

WOOD GREEN TRUST

Registered Charity no:1079995

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting to be held Saturday 17th May 2025 (on Teams)

1. Welcome & Apologies

Present Wendy Holton, Rosemary Ruston, Isobel Mason, Martin Whitell, Peter Hanley, Jenny Janes, Paul Cordell, Anne Fieldhouse, Maithri Gohill, Martin Fieldhouse

2. Minutes last meeting (21/9/24) shared and approved. Wendy will sign.

3. Matters arising

Unitarian Transformers have now become a charitable incorporated company.

4. Chairman's report (Wendy Holton)

This year has seen the end of the sponsorship for Unitarian Transformers. Although there were bumps along the way, it has been successful and the project continues as a charitable incorporated company.

The Trustees should be proud of how they've enabled UT to carry on their work in promoting Unitarianism and their beliefs to a wider audience.

The various online groups have been successful and the children's Transformers and Starfish have continued to grow. Thanks go to Rosemary and Andrew for this.

I must say how grateful I am to Peter for his involvement and the support in our regular contracts with the Unitarian Transformers. In particular, I'd like to thank Peter for his call to follow success and not dwell on failure which has been very important in allowing UT to develop as it did. It's also taught me a few lessons along the way.

We had a good response to our winter warmer grants, which have been used by 9 different groups, including Evesham, which is where Mark Hutchinson is now situated.

We have not had any feedback from these winter.

We put out a call for new projects to carry forward. We now have two new projects for us to consider.

I'd like to thank Jenny for her work as a treasurer for us. We need to seek a successor for her in the coming year as she would like to relieve herself of the duties of treasurer.

I will also like to end by thanking all the Trustees for the work they've put in on the various and principal requests we've received over the last year. So thank you very much.

5. Treasurer's report (Jenny Janes)

There is an increase in the total cash funds from £57,901 in 2023 to £78,410 and in the investments from £515,549 in 2023 to £528,191.

At the end of 2024, the balance in our CAF current account was £43,000, in the CAF deposit account, there was £61,000 and then the Tridos deposit account was £27,000.

Our main investments continue to be managed by Quilter Chevrolet. Grants were given to the ministerial fellowship and the final £15,000 the third of three to Unitarian Transformers.

There were three delegates to the GA meetings, Stroud, Watford and Bangor and also £9000 to the LDPA for Fuse 2024 and £10,000 to the GA for the youth programme.

The warm spaces support attracted 6 grants at £500 and 1 at £1000. At present, the balance in our current account stands at £45,000 when considering future Grant in 2025. It is important to keep this money available so we can act when needed.

Quilters handle our investments successfully and are keen to take the burden of administration from us. We agreed this at the last meeting and Jenny still recommends it. They are very personable to deal with. She has circulated the information. Everyone in the meeting were in agreement.

Wendy thanked Jenny for all her work.

6. Secretary's report (Isobel Mason)

Relatively busy year. X2 larger applications approved (FUSE 2025 and Unitarian GA Youth programme).

2 requests to agree today from the Cardiff community and Unitarian college.

WWS grants very successful, 9 applications from 8 congregations.

We have had x2 feedback.

Agreed we should request feedback from all.

7. Election of Officers 2024.

Wendy & Isobel agreed to continue as chair and secretary.

Jenny agreed to continue as treasurer until a successor is found.

8. Appointment of Examiner

According to accountancy rules our turnover is below threshold so we don't technically require an examiner. Peter advised we should check with Quilters.

We are only just below, so agreed we should seek a new examiner in the coming year.

9. Recent applications for consideration

Cardiff community Seeking £800 for a 6 month project. Martin W spoke to Ant How. The applicant is aiming to get a number of projects at alternative style gatherings. The Cardiff congregation is in a fairly weak state. If we proceed it shouldn't be long term. Fairly small amount requested. There is a risk, but it is a good application.

Peter agreed a small amount and a good idea. Some discussion about the measurement of success is required. Would be useful to get a report of outcomes.

Rosemary raised concerns over numbers of potential users, would like only 6 months.

Isobel explained that she has no financial link, but Unitarian College have agreed to manage the finances.

Agreed to proceed with Martin W overseeing. Isobel to email confirmation and copy in Jenny and Martin W.

Unitarian College £2000

Peter felt it was a good idea, however, their accounts are strong. He suggested £1000.

Martin W explained he is particularly drawn to the application that the Czech University have strong congregations and affiliations and he is keen that the UK really support and really beneficial for young people. Suggested £1500.

