

COMMITTEES and PROCEDURES

Aylesbury Vale U3A (AVu3a) accepts the Objects and Principles of The Third Age Trust Movement. It operates as an independently managed, self-governing 'charitable' organisation, within the framework of the Trust. It is vital to the success of AVu3a that it has a lively, effective and ambitious management committee, with or without co-opted members. Only the elected officers holding the posts of Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer will be trustees.

The golden rules for an effective committee meeting are:

- Prepare beforehand.
- Be involved.
- Explore the issues.
- Take responsibility.
- Make decisions.
- Follow them up.
- Be willing to stand in for a committee member unable to attend.
- Committee members should not propose or second members for the committee elections. This should be done by members only.

FUNCTIONS

Chairman

The Chairman, together with the Secretary, will decide on an agenda and must be well informed on all the issues to be discussed and their relative importance and aware of where decisions are needed. The Chairman holds a key position during the meeting and will maintain control. He/she will be firm, fair and tactful without disruption or aggression. It should be remembered that all decisions must be committee decisions and that the Chairman has no special executive powers other than those stated in the constitution. If a vote is taken and is equally divided, the Chairman has a casting vote. The chairman will be registered as a Trustee.

He/she needs to be:

- Flexible in approach.
- Diplomatic and approachable.
- A positive leader.

Tasks:

- To maintain the charitable objectives/purposes of the U3A.
- To preserve order at meetings (all members must address their remarks via the Chairman and not directly to the person).
- To ensure the correct procedure is followed.
- To guide the discussion in a positive manner, all the time assuming a neutral role.
- To allow different points to be expressed.
- To encourage participation from all members in discussion and decision-making,
- To adhere to the agenda and avoid side-tracking.
- To remain calm when strong feelings are expressed.
- To draw discussions to a conclusion and to summarise fairly the arguments “for and against” an issue.
- To ensure that decisions are followed through, often in conjunction with the Secretary.

Vice Chairman

One of the roles of a Vice Chairman is to deputise for the Chairman and so he/she will need to be familiar with all necessary procedures and able to assume responsibility at short notice, if required to do so. The Vice Chairman will be registered as a Trustee.

Secretary

The Secretary is usually the committee organiser and often, the person most involved in the practical running of AVu3a. He/she keeps the wheels of the organisation turning and is the committee scribe. The Chairman and the Secretary need to be able to work well together and agree upon a course of action. Mutual trust is essential.

He/she needs to be:

- A good organiser.
- Systematic.
- Diplomatic and approachable.
- A clear thinker.
- Calm.

Tasks:

- To keep the Chairman well informed as correspondence is often addressed to the Secretary.
- To construct the agenda for the meetings with the Chairman.
- To send out agendas with relevant discussion papers in good time.
- To arrange venues and equipment as required.
- To take spare copies of the papers.
- To ensure the meeting is quorate (5 elected committee members).
- To convey decisions taken to the people who may be required to take action.
- To act as required following the meeting.
- To deal with correspondence following discussion with the Chairman.
- To maintain full and accurate files including minutes.
- To be the point of contact and reference between meetings.
- To be the link with the National Office and to ensure that information is relayed to the committee and passed on to the membership.
- To take fair and accurate minutes of the meeting and, having agreed them with the Chairman, circulate them to the committee for approval three weeks prior to the next committee meeting.
- All minutes must be filed securely and kept for a minimum of 6 years.
- The secretary will be registered as a Trustee.

Treasurer

The Treasurer is responsible for the efficient handling of all the financial affairs of AVu3a.

He/she needs to be:

- Methodical.
- A good communicator.
- Able to look at the bigger picture but with a good eye for detail.

Tasks:

- To organise the opening and operation of a bank account or bank accounts in accordance with the wishes of the Committee.
- To make a recommendation on cheque signatories and on-line authorisations for committee approval.
- To ensure that strong financial management procedures and internal controls are in place.
- To maintain accurate and sufficiently detailed financial records in accordance with the requirements of the regulatory authorities.
- To report to the Committee on finance at each meeting.

- To prepare the statement of accounts for examination and presentation to the AGM.
- To prepare a budget annually.
- To recommend the level of subscription to be paid by the members.
- To pay approved invoices.
- To pay agreed expenses (it may be necessary to devise an appropriate claim form).
- To keep all receipts.
- To recommend an appropriate level of reserves.
- To set out and agree policies for reimbursement of expenses, petty cash floats etc.
- The Treasurer will be registered as a Trustee.

Other Committee Members

In addition to the officers, there are committee members who will carry out other important and defined functions (refer to 'Descriptions and Guide to the Roles of committee members'). They are:

Groups' Co-ordinator, Membership Secretary, Outings' Co-ordinator, Speakers' Secretary and Hall Manager.

