

Minutes of the Oban u3a Annual General Meeting,

2 September 2025, 11.30 Corran Halls

A warm welcome was extended to everyone by the retiring Chair, Penny Earle.

The retiring Chair explained that photos had been taken during the morning at the Open Day and asked if there were any objections to the use of these photos for publicity or similar activities. There were no objections from the Floor.

Congratulations were extended to Dorothy Dahl on winning the 'Photographer of the Year' award.

Present:

Chris Adie, Helen Anderson, Susan Barnard, Julia Bateson, Paul Bateson, Fiona Batten, Robert Batten, Bob Batty, Elsa Bell, Richard Bosworth, Anne-Louise de Buriane, Toni Calam, Graham Cameron, Felicity Campbell, Janet Church, Patricia Collins, Joyce Coope, Dorothy Dahl, Caroline Dalglish, Alison Dawson, Penny Dixon, Penny Earle, Liz Eaton, Chris Farley, Rosemary Firth, Tom Firth, Alastair Fleming, Zöe Fleming, Mary Freer, Mary Gault, Maureen Gilmour, Frances Grant, Ken Groom, Martyn Harvey, David Hughes, Ann Jones, Margaret Keirnen, Joan Kemp, Karen Kerr, Ray Leakey, Audrey Maceachen, David Marshall, Valerie Marshall, Duncan Martin, Norman Martin, Pat Martin, Alexander McGuire, Pamela McGuire, Frances McKay, Jennnifer Miller, Keith Miller, Gordon Muir-Jones, Winnie Mullen, Kathy Murgatroyd, Ken Oxland, Mari Park, Diana Parson, Ian Parson, David Pollard, Sue Pollard, Rosemary Power, Alison Rennie, June Rhodes, Anne-Marie Robertson, Mary Sandilands, Catherine Shaw, Jennifer Shaw, Donald Shell, Alison Shepherd, Judith Shorter, Margo Sim, Margaret Sime, Liz Smith, Stuart Smith, Joy Sullivan, Joanne Sutherland, Neil Sutherland, Janet Turner, Michael Turner, Maurice Wilkins, David Williams, Charles Woods.

1.Apologies for absence

David Alcock, Anne Archer, Margaret Batty, Mandy Bosworth-Jones, Rob Clarke, Peter Darling, Phil Hamerton, Alan Hoar, Vanessa Kilpatrick, Pam Maguire, Sandy Maguire, Maud Marshall, Linda Pattison, Linda Robb, Annette Tedder, Jane Wilkinson, Rosemary Young

2.Acceptance of the minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 10 September 2024 had been circulated and were proposed as a true record by Joanne Sutherland, seconded by Anne-Louise de Buriane and carried unanimously.

3.Matters arising.

There were none.

4.Treasurer's Report and adoption of accounts.

The examined accounts of the past financial year had already been circulated, and the Treasurer, Richard Bosworth spoke to the meeting, highlighting:

- The membership has risen to 184 (last year 146), and so fee income has risen

- Group contributions show a surplus of £472. A majority of this lies at the door of the pickleball groups who have enjoyed several free sessions as a consequence. All groups have broken even or made a small profit with the exception of Bridge Group, which is a new group and is due to venue costs, however, one additional member joining the group would be sufficient to cover this shortfall.
- The group leaders' lunch had been merged with the Christmas lunch. The costs are higher than in previous years as there are more interest groups and therefore more group leaders who were given a free meal!
- Sundry income (£1,009) has arisen following the u3a group on Mull closing. The u3a rules mean that any surplus belonging to a closing group is passed to the closest active group rather than to the centre. This has been registered as a donation.
- Oban u3a has seen a significant rise in running costs due to increased membership, Beacon costs (only partially covered last year) and postage costs for distribution of Third Age Matters.
- Amongst expenditures there was the purchase of a CLA license to allow use of published material and equipment (new badge storage system).

Richard commented that without the 'Mull monies' and group 'surplus' there would have been a small loss in the overall figures, and consequently the Committee had felt justified in agreeing to a small rise in annual subscription.

Questions were invited, but there were none. Richard was thanked for his work on finances.

5. Chair's report.

The Chair advised the meeting that from the Committee's perspective the year had been quieter than last. However, the membership has risen from 146 last year to 187 this year (179 plus today's new joiners). Sadly, there has been the loss of three members, Peter Kemp, Nevin Blackwood and Jeanette Crerar who died during the year, and are fondly remembered.

