

Bath U3A Trustees' Annual Report 2026

The U3A in Bath is a member of the UK- wide Third Age Trust. We are a charity in our own right. Our membership is open to anyone who is no longer in full-time employment and there is no age qualification or lower age limit.

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 regularly by Zoom and face to face. 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 in the last 18 months and full details of these can be seen on the national website.

Our objectives, as set out above, are carried out through our free monthly talks and in addition via membership of our many free interest and activity groups with members helping other members. Communication with members is through our website, monthly newsletters and by email. Governance is through our Committee members, a number 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 others who volunteer in various capacities.

For a small annual membership fee set at the AGM in 2024 at £18, members have access to all our groups and talks; some activities like outings, sporting and musical activities and residential trips require further payment, but all are non-profit making. We also provide access to public liability 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 laptops for the Treasurer, Business Secretary, Membership Secretary, Newsletter Editor and others who require one to fulfil their role.

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, currently Simple Membership (SM), but shortly to move over to Beacon, a system used by the vast majority of other U3As as well as being used and owned by U3A Central Office. 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 Eleanor Ellington, former joint Group Adviser, whose term of office came to an end in the Autumn. We are delighted to have found her successor, Barbara Thomas, whose details are on the Agenda for appointment, working alongside Sheila Nicholson, who was appointed at the last AGM.

We are aware that some new members cannot always join the Groups that they want immediately, but we encourage members to go on waiting lists or look at other groups that have vacancies until places become available. We do our best to ensure that the huge range of activities that are available can be accessed by as many of our members as possible.

New groups that have been set up this year include:

Bridge for Beginners 3

Short Novels Reading Group 2

Beginners' Italian

Longevity through Nutrition and New Thinking

Meditation (sadly not able to continue due to low take-up)

There are now 113 groups.

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. The whole organisation is run by volunteering and sharing the load of rewarding organisational effort.

At the end of February 2026, we had 1581 members, an increase of 77 on last year and this has risen to 1613 on April 30th 2026. The Membership Secretary now has a small team to assist, amongst other things, 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 2026/27 with online payment. Our Membership Secretary completes her term of office this July and we are still looking for a replacement to lead and expand the excellent team. Huge thanks go to Jenny Snashall in her role as Membership Secretary since 2022, during a challenging period post Covid and she has kindly agreed to remain involved as Beacon Administrator for a short period once we make the system change.

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. The outings group has had 2 successful events this year, a holiday to Chester and Liverpool and a trip to the Royal Mint in Wales. We are hoping to arrange more trips this year and want to give a big thank you to David Bethell who has completed his term as the Outings Trustee. David was in post for many years so he leaves with our best wishes. We welcome Wendy Higgins who has volunteered to replace him and to look into new outings opportunities this year with an Outings sub-committee.

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. Sadly one of our long standing and excellent Speaker Organisers, David Haggard, died in the Autumn at the age of 90 and huge thanks went to him for all he did for many years. He has been replaced by Gerry Kontos and she and Betty Suchar have continued high quality work in choosing and organising our speakers.

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, led by our new Vice Chair, Deborah Cutler.

Details of all our talks and activities are on our website and members have access there to newsletters and back copies also available via the members only section of the website. Improvements to the website have been 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 more changes later this year. Thanks also to Peter Ellington who has helped keep our IT and software running smoothly. With the move to Beacon, we are hoping support like his will not be needed so frequently.

Pat Corcoran, our Newsletter Editor, had done a brilliant job for the last few years, creating our bulletins and newsletters which are special communication tools for all members. Her term of office was completed in the Autumn and the Committee thanked her very much for all she had done for Bath U3A. We were delighted when Caron Grainger and Dave Spivey came forward to take over from Pat and they are

doing a great job with the newsletter. They have also helped organise a survey of all members, the results of which will be shared later this year.

Your Committee and Trustees

The Committee consists of the following members, some of whose posts involve being appointed as Trustees:

Judy Green (Chair)

Deborah Cutler (Vice-Chair)

Sue Oldfield (Business Secretary)

John Weinle (Treasurer)

Richard Marke (Treasurer)

Jenny Snashall (Membership Secretary) **until 3rd July 2026**

Wendy Higgins (Outings) to be appointed at the AGM

Sheila Nicholson (Groups' Organiser)

Barbara Thomas (Groups' Organiser)

Dawn Scarisbrick-Rowe (Newsletter Distributor)

Non-trustee Committee members are:

Caron Grainger/ Dave Spivey (Newsletter Editors)

Anne Holmes/ Chandra Doshi (Webmasters)

Steve Prowse (Publicity) **completing his term in 2026**

Andy Pepperdine (Equipment and Audio visual) **completing his term in 2026**

Betty Suchar/ Gerry Kontos (Speaker Organisers)

In common with many other voluntary organisations, whilst we have a thriving membership, we have difficulty in recruiting members to be involved in Committee and other support roles. We know that members have caring duties, maybe part time work or health challenges. My appeal as a relatively new Chair is to ask all our members to think how each of you might spare a bit of time and energy for U3A.

I have been delighted by the welcome from the Committee and recognise the high quality of work being carried on your behalf. I know there are lots of you with hidden talents and expertise from your working lives so please think about sharing it!! It is rewarding and stimulating to be involved. We are rightfully proud of being one of the largest U3As in the country and of what we can achieve together. If you would like to help, please contact me or my fellow Trustees/ Committee members.

YOUR U3A NEEDS YOU!

Chair U3A in Bath and the Committee

May 2026

