

**SCN Media & PR Meeting
Tuesday 30th Sept 2025 10am**

Attendees

Kevin Stock	SCN Manager	
Sue Derrick	Chair	Botley HE & District
Rod Lipscombe	Vice-Chair	Ems Valley
John Draper	Vice-Chair	Gosport
Graham Sheppard	Chair & PR	Locks Heath
Andrew Wiltshire	PR	Portsmouth
Gilli Smith	Sec & PR	Solent
Mike Young	Vice-Chair & Media	Stubbington
Angela Chapman	New Bulletin	Waterlooville
Jo Derham	Media & Risk	Waterlooville

Apologies from: Botley, Havant, Horndean, Warsash

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

Representatives from various U3A groups met to discuss their current media/PR strategies, with different u3as using varying approaches for managing communications and social media presence. The meeting explored strategies for attracting more male members to U3A groups, which are predominantly female, and discussed IT support and digital safety

resources available to members. The group also covered methods for reaching a wider audience and attracting new members, including various communication channels and promotional strategies, while addressing concerns about copyright protection and balancing costs with accessibility.

Next steps

- Andrew to contact Portsmouth Central Library about placing a U3A information folder on their desk.
- Andrew to explore starting male-oriented groups like archaeology to increase male membership in Portsmouth U3A.
- Andrew to follow up with Portsmouth MPs and the Lord Mayor who attended the 40th anniversary event for potential community outreach.
- Andrew to consider marketing Portsmouth U3A differently to emphasize the social aspects rather than the cost when approaching surgeries for social prescribing.
- Mike to continue the successful Saturday morning coffee meetings to attract new members.
- Angela to share the links from Waterlooville U3A website regarding digital and online safety with Andrew.
- Kevin to consider updating the Waterlooville U3A Public Facebook page more regularly, particularly for events like Open Day.

Summary

U3A Media and PR Strategies

The meeting involved representatives from various U3As discussing their current membership numbers, group activities, and media/PR strategies. Several, including Portsmouth, Waterlooville, and Botley, have media or PR personnel, while others, like Ems Valley and Gosport, rely on committee members to handle these tasks. The discussion highlighted the challenges of managing social media presence, particularly on Facebook, and the need for tech-savvy individuals to maintain websites and member communications.

U3A Newsletter Distribution and Gender Balance

The meeting discussed various methods of distributing newsletters among U3A members, with most groups opting for a combination of email and postal services. Andrew highlighted a significant gender imbalance in Portsmouth's U3A, with only about 10 men for every 100 women, and the group explored potential strategies to attract more male members,

including creating a 10-PIN bowling group. John noted that Portsmouth's large men's shed might be a deterrent for male membership, and the group considered whether their £45 annual fee could be a barrier to attracting more members.

Boosting Male U3A Membership Engagement

The group discussed strategies for attracting more male members to U3A, noting that most groups are predominantly female. They shared experiences of mixed success with male-oriented groups, including archaeology and science/technology. The discussion highlighted the challenge of encouraging men to join groups, with suggestions including having male meet-and-greet volunteers and advertising for new male-focused groups. They also briefly touched on concerns about online scams and how to support members who are nervous about using computers for U3A communications.

IT Support and Digital Safety

The group discussed IT support and digital safety resources available to members. Angela shared that Waterlooville U3A provides IT advice through volunteer members and offers links to crime prevention and online safety information on their website. Andrew mentioned an upcoming speaker on digital safety concerns. Graham emphasized the importance of teaching basic tech skills to members in a simple, step-by-step approach. Sue mentioned that their webmaster offers individual help after monthly meetings, and John noted an upcoming police presentation on cyber security.

Expanding Audience Engagement Strategies

The group discussed strategies for reaching a wider audience and attracting new members to their organisation. They explored various approaches, including coffee mornings, partnerships with local surgeries, and leveraging existing member networks. Graham emphasised the importance of breaking out of existing cultural norms to reach a broader community. The discussion highlighted the challenges of balancing cost with accessibility, with Jo suggesting that emphasising the social benefits could help overcome these issues.

Communication Channels and Copyright Discussion

The group discussed various communication channels, including Facebook, WhatsApp, and physical leaflets, with Sue reporting they had 300 tri-fold leaflets printed at a cost of around £100. They explored the use of public versus private Facebook pages, with different U3As opting for different approaches based on their membership needs. The discussion concluded with a debate about whether to purchase a £70 CLA license for copyright protection, with Mike and others noting specific instances where copyright laws had affected their activities, particularly regarding music copying for the choir.