Each member will present his/her report to the committee. Updates, discussions and actions to be taken are noted.

Co-opted Members

Our constitution enables AVu3a committee to co-opt up to two members. This means that the committee may invite other people who have not been elected to join until the next AGM and they have the same status and responsibilities of elected trustees. Care needs to be taken to ensure that this power is not abused. It is a facility to ensure that a committee has the necessary skills and expertise and to replace a member who must leave the committee, but it must not be used for by-passing the electoral system or as a reward for favours received. Everybody on the AVu3a committee has the role of a trustee, regardless of whether it has registered with the regulatory authorities. The Treasurer will be registered as a Trustee.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The **agenda** for a committee meeting follows a basic structure:

Heading – date, time and place of meeting

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the last meeting (these should have been previously circulated to the committee and, once agreed, the Chairman should sign them).
3. Matters arising including items which were discussed at the last meeting which need to be followed up. It is helpful to list these and if it is likely that an item will need a lot of discussion, make it an agenda item.
4. Correspondence.
5. Chairman's report.
6. Secretary's report.
7. Treasurer's report.
8. (Important items - papers often enclosed).
9. Groups' Co-ordinator's report.
10. Membership Secretary's report.
11. Outings' Co-ordinator's report.
12. Speakers' Secretary's report.
13. Hall Manager's report.
14. (Minor items)
15. Any Other Business (helpful if the Chairman is informed of items in advance so they can be listed. If an important item is raised here, it may be better to carry it over to the next meeting as an agenda item).
16. Date, time and place of next meeting.

The Chairman should make it clear when an item is for discussion only and when a decision is needed. In some situations, it may be wise for the Chairman to introduce the item to be discussed by summarising the background to the discussion. The Chairman is responsible for creating and sustaining the momentum of the meeting and recognising which items require more time. The Chairman must always remain impartial. Before a vote, the Chairman should summarise the arguments for and against where appropriate. A proposer and seconder should be sought and then a vote taken. Voting is by a show of hands and votes for, against and abstentions should be recorded. If the committee is of one mind and there is no dissent, it should be recorded as having been carried out. If the votes are equal, the Chairman has a casting vote.

Confidentiality

Once a committee decision has been reached, committee members are expected to accept and abide by it. Opinions expressed in meetings should be regarded as confidential.

Sub-Committees

If the workload becomes a problem, Avu3a committee can consider appointing sub-committees to perform a function or a specific task. These sub-committees should include at least one member of the main committee to ensure full and prompt reporting. The main committee must agree terms of reference, which should clearly state that the role is purely advisory and does not have decision making powers or expenditure authority.

MINUTES

Minutes are important as the written record of what took place and the decisions taken at a meeting. They may be very useful for reference purposes with the passage of time, for example, minutes may be needed to substantiate a claim or defend one made against the organisation. Accuracy is essential in respect of decisions taken.

Writing the minutes

Whoever is responsible for writing the minutes should take plenty of notes at the meeting and then pick out what is wanted for the draft. The order of items must be the same as the agenda and should be numbered. It is also helpful if the items are given headings to assist reference in the future. Every agenda item must be recorded. A verbatim account is not necessary, but

whilst brevity is best, the minutes must be a fair and accurate record and convey meaning

when read later, particularly by someone who was unable to attend. Members unable to attend should be noted under apologies section of the minutes.

The outcome and whether a vote was taken must be clearly indicated, plus who is responsible

for any action to be taken.

Minutes of a Committee Meeting should be set out as follows:

Minutes of the Aylesbury Vale U3A committee meeting held on (date) at (venue) at (time)

Present... (Chairman, followed by names of those present in alphabetical order and titles e.g.

Treasurer etc).

Apologies for absence.

1. Minutes of last meeting.

The Chairman asks if he/she may sign as a correct record. Any alterations to the wording or

errors must be agreed before the Chairman signs them with the date.

Once signed they form the only legal record of the business of the meeting.

2. Matters arising.

3. Numbered items as they appear on the agenda.

Decisions taken must be clear.

Finally finish with:

“There being no further business, the meeting closed at.....(time).

The next meeting will be

Signed..... Date.....

DOCUMENT RETENTION

Financial documents - at least 6 years.

AGM reports, annual accounts and minutes should be retained for the life of the association.

Committee meeting minutes should be permanently retained but where it is difficult or impractical to do so, a minimum of 6 years is recommended.

The above document was approved by the committee on 5/10/23

Date for review: 2025

Signed on behalf of the committee: Chris Lowe Chairman

Document Revised December 2024