at 4pm. If you would like to learn more about the essential role that the Norton House Trust plays in ensuring that Leek u3a continues to benefit from our fairly unique building

resources and facilities; or if you would like to support the trust in a practical way please come along and have a chat with us. Every time I go to the Norton House Trust AGMs I learn more about the history and the pioneering people who secured and built up the resources and who ensure they are kept running and maintained viably. It would be really great to see a good turn out of leek u3a members.

I'll finish now, but not without asking you please again to thank our unsung heroes who have made and continue to contribute day in day out to our success. The committee Chair Keith for Leek u3a and Angela for Norton House Trust. Last but not least, I'd like to thank you all for turning up and supporting us as group leaders and members. Thank You.

9 Any other Business

There was no other business.

10 Meeting close

Followed by a performance by the Leek u3a Folk Ensemble.