



## HALESWORTH AND DISTRICT U3A CHAIRWOMAN'S REPORT 2024

Halesworth and District u3a has progressed well this year.

We are in a sound financial situation as you will see from the Treasurer's report. We have increased our membership by nearly a hundred in the last 18 months.

Every u3a large and small is a charity. The increase in our membership and the consequent increase in income is the reason why we are now required to apply for formal registration with the Charity Commission. Apart from a minor change to our constitution nothing will change very much for Halesworth u3a. Our committee members are the Trustees as defined by the Charity Commission. Formal registration will bring some practical advantages such as the ability to register with Pay Pal, which will enable our members to pay their fee by bank card rather than hunting for the cheque book. We hope that during the next year we will be able to offer members the option of donating a little extra by using Gift Aid.

This year our webmaster Nick Amery has worked with the Third Age Trust IT team to deliver a new-look web site for us. We are immensely grateful to Nick for the time he has given to our u3a to ensure that our face to the world is modern and attractive. We urge all our groups to use this new-look site to advertise their group activities and events.

In July we held the summer get-together for our group coordinators. This annual event is a small thank you for the work that our coordinators do to support Halesworth and District u3a. The event provides the coordinators with an opportunity to compare experiences and also to tell us about their ideas for improvements. This year the Treasurer, Karen, showed our coordinators how they might use the new Beacon membership system to keep track of membership and communicate with their groups. Our webmaster Nick Amery demonstrated how groups can use the new look web site to publicise their activities.

Thanks to enthusiastic volunteers we have been able to introduce several new activities to offer members, including Art Appreciation, Drawing for the Terrified and Bowls. However we are keen to broaden our portfolio so please do let Jo (our Groups Facilitator) know if you would like to help set up a new group.

Our annual coach trip to Munnings Art Museum was well received and proved an enjoyable day out. We were fortunate that the weather was fair and we could visit the gardens at Castle House and also explore the nearby village of Dedham.

Thanks are due to Melita for the very varied and interesting programme of talks we have enjoyed this year. I am pleased to say that Melita is well on the way to finalising the programme for 2025 and we are looking forward to our Tuesday talks next year.

Some you lose some you gain. This year several committee members and group organisers are standing down. Some have moved away; others have completed their time as committee members. We are grateful to Sheryl who set up and led both the table tennis group and the Supper club; Sheryl has moved back to her home turf. Similarly thanks are due to Katherine Kirk who as well as being Vice Chair of our committee moderated the Discussion Group and made several attempts to start an environmental group! Malcolm Ballentine has completed his term of office. However he will continue to manage our IT equipment ex officio. Sharon Collins our Secretary will be leaving the committee once our registration with the Charity Commission is complete. We are very grateful to Sharon for her persistence and attention to detail which have been very necessary to make sure we achieve this objective. Our Treasurer is standing down having used her tenure to lead on modernising our processes and bringing appropriate rigour to our finances. We are immensely grateful to Karen for what she has achieved.

We are pleased that we have received several nominations for the committee. There are some roles for which we are seeking volunteers and these will be advertised by email. In particular we would like to recruit someone who enjoys working with figures and spreadsheets to take over as Treasurer. We also seek someone comfortable with modern IT to be our User Admin for the Beacon Membership System.

During the year your committee reviewed all our policies and developed new ones as suggested by the Third Age Trust. The latest versions of our policies are now on the website.

I hope that you have enjoyed your membership during the past year. There is always room for improvement so please contact me or one of the committee if you have an idea for a new activity or for doing things differently. I and my colleagues look forward to meeting many of you in the year ahead.

Monica Edmonds  
Chairwoman