

Bath u3a Trustees' Annual Report 2025

The u3a in Bath is a member of the Third Age Trust. Our membership is open to anyone who is no longer in full-time employment and there is no age qualification.

The Object of the u3a is the advancement of education and, in particular, the education of older people and those who are retired from full-time work by all means, including associated activities conducive to learning and personal development, in Bath and surrounding areas.

We are members of the Bath and Wiltshire u3a network, a group of local u3as, which meets 4 times a year. The group has been meeting online of late and our Chair has attended meetings wherever possible. In addition, there is a local network for Treasurers and Group organisers. There have been a lot of changes to the organisation of the u3a nationally and full details of these can be seen on the national website.

Our objectives, as set out above, are carried out through our monthly talks and in addition via our many interest and activity groups, now up to approximately 110. Communication with members is through our website, monthly bulletin and quarterly newsletters. Governance is through our Committee, many of whom are also Trustees of the Bath u3a Charity. The organisation is entirely run by volunteers and without the high quality of work done by them, the organisation would not exist. We are constantly looking to refresh and renew key Committee members, group convenors and coordinators.

For a small annual membership fee set at the last AGM at £18, members have access to all our groups and talks; some activities like outings and residential trips require further payment. We also provide access to insurance cover whilst on U3A activities and to the wide range of learning resources provided by the Third Age Trust. In addition we keep a small amount of equipment, which can be borrowed by groups to help support some activities. In order to facilitate the work of some of our Trustees, we provide dedicated laptops for the Treasurer, Business Secretary, Membership Secretary and Newsletter Editor.

All our groups are autonomous, but we provide help to them as needed through a dedicated section on the website, the expertise of the Groups' Advisers and an annual meeting for convenors. This gives them the opportunity to share good practice and problems as well as providing input on matters like handling money, GDPR and our management system, Simple Membership (SM).

All our members have a log-in to SM and we are working to ensure universal uptake. Many of the group convenors have taken ownership of their webpages and group management. The Groups' Advisers have worked hard to support all the convenors and our thanks in particular goes to Diane Duck, joint Group Adviser, whose term of office comes to an end at this AGM. We are delighted to have found her successor whose details are on the Agenda.

We are aware that some new members cannot always join the Groups that they want immediately, but we encourage new members to go on waiting lists or look at other groups that have vacancies until places become available.

At the end of February 2025, we had 1504 members, an increase of 59 on last year and this has risen to 1536 in April. The Membership Secretary now has a small team to assist with processing new members at our monthly meetings which is often when people join. We also now offer payment by card and we are looking to streamline renewals in 2025/26.

New groups that have been set up this year include:

The Economist – Current Affairs	History of Art 4	Solo Whist
Card Games Assorted	Français au Cabaret	Film Club
Discovering Words 1 and 2	Short Novels Reading	Dancing for Fun
Bridge for Beginners 2		

We are always delighted to hear of suggestions for new groups and recognise with such a high membership that group numbers need to be increasing. Many groups are limited in size because they meet in members' houses and in some niche subjects are very small, but nevertheless highly valued. The Groups' Advisers are always available to offer support and encouragement to any member prepared to take on board the self-help philosophy of u3a and to do the groundwork to get a new group started.

This year we held 2 informal get-togethers for new members and we were delighted with the attendance and feedback. Several Trustees and Group convenors were there to chat to members and to answer queries. In contrast, the outings group is still struggling to engage with members, but we are hoping that this area will turn a corner in 2025/26.

Our monthly meetings continue to be well attended, thanks not only to some excellent publicity, but also to the quality of the speakers. Our Speaker Organisers have produced a varied and interesting programme. The Welcome Group who are on duty at the monthly meetings to answer queries, to count numbers and direct people to the membership table has been a useful addition this year, led by our previous Chair, Anne Banks. We said a big thank you to Anne at our October talk, but I repeat those thanks here as Anne did a great job for over 5 years as Chair.

Details of all our talks and activities are on our website and members have access there to newsletters and bulletins with some back copies also available via the members only section of the website. We are currently working on substantial improvements to the website led by our Webmasters Anne Holmes and Chandra Doshi. Thank you to them for all the work they are doing. We hope to go live on these changes later this year.

Pat Corcoran, our Newsletter Editor has done a brilliant job for the last few years, creating our bulletins and newsletters which are special communication tools for all members. She has indicated she will be resigning at the AGM and the Committee thank her very much for all she has done for Bath u3a. Please come forward if you think you could help us with this key area of work. Pat assures us that she will help with training a successor and has thoroughly enjoyed all the work she has done in this area and on the Committee.