

Chairwoman's Annual Report to the Halesworth & District u3a - 2025 to 2026

I am pleased to report that our u3a continues to grow in membership and to offer a variety of activities.

This year our membership peaked in September at 486 which is an all-time high. The numbers inevitably decrease at renewal time as people move away or find other fulfilling activities.

During the year we have supported the successful start of the Casual Cycling group, the MOTO (members on their own) group and Latin beginners. We are always keen to receive suggestions for new group activities and the *raison d'être* of the committee is to enable groups to come alive and to prosper.

We continue to modernise our processes in incremental steps. Last year we initiated on-line membership applications and renewals. Our thanks to webmaster Nick Amery for enabling this to happen. This year we were able to accept payment by credit and debit cards for the first time. We held a Membership Morning in the Coop Community Room at which to take card payments and about 100 members attended to renew their memberships. Given the success of the event we will run the Membership Morning again next year. We thank the Central England Cooperative Society who have donated the use of the Community Room to the town of Halesworth, it is certainly a very popular venue for our u3a.

The u3a contribution to the local community includes providing talks at the Cut Arts Centre throughout the year. We are grateful to the Cut Arts Centre team for their continuing support to the senior residents of the District. This year we hosted 10 speakers on a wide range of topics. The average attendance was slightly over 100, and the most popular events included the Parisian Cabaret at Christmas and Dr Tim Pestell's presentation on the renovations at Norwich Castle. The audience were keen to see the new interiors at Norwich Castle and our subsidised coach outing to the castle was sold out within a week. The u3a Local History Group and Family History Group have also delivered tangible benefits to Halesworth through their participation in events organised by the Town Council. The u3a guided history walks have continued to be very popular, and both groups made a significant contribution to the Heritage Week events in September. The newest heritage walk on the history of Quay Street was a particular highlight. Our thanks go to the organisers and enthusiastic members of both groups. We show our appreciation of the group organisers with a thank you lunch at the Angel, Halesworth. This event gives our much valued volunteers an opportunity to share experiences and successes with colleagues whom they rarely meet.

I take this opportunity to thank my colleagues on the committee for their support through the year. In turn the committee thanks the members who support the u3a *ex officio* for their important contribution to the smooth running of events. We all thank the group organisers and other volunteers without whom there would be no Halesworth and District u3a. We have received a gratifying response to the plea for new volunteers and look forward to a newly constituted committee after the AGM. Everyone should be proud that we have achieved so much, we look forward to achieving more successes in the year ahead.

Monica Edmonds - Chairwoman