The increased membership has been reflected in the increased number of groups. There are now 27, including the first evening group, ukelele, and the results of their efforts have been enjoyed today. New groups are still starting, including Astronomy and Drama who were represented at the open morning earlier in the day. There is something happening within the Oban u3a every day, and so there is a big thank you to all the Group Conveners, and of course to Joy Sullivan who has coordinated all that.

2024/25 showed a range of diverse and interesting talks at the monthly meeting, with a wide range of topics. Thanks are extended to Rosemary Young, who cannot be here today, for her liaison with speakers and also to the 'audio visual' helpers too.

The trial of online discussions by the repetition of Donald Shell's talks on British Politics on MS Zoom took place and thanks are extended to Donald for his time commitment in putting this in place.

The annual Festive Lunch took us to the Royal Hotel and was enjoyed by a good number of members.

The switch to the Beacon system has reduced a lot of administration, and all members are encouraged to use Beacon in the future as this really reduces the time needed to process renewals, new members, and choice of Interest Groups. A new 'welcome pack' has been developed and is being sent to all new members, thank you Neil.

Two committee members worked hard to develop a 'promotion leaflet', and all members are encouraged to take copies to place them about their locality. Facebook presence has drawn many likes with some new members finding Oban u3a this way. Articles have been published in the Oban Times who have also twice contacted the Chair for comments because of the perceived 'demographic' of the membership. We have highlighted that we are not an academic organisation, and we would welcome members of any age recognising that all age groups now have more free time on weekdays.

During the year the Committee proposed changing the constitution, but their suggestions were rejected by the Third Age Trust, so it remains unchanged at the end of the year.

There are two Scottish representatives on the new Council of the Third Age Trust, and they have made an enthusiastic start by holding the Scottish jamboree last week.

The committee has worked hard to maintain the u3a and help it thrive. During the year some Committee members have changed but all are thanked for their various contributions to the Committee.

Finally, I would like to extend thanks Sue Pollard for volunteering to stand as Interim Chair from today.

6.Election of the committee

Penny Earle presided over this section of the meeting, as she was no longer Chair. Proposers and seconders for the new committee had already been obtained, and details circulated. Additional nominations to the Committee from the floor were invited, but there were none. It was recognised that the Committee would be able to bring in new members on an ad hoc basis during the year as required.

The election of the committee en bloc as circulated was proposed by Sue Barnard, seconded by Duncan Martin and agreed unanimously.

Interim Chair	Sue Pollard
Vice-chair	Graham Cameron
Secretary	Julia Bateson
Treasurer	Richard Bosworth
Committee members	Neil Sutherland, David Hughes, Mary Freer, Charles Woods

Sue Pollard took the Chair of the meeting

7.The Year ahead

Sue Pollard as Interim Chair confirmed that it had been a very successful year for Oban u3a, but this had not been possible without the members of the Committee, some of whom were standing down at this meeting, Rosemary Young, had been key for arranging speakers for the talks and Joy Sullivan had been responsible for interest group conveners, and venues, sometimes offering her own home for meetings. A token of gratitude was given.

Thanks, were also extended to Penny Earle the retiring Chair, who had taken on the role as an almost full-time job, giving up some of her interest group memberships to devote time to the Committee. She had overseen the introduction of Beacon, brought documentation up to date and increased the membership. A presentation was made to Penny Earle.

All u3a groups come under the Third Age Trust, which works from the bottom up; and Oban u3a is no different. Members were asked to make suggestions for future groups and events. There is peer group learning within the Interest Groups, with conveners arranging and facilitating meetings not leading them.

8.AOCB

Sadly, the loss of members with the demographic of the u3a is inevitable, and it is appropriate to remember Eric Midwinter.

Jennifer Shaw spoke to the meeting about Eric Midwinter. Eric Midwinter co-founded the u3a in 1992. It was set up as a self-funding organisation, with no lower or upper age limit. His vision was that all can continue to learn, especially to counteract the negative stereotypes of older people.

There are now about 400,000 members of u3a country-wide and the organisation has been a model for similar organisations world-wide. There is a full obituary available in The Guardian 30 August 2025.

The Chair led the meeting in a minute's silence to remember those no longer with us.

Members were asked to remember the fate of Mull u3a; Oban u3a does not want to go the same way. Sue Pollard is only an Interim Chair and members are asked to consider this and what they might be able to contribute to the organisation.

None

9.Date of next AGM

1 September 2026.

The business having concluded the meeting adjourned at 12.05pm.