

LRU3A – IT/WEB PEER GROUP

MEETING – Monday 10th August 2026, 4.30pm, on Zoom

Zoom link details:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81624610055?pwd=0hUb2yLCtUQ6tcjOO1mTH0OPjK4Zwy.1>

Meeting ID 816 2461 0055

Passcode 110193

These meeting notes are not minutes – they don't try to capture all details discussed. But they do try to record key discussion points or actions arising.

ATTENDEES:

No	u3a NAME	REP NAME	Att	Apol.
1	Abbeywood & Thamesmead	???		
2	Barnet	Marisa Nicholls		
3	Beckenham	Deborah Whale	1	
4	Bexley	Paul Wilkins ?? LUIGI LIPPARELLI ??		
5	Brent	David Rose		1
6	Bromley	Sally O'Donnell Richard Jones		
7	Crouch End & District	Julian Osley		
8	Croydon	Steve May Kerstin Beard Jenny Wilson (RT)		
9	Dulwich & District	David Beamish	1	
10	Ealing	Phil Broomsgrove (PB) Jurek Narozanski		
11	Enfield	Gaye Illsley		
12	Hackney	Angie Daly, Tony Hollingworth		
13	Hammersmith and Fulham	Graham Tigg (GT) Neville Rowden	1	
14	Harrow	Nita Patel Kathy Westhead		
15	Havering	Brian Hudson		
16	HGS	David Powers		
17	Hillingdon	Tony Kemp		
	Hounslow	Sally Eggett		1
	Islington	Derek Harwood (DH)	1	
	Kenton & District	Dick Nathan	1	
	Kingston	Diane Wilson		
	Merton	David Lusty		
	Mill Hill	Richard Driscoll		
	Newham	Hilary Norton		1
	Northwood	Geoff Street		
	North London	Mike Christie (MC)	1	
	Norwood	Geoff Street		
	Orpington	Roger Howe		

	Palmers Green	Frances Halliday Colin Nesbit		
29	Redbridge & District	Lennart Christensen		
30	Richmond upon Thames	David Wood		
31	SE London	Mark Serebriakoff (MS) Martha Fox	1 1	
32	Stanmore District	Martin Carr		
33	Sidcup	Trevor Ford	1	
34	Sutton	outsourced		
35	Tower Hamlets	Peter Sellars / Stella Morris ??		
36	u3a in London	Sylvia Churba Mari-Ange King		
37	Upminster	Richard Strauss		
38	Waltham Forest	Jane Harrington Carol Kinghorn		
39	Wandsworth	Mike McConigly	1	
40	Wanstead & Woodford	Phil Joiner Dinah Calderbank		
41	Welling	Maria Guest-Naharnowicz Marisa Miller		
	Surrey Network	Ian Funnell Carol Stilwell		

AGENDA:

1. Review of Actions Arising
2. SiteWorks
3. Open Discussions
4. AOB

From Zoom AI Companion:

Summary/ Quick recap:

The meeting was an informal discussion among u3a web and IT managers, focusing on SiteWorks, Beacon, and digital tools. Derek confirmed that the recent Beacon CRM data breach was unrelated to the u3a's own Beacon system. The group discussed password-protected pages in SiteWorks. Most felt that passwords would be remembered and you couldn't over ride that (to make members sign in each time). There was discussion regarding about single sign-on between Beacon and SiteWorks – had been previously considered but considered too difficult at the time. There had been work done previously regarding integration (to avoid duplication) between Beacon and SiteWorks. Status of the DSU project was discussed. The 'Discovery' phase was now complete. There has been no technical development yet. Members shared experiences with WordPress membership plugins, the use of third-party plugins in SiteWorks, and resources like the WordPress forum. PayPal integration in Beacon was discussed, including an upcoming API upgrade to improve the user experience while still using PayPal. Alternatives like Stripe, Zettle, and bank transfers were compared, with practical issues around references and card payments noted. The use of MailChimp

and MailerLite for newsletters was reviewed, along with methods for maintaining mailing lists from Beacon exports. The meeting closed with a reminder of the next scheduled session.

1. Review of actions outstanding: none

New actions arising:

Derek: Follow up with Wendy regarding the status of the non-duplication modification project for Beacon and SiteWorks in a few weeks.

Derek: Send a message to Wendy to volunteer Islington u3a for early rollout of the new PayPal API in Beacon.

Dick: Share the method for adding a background image to the SiteWorks menu on mobile devices with the group if he manages to implement it (others to provide solutions if they have implemented already).

(next section not checked – taken from Zoom Companion)

2. SiteWork Implementation and Updates

The meeting focused on SiteWorks updates, with Derek sharing that another London u3a had decided to implement SiteWorks. There followed open discussion on a number of topics raised.

