

SCN Webmasters, Beacon Admin and IT Meeting Agenda

Tuesday January 27th 2026 10am

Attendees

Kevin Stock	SCN Manager	
Sally Ingledew	Council Rep	
Linda Jeans	Membership	Botley HE & District
Warner Baker	Webmaster	Botley HE & District
Peter Newland	Beacon & Web	Chichester
Jennifer Bellamy	Webmaster	Gosport
Andy Forbes	SER Web	Horndean & District
Stephanie Sheppard	Webmaster	Locks Heath
John Stych	Beacon & Mem	Locks Heath
Prue Amner	Beacon & Web	Rowlands Castle
Jim Gilhooley	Beacon & Web	Solent
Sally Ingledew	Membership	Stubbington
Rob Johnson	Beacon & Web	Warsash
Angela Chapman	Beacon & Web	Waterlooville

Apologies from:

- Welcome** by Kevin Stock, SCN Manager
Permission was received to record the meeting for the purpose of producing this report.
- 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).

Meeting summary

Quick recap

The South Central Network Meeting focused on various operational aspects of U3A organizations, including online membership renewal processes, website policies, and technical issues. Peter shared his experience with implementing online renewals through Beacon, highlighting the use of PayPal and the challenges of joint memberships. The group discussed strategies for storing and accessing policies, with Jennifer seeking advice on password-protecting sensitive information. Jim inquired about cookie settings, and the conversation ended with a brief discussion about the inclusion of U3As on the National U3A website. Participants shared their experiences with Beacon training courses and addressed technical issues related to website management.

Next steps

- Sally: Send events information to Andy by email for posting on the website.
- Prue Amner: Attend (or arrange to attend with membership secretary) the relevant Beacon training course on online joining and membership renewal.
- Rob: If further email sending issues occur, raise a support ticket with the Beacon support team for investigation.
- Jennifer: Investigate password protecting or hiding sensitive pages/documents on the website and consider implementing a global or shared password as discussed.
- Peter: Advise Prue Amner on the Beacon migration process and share relevant experience as needed.
- Warner: Check with National U3A (or TAT) to ensure non-SiteWorks U3A websites are listed in the national directory and follow up if not listed.

Summary

South Central Network Meeting Kickoff

The meeting began with introductions and casual conversation, Kevin mentioning the expected attendance of 15 people. Kevin then asked everyone to ensure their U3A was included in their name. The meeting was officially opened by Kevin, who welcomed everyone to the first Network Meeting of the Year and introduced himself as the Manager of the South Central Network. He encouraged attendees to introduce themselves and state their roles.

U3A Membership Systems Discussion

The meeting began with introductions from various U3A members, including website administrators and beacon administrators from different regions. Kevin noted that many U3As have one person handling both the website and beacon roles. Prue raised the issue of automatically renewing U3A membership fees through the Beacon system, as her group currently uses other systems for their gardening club and historical society. Prue said her u3a are doing a feasibility study for online membership. Peter shared his experience with implementing online joining and renewing for their U3A, noting that while it generally works well, some members encounter issues with PayPal registration. To address these problems, they offer a guest option and also accept payments over the phone.

Online Payment System Implementation Discussion

Peter explained the setup process for online payments through Beacon, emphasizing the importance of testing the system with committee members before a full rollout. Angela highlighted the potential financial impact of commission fees for members switching from BACS to online payments.

Online Membership Renewal Process

Peter explained the transition from manual to online membership renewal processes, highlighting the significant time and effort saved by automating payments through PayPal and Beacon. Angela noted that their group has

adapted well to online payments, with minimal issues, while Andy shared that their smaller U3A has successfully managed online renewals for years. The discussion also covered the process for new members, with Prue explaining that they can join by filling out a form and paying via bank transfer, cheque, or cash. Kevin inquired about online payment options, and Peter clarified that PayPal serves as a credit card processor, allowing members to pay by card or PayPal account.

PayPal Integration for Payment Processing

The group discussed the integration of PayPal and credit card payment processing through the Beacon system, where payments are recorded automatically and funds are temporarily held in a PayPal account before being transferred to the organization's main account. Peter explained that the system charges approximately 1.6% for transactions, which is automatically accounted for in the financial records, and clarified that members can pay either by PayPal or credit card through the portal. Sally raised concerns about account reconciliation with the treasurer, and Jennifer noted that the method of payment (credit card, debit card, or cash) is irrelevant to the organization once funds are received through PayPal.

PayPal Data Compliance Discussion

The group discussed payment processing through PayPal, with Warner explaining that while PayPal retains customer details, this is standard practice and compliant with GDPR regulations. They clarified that guest payments do not affect data retention, and Peter noted that joint memberships cannot be processed through the online system. The conversation ended with Rob reporting that an email delivery issue at Warsash U3A had been resolved, with Peter suggesting it might have been related to system updates on Tuesday.

Website Policy Storage Strategies

The group discussed how to store and share policies on their website. Jennifer explained her concerns about making policies easily accessible to the public and suggested password-protecting them. Other members shared their approaches, including using password-protected pages and

hidden links. Warner, a former GDPR expert, advised that policies should be generic and not contain personal identifiable information. The group agreed that while policies should be accessible, they could be shared more widely to avoid potential issues.

Website Policies and Risk Assessments

The meeting discussed website policies and risk assessments, with Prue explaining that risk assessments are available on a dedicated page and Jim noting that key policies are displayed on the homepage. Peter advised on managing search engine visibility for policies using the Yoast plugin. The group addressed a question about cookie settings, with Peter explaining that websites must obtain user permission for cookies under UK law, though cookies primarily help website navigation. The conversation ended with a discussion about Beacon training courses on Zoom, which most U3As utilize.

Warner raised concerns about some U3As not appearing on the National U3A website, which Angela confirmed had been resolved.