Isobel declared interested as the application is from her sister Helen, but that UC are really developing youth work. Suggested £1500.

Maithri described positive contacts with the Czech Unitarians through Heart and Soul.

Wendy, UC have good contacts in the Czech republic. Very good application. Bonding and cohesion for young people.

Anne felt these could be good experiences that would leave a lasting impression.

Agreed to fund £1500.

Lay Leadership

Martin F had emailed a proposal to consider financial support to the Lay Leadership development (£100 per person). Currently the training comprises x4 residential weekends at a cost of £3000 (minimal 12 per course). Wendy had discussed with Helen Mason who explained that about 30% pay the total cost independently. 70% have financial support (from own church or district).

Wendy suggested that any applicants should show evidence of having sought funding from own church or district) and that we could make a contribution to specific applicants. Proposed we should let UC know that we will consider applications and let Martin F know we would consider an application from his daughter.

Isobel suggested we reach out to Unitarian College.

Martin W supportive of lay leadership training, but applicants can look for funding elsewhere (local & General Assembly). Agreed to a conversation through UC with a capped offer (£1000-£1500). Happy to offer £400 to Martin F's daughter. Suggested a conversation with UC about how we could support.

Anne described that her sister struggled to fund her lay leadership training for Bridgewater (who don't have funds). The course work is quite intensive and time consuming, which also raises costs.

Peter, speculated whether UC could also advise on the impact of the monies.

Maithri agreed we should clarify other sources of funding.

Agreed Isobel will email Martin F with an offer to support his daughter's costs, Isobel to write to UC expressing our interest in supporting those who do not have funding from other sources moving forward.

10. Planning – 2025 Grants x2 applications

Warwick Peter, reasonable application but more background is needed. Perhaps more ready than Newcastle. Not convinced solid bid.

Wendy, like 4 years ago we need much more information and scrutiny.
Digital is expensive and needs technical expertise.

Martin W suggested this proposal is at an early stage and we don't have enough information as yet.

1st year, 90 minute meeting per month. Not a lot of activity for the cost.

Warwick congregation is at a cross roads. Big risk with lots of money. Would be a good option for GA Innovation fund but needs to 'match' funding. Needs technical expertise. Little creative thought.

Newcastle Peter, in essence, a stronger 'no'. Some of the details relies too much on the digital realm. Needs lots of scrutiny before moving forward. Responding to a problem, but not advanced enough to fund £45,000.

Wendy, Newcastle needs more details.

Maithri, both applications are addressing new ways of delivering to Unitarians.

Isobel not enough insight / information to make a definitive decision.

Rosemary expressed concerns that both are all digital. Little evidence of community or congregation involvement.

Anne, not enough depth.

Wider discussion about whether we want to follow up on either for more detail.

Agreed to decline both but to direct them to the GA Innovation fund. Martin W helped with the wording of our response (below).

'Thank you for applying for funding for your project at xxxx. We considered the application carefully at our meeting recently and appreciate the work you have done to get your ideas to this stage.

We don't feel able to proceed with you as yet for two main reasons.

The primary one is that the General Assembly Innovation Fund is in place offering significant funds and support for the type of innovative approach you suggest. We would welcome you to come back to us if that Fund rejects any proposal you make to them.

Our second reason is that we don't feel you are quite ready to proceed to our next stage which would be meet with a group of our trustees to discuss your plans in detail.

We would encourage you to develop your ideas more and maybe clarify your proposed programme in the light of your engagement with the Innovation Fund.

We hope this is not too disappointing for you but we stress that we are open to a future application if you cannot meet the requirements of the Innovation Fund.'

11. AOB

Trustees Paul unable to continue as a Trustee from this meeting onwards. Wendy thanked him for all his help, assisting Jenny, providing venues for lunches and the development of the website. He will be happy to pass on the website details when we find a replacement interested in its continued development.

2 new Trustees Jenny & Sam (details below).

Sam Cane

36 Hayes Lane
Fakenham Norfolk NR21 9ER
Phone 07766 534003

email sam.cane1982@hotmail.co.uk

Jennie Deacon
47 Manor Drive,
Arleston, Telford TF1 2ND
phone 07801 534400

email deaconja@gmail.com

Warm Winter Spaces Wendy will advertise again. Isobel to ask for reports from this years' successful applicants.

12. Next meeting: Saturday September 6th, 11am, 69 the Ridgeway, Flitwick, MK45 1DJ.