LETCHWORTH ARTS & LEISURE GROUP

Minutes of Committee Meeting

Monday 19 January 2026 at 7.30pm

In Meeting Room, Mrs Howard Memorial Hall, Letchworth Garden City SG6 1NX

Present:

Committee
Jackie Harber, Chair
Tessa Palfreyman, Secretary
Hetty Smith, Treasurer
Judith Gower, DP and EDI Officer
Phil Morgan, Volunteers Coordinator
William Armitage
Amy Wilson
Jo Viscusi

Guest – Sandra Mee

Item	Decisions and Actions	Who	By
1. Approval of apologies	Apologies received from Kim Baker, Charles Chong and Trevor Lynam and approved. Member Sandra Mee was welcomed to the meeting and introductions made.		
2. Declaration of interests	Standing Declaration from Judith as member of the Board of The Cloisters.		
3. Approval of minutes of previous meeting	The Minutes of the meeting on 19 November were approved and signed by the Chair.		
4. Matters arising/ outstanding actions not covered under other agenda items	A number of actions from the summary table have been completed. See revised summary table on pages 4-5 of these minutes for current actions.	**All to read**	ASAP
5. Chair's Report	▪ Report previously circulated and contents noted. ▪ William noted that Jackie's presence at a recent coffee meeting was well received by the members. ▪ Jo reported on progress with the recent complaint from a member. ▪ **ACTION: Jackie, Judith and Jo will meet to discuss the Reasonable Adjustment issue and finalise the report. Jackie S. will be invited to the meeting.** ▪ **ACTION: Jackie to email both parties to bring them up to date.** ▪ It was noted that the content of the complaint will contribute to the redrafting of our EDI policy.	**JH/JG/ JV** **JH**	ASAP ASAP
6. Treasurer's Report	▪ Reports previously circulated and contents noted. ▪ Jackie queried two negative figures for newsletter and Monday Open Meetings in the December accounts pdf.		

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	▪ **ACTION: Hetty to check figures with Kim.** ▪ **ACTION: Hetty to add note that costs for First Aid Course under Group Finances are paid by Committee**. ▪ Hetty reported that the Table Tennis group is planning to spend their balance on a new table. ▪ The Opera and Ballet group has now closed and their funds have been transferred to the central LALG account which will be shown on the January accounts sheet. ▪ Redwood Bank will reduce its interest rate from 2.7% to 2.5% from the end of January. Committee agreed we should not move our funds from them at this time. ▪ The meeting agreed to transfer £3000 from the Lloyds account to Redwood Bank under 'Running Cost Surplus'. ▪ **ACTION: Hetty to arrange the transfer.**	**HS/KB** **HS** **HS**	ASAP ASAP ASAP
7. Membership Secretary's Report	▪ Report previously circulated and contents noted. ▪ Our membership figures are the highest they have ever been. ▪ William asked if we can see how many members we would need to recruit in a year simply to replace the ones we lose. While the figures cannot be produced annually due to data deletion as required by GDPR, they are shown on the reports month to month.		
8. Governance	▪ A) The acknowledgement of the Group Support Team's response to minute 10 of the November minutes was approved (see item 10 below for text). ▪ Tessa explained the amendments to the draft guidelines for the Community Benefit Initiative category. Following discussion it was agreed to seek any further views by email. ▪ **ACTION: Tessa to email committee with revised draft and set deadline for response.** ▪ B) Judith presented her DPO annual report which was accepted subject to a date change. ▪ **ACTION: Tessa to make amendment and archive.** ▪ C) Jo set out the issue of potential cancellation and refund of fees levied by individual groups for activities such as trips; for example if a member pays in advance and then cannot attend. It was acknowledged that groups tend to make their own rules but that these need to be made explicit to their members. ▪ **ACTION: Hetty to draft a form of words for Group Contacts to make this clear and circulate to Committee for comment.** ▪ D) Jackie explained the recent query around the funding of a free place for a carer at LALG events. After discussion it was agreed to form a small group to define the term carer and how free places might be applied. ▪ **ACTION: Jackie, Jo, Judith and Sandra will meet to discuss this.**	 **TP** **TP** **HS** **JH/JV/ JG/SM**	 ASAP ASAP ASAP ASAP
9. Volunteering	▪ Report previously circulated and contents noted. ▪ William explained a loss of members in a team often		