3. Beacon CRM Data Breach Clarification

Mark asked about a data breach involving Beacon CRM, seeking clarification on whether it was related to their organization's Beacon system. Derek confirmed that the two Beacons are completely separate - one is a commercial product used by charities, while the other is an internal U3A software system. Derek explained that they had already communicated this distinction in their London region mail shot, and Dick shared that he experienced a similar data leak with his charity's Beacon CRM system, which included personal details and DBS number.

4. Website Password Requirements Discussion

David asked about password requirements for a members' page on their website, believing that password managers would automatically save credentials. Graham and Mike Christie explained that WordPress typically maintains login sessions for about a month, though there might be a timeout period. Derek shared his experience of leaving SiteWorks logged in for extended periods, while Mark clarified that the discussion was specifically about a separately passworded members' page.

5. Website Password and Login Issues

The group discussed password protection and login issues for their website systems. Mark and Graham explored whether passwords could be configured to require entry each time, but David explained this would be difficult to implement securely. Mike Christie expressed disappointment that single sign-on between Beacon and SiteWorks wasn't implemented, as he had hoped this would be addressed by 2026. Derek clarified that previous attempts at single sign-on were deemed too difficult to implement, and the non-duplication project to avoid data field duplication in both systems has been delayed due to the DSU project priorities.

6. Technical Implementation Status Discussion

Derek and Graham discussed the status of various technical implementations, including gift aid and PayPal features that are scheduled for August deployment. Mike Christie raised concerns about the lack of technical discussion regarding single sign-on solutions and non-duplication features in the DSU project, expressing disappointment that no details about potential technical solutions like Google's sign-on manager or third-party password managers had been shared with the SiteWorks implementation team. The group also discussed WordPress membership plugins as an alternative approach for some U3As, though the conversation ended before fully addressing whether these plugins are approved by the SiteWorks team.

7. WordPress Plugins Discussion Summary

The group discussed WordPress plugins, with Derek mentioning that some small U3As avoid using Beacon due to cost and instead use alternative plugins. Graham explained that while official plugin recommendations exist, there are approximately 200 other plugins used by U3As, and the platform manages plugins by monitoring security updates and suspicious installation patterns. The discussion also covered the WordPress forum, with Derek noting that while the Friday digest contains some useful information, the full forum provides more detailed content and links, and Graham suggested checking the "how-tos" section on the website for additional resources.

8. PayPal Upgrade Discussion

The group discussed an upcoming PayPal upgrade that will improve the user experience by allowing easier payment by debit and credit card without requiring a PayPal account. Derek explained that Islington is particularly excited about this change as 85% of their renewals are processed online through PayPal, and many members encounter difficulties during the September renewal period. Graham mentioned that Wendy had sent instructions for the upgrade process, though he found them complicated, and Mike McConigley suggested reaching out to Wendy for more volunteers to test the early rollout before September.

9. U3A Payment System Options

Martha asked about payment methods used by other u3as. Many use BACs. Islington do over 80% of their annual renewals through Beacon/PayPal. But many other u3as use BACs for this. Some u3as use BACs for their Outings or Group activities to avoid paying to a coordinators personal bank account. Graham proposing a central payment pot managed by the trust, similar to that proposed originally for Beacon 2, which would collect and redistribute money while taking a small fee. Mike Christie confirmed this was previously proposed by APT as a way to create a revenue stream. The discussion clarified that while PayPal's new API provides better security and a more integrated user experience within Beacon, the actual fund delivery still goes through PayPal, with treasurers needing to transfer money periodically.

The group discussed payment methods for U3A transactions, with Derek sharing insights from the National Treasurer's Forum about banks handling BACS transfers and the challenges of matching payments with membership records. Mike Christie highlighted the need for card-based systems beyond subscriptions, including payments for events and outings, as members prefer not to use bank transfers

by 2030. Dick raised concerns about correctly recording payment references and suggested using payment agents like SumUp to consolidate transactions into fewer bank transfers. The discussion concluded with Dick seeking help to implement background images in SiteWorks menus, which Graham suggested could be achieved through group settings.

10. MailChimp Platform Management Discussion

The group discussed their experiences with MailChimp email marketing platforms. Mark explained that despite MailChimp's restrictions on free accounts, his organization's legacy agreement allows for up to 1,000 contacts with 3 users, though he cannot make changes to the account. Derek shared that Islington uses MailChimp with manual audience maintenance, while London region previously had three accounts that were consolidated. The discussion revealed different approaches to managing membership databases, with some organizations using monthly database refreshes and others handling updates manually. The conversation ended with confirmation that the next regular meeting would be

AOB:

Any queries can be raised between meeting through Derek.

Send any suggestions for agenda items for future meetings to Derek.

Next Meeting:

Generally all meetings to be: 2nd Monday, every 3 months at 4:30pm (unless otherwise noted).

Next meeting: 9th **November at 4:30pm.**