



South Central Network

SCN Secretaries Meeting Report

Tuesday 24th June 2025 10am

Attendees

Kevin Stock	SCN Manager	
Sally Ingledew	Council Rep	
Anne Warden	Secretary	Botley HE & District
Pat Lock	Secretary	Chichester
Maggie Gavin	Secretary	Gosport
Peter Newman	Secretary	Havant
Fiona Bartlett	Secretary	Hayling Island
Maggy Chesters	Secretary-to-be	Horndean & District
Gilli Smith	Secretary	Solent
Sue Cooper	Secretary	Stubbington
Lyn Moore	Secretary	Waterlooville

Apologies from: Ems Valley, Emsworth, Locks Heath, Meon Valley

- 1. Welcome** by Kevin Stock, SCN Manager
Permission was received to record the meeting for the purpose of producing this report.
- 2. Introductions** All attendees introduced themselves and said which role(s) they performed.

For this meeting I turned on Zoom's AI Transcribing facility, and this is the report that it produced (after minor corrections by myself).

Quick recap

The meeting began with introductions from various U3A secretaries and a discussion about the challenges of recruiting committee members for an upcoming AGM in September. The group explored various strategies for volunteer recruitment and discussed methods for taking meeting minutes, including the use of AI transcription and shared reporting systems. Sally identified several areas of concern regarding communication and website usability, with plans to address these issues through board review and potential task force creation.

Next steps

- Peter to continue recruiting committee members using personal approaches and emphasising the rewarding aspects of the role.
- Sally to look into why Gosport U3A is not appearing on the main map and assist Maggie with resolving this issue.
- Sally to develop and distribute a short paragraph about U3A principles for U3As to potentially include on their websites or newsletters.
- Southeast region Comms team to improve their website and develop a concise presentation of U3A principles.
- All secretaries to review their U3A's contact information on the committee portal to ensure it's up-to-date and consider using generic email addresses.
- Sally to investigate and address issues with the quality of responses from the national office to U3A queries.

Summary

U3A Volunteer Recruitment Challenges

The meeting began with introductions from various U3A secretaries, including Anne Warden, Pat Lock, Maggie Gavin, Fiona Bartlett, Gilli Smith, Sue Cooper, and Lynda Moore. Peter Newman discussed the challenge of recruiting committee members for their upcoming AGM in September, expressing concern about the organisation's future due to a lack of volunteers. Despite his efforts, Peter is still seeking one or two more committee members and requested ideas from others on how to encourage participation. The conversation ended with Sally Ingledew introducing herself as the Council Rep for the Southeast region, serving as the point of contact for u3as & network managers.

Volunteer Recruitment Strategies and Challenges

The group discussed challenges in recruiting committee members and volunteers, with Peter noting that despite offering rewarding roles requiring only a few hours per week, people often perceive the tasks as too demanding. Patricia shared that their committee had experienced high turnover but implemented a successful strategy of personal contact to engage potential volunteers, while Gilli emphasized the importance of proactive recruitment and personal approaches. Sally highlighted that the Southeast Comms team is working on direct member communication and creating documentation to explain U3A principles, and suggested avoiding overwhelming new members with detailed role descriptions. The discussion concluded with Kevin asking about minute-secretary roles, with Sue explaining that while they previously had a dedicated person, they are currently handling minutes as needed.

Meeting Minutes Documentation Strategies

The group discussed various methods for taking meeting minutes, with Kevin sharing his experience using AI transcription for SCN reports which requires minimal correction but doesn't always match the standard format. Lynda explained that audio recording meetings at Waterlooville helps capture complex discussions that would be difficult to note manually, while Gilli described her method of compiling individual committee reports into a minutes template. Patricia shared that her committee has streamlined the process by having members submit reports in a shared drive before meetings, which she then incorporates into the minutes with only significant discussions noted.

Risk Assessment Process Clarification

The group discussed risk assessments, confirming that completed forms are kept by the risk manager and group leaders conduct assessments for their respective groups, with home-based meetings requiring individual risk assessments while venue-based meetings are handled by group leaders. They clarified that while the national risk assessment template is used as a base, it is often adapted and not completed in full, with common sense applied based on the specific situation.

U3A Communication and Operations Review

Sally identified five areas of concern, with communication between office U3As, U3As and their members, and the office/board being the main issues. They plan to ask the board to review these concerns and potentially establish a task force to address them. She also raised concerns about the

website's usability and the quality of responses from the office, emphasising the need for more proactive initiatives and better understanding of U3A operations.

U3A Website and Mapping Updates

Sally discussed the website improvements and the use of ChatGPT to generate content for U3As. She highlighted the importance of keeping the committee portal up to date and mentioned that she now has access to all U3A details. Maggie raised concerns about not being able to get Gosport on the main map, and Sally agreed to look into the issue. The conversation ended with a brief go-around where attendees confirmed they had no additional comments or AOB.