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	leads to them reducing their scope of work which can reduce opportunities for LALG in general. ▪ Phil noted that we will need more distributors for the Directory and leaflets and a list of where they are placed as William steps back. Amy noted she had a list of some placement venues. ▪ **ACTION: William to work with Phil to produce a list of venues where the Directory is displayed and cross check with Amy.**	**WA/PM/ AW**	ASAP
10. Group Support Team	▪ Report previously circulated and contents noted. ▪ The Committee is grateful to the Group Support Team for their response to the minutes of item 10 at the November Committee meeting. The Committee takes this opportunity to acknowledge the feedback: We agree that keen editing and a reduction of adverts may make space for a few more groups. The LALG Strategy aims to "Maintain the number of members and groups at a viable level". Key indicators for viability include newsletter capacity and human resource in the GST hence the Committee's interest in these areas. We appreciate that the Group Support Team already prioritises the duplication of an existing group where sufficient demand exists, as well as new ideas coming from within the LALG membership. It is reassuring to learn that the GST aims that all new ideas should ideally be restricted to publication in two consecutive issues of the newsletter, but the Committee recognises that occasionally this may alter. The Committee is happy for the GST to maintain two pages in the newsletter for New Ideas and is reassured to learn that this is felt to be part of a successful strategy for managing workload associated with the creation of new ideas that does not overwhelm the team. ▪ William noted there is a trend in the newsletter for some groups not to include details of their meeting scheduled for the second month. As a result, the publicity emails promote these activities when notified of them. ▪ **ACTION: William to discuss this with GST with a view to issuing encouragement to Group Contacts via GC Bulletin to include details in newsletter.** ▪ The GST are considering removing the label 'Full' next to groups with no space in the newsletter as it is perceived as off-putting. The Committee agreed and is happy for the GST to seek the views of GCs via the next GC Bulletin. ▪ **ACTION: Tessa to notify the GST**.	**WA** **TP**	ASAP ASAP
11. Publicity Team	▪ Amy gave a verbal report. The Publicity Team's current focus is on building a list of possible events to take part in during 2026 and devising their calendar. ▪ The team would also like to run some smaller-scale		

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	publicity events for specific clusters of groups with a shared theme such as art and craft., These would provide a focused way to recruit new members and publicise the organisation. ▪ The team is also planning to advertise LALG in Letchworth, Baldock and Hitchin libraries with a stand. ▪ Publicity is also planned for the Ashwell at Home event in May; Letchworth Festival in June and Hitchin Festival in July. ▪ Amy is exploring the production of photos and video clips of groups in action subject to full consents. ▪ Amy is ordering a new roller banner and other items. Judith noted that it would be valuable to include a QR code on the roller banner. ▪ Time did not allow for discussion the formation of a sub-committee to discuss 40th anniversary of LALG ▪ **ACTION: Tessa to email committee to ascertain who would like to be involved.**	**TP**	ASAP
12. Social Team	▪ The Social Team is pleased to report that they are now at full strength with the addition of two new members. ▪ Judith reported that Andy McConnell (glass expert) is now giving a talk at The Cloisters this year in which case it will be too soon to book him for LALG in 2026. ▪ Judith has other contacts with Antiques Roadshow experts who may be able to speak later in the year such as at the AGM See AOB.		
13. IT Group and website	▪ Report previously circulated and contents noted.		
14. Linked organisations	▪ No applications received.		
15. Focus	▪ **i) Budget Setting** ▪ The meeting reviewed the proposed budgets sheet produced by Hetty. A discussion followed on how we can use our funds for the benefit of current and potential members. Amy suggested a tablet or similar to run a looped slide show advertising LALG and our groups for use on publicity stalls. ▪ Judith extended this idea with a proposal to devise an advertisement for LALG which can be played in the Broadway Cinema before the film starts. ▪ **ACTION: Judith to approach cinema re cost of screening an advert for LALG.** ▪ The budgets were accepted subject to further discussion on spending at the February Committee meeting and thanks extended to Hetty for her work on this. ▪ **ACTION: Hetty will ask Kim to populate the final column on the sheet to show spending to date for each relevant category.** ▪ **ii) Directory copies** ▪ Jackie presented her statistics on the cost of the Directory per issue (75p); the number of new members recruited in 2025 (383 households/617 members) and the proportion recruited via the newsletter/directory (16%) of the 75% of new members that gave that information.	**JG** **HS/KB**	ASAP ASAP

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	▪ William explained that the Directory's aims are to raise LALG's profile and recruit new members and it is less costly to produce than the newsletter. ▪ The figures show that we are spending a lot of money on the Directory but it is not recruiting a lot of new members, four times as many were recruited by word of mouth in 2025. ▪ The Committee was concerned that the cost of producing so many directories may not be the best use of the publicity team's budget. ▪ Phil questioned how to replace William and possibly the directory. It was agreed to hold a separate meeting to share ideas and seek a way forward. ▪ **ACTION: Amy to arrange a meeting of the Publicity Team to which the committee will be invited in order to discuss the above.** ▪ William suggested and the Committee agreed to an allocation of 500 copies of the Directory for the February/March issue.	**AW**	ASAP
16. Any Other Business	i) Date 2026 AGM ▪ The Committee discussed a Monday morning AGM versus an evening one and agreed that a daytime session was more attractive as October evenings are dark and often cold. ▪ **ACTION: As three Committee members absent, Tessa to email Committee proposing we attach the AGM to the Monday Open Meeting subject to the Social Team's agreement.** ii) Letchworth Festival ▪ No time to discuss this but it is already being considered by the Publicity Team. iii) Following her observation of the meeting, Sandra volunteered to join the Committee. She was welcomed with pleasure. **ACTION: Tessa to process the paperwork for Sandra.**	**TP** **TP**	ASAP ASAP
17. Future Committee meeting dates	**All meetings start at 7.30pm and take place at Mrs Howard Memorial Hall unless otherwise indicated.** *** Meetings asterisked are strategy ones.** **2026** Tuesday 17 February* Wednesday 18 March Monday 20 April* Via Zoom for all participants Tuesday 19 May Wednesday 17 June* Monday 20 July Tuesday 18 August* Wednesday 16 September Monday 16 November		

The meeting closed at 9.45pm.

These minutes were approved by the Committee and signed by the Chair at the Committee meeting on 17 February 2026