

Trustees' Annual Report for the period

1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025

Overview

During the year the committee's priorities were to support groups and group leaders and recruit new members to the committee. They also tried to encourage members to start additional groups where existing ones had waiting lists and to start new ones covering activities that were not already catered for. In addition to overseeing our own u3a's business we continued to be involved with the wider u3a movement, including the North Cumbria Network and North West Region.

Membership

The Membership Secretary looked after all aspects of membership and reported that at 31st March 2026, membership was 613 including 5 Associate members. This is an increase of 12 compared with the previous year's figure of 601.

A big "thank you" goes to Janet Dutton for all her hard work in sending out renewal invitations and membership cards, updating Beacon, banking cheques etc, as well as organising packs for new members.

Groups

The number of groups on offer has again fluctuated during the year. Some folded due to lack of interest, issues around finding suitable venues, or because the group leader stepped down and could not be replaced, while several new groups were started. Quite a few were, and continue to be, oversubscribed with waiting lists.

Third Thursday Together

Over the year we had talks on a variety of topics along with social events. Subjects have included Secrets of the Human Brain; Shoe Design; Cumbrian People; 50th Anniversary of Doug Scott's Everest Ascent; and From Craft Apprentice to Crime Writer, a broad variety of topics which were well received by our members. We also had a Beetle Drive, although not as well attended as we would have liked it was an enjoyable afternoon with plenty of conversation.

Communications

Our main method of communication over the year was the Newsletter edited by a small team comprising Geoff Stockdale, Beth Banks and Martina Davis. Many thanks to the team and of course the many members who have submitted articles and photographs.

Finance

Detailed Accounts and the Balance Sheet have been sent to all members. Our treasurer, Geoff Stockdale stood down from his role in November and Gill Birks was elected as our new treasurer, she has produced an annual report giving more details.

Website

The website remained a place to find information and was updated regularly.

Beacon

The Beacon database continued to be used for membership and accounting records as well as sending bulk emails to members from the chairperson, treasurer, secretary, membership secretary and group leaders. Some committee members also undertook training on using Beacon for their individual roles.

Anniversary

July 2025 saw us celebrate 30 years of being Carlisle & District u3a. To mark the occasion we held an afternoon tea and were entertained by Fools Gold Accoustic. An anniversary cake was “cut” by Barbara Eden, a founding member and a previous chairman and Kath Denyer, our current chairman. We were fortunate on that occasion to have four more previous chairman present. Several of our other groups also held their own celebrations.

Committee

At the 2025 AGM Kath Denyer (Chair) and Geoff Stockdale (Treasurer) stood down from the committee, Adrian Jones had stepped down during the year. We were pleased to welcome Gill Birks (Treasurer), Gillian Bamford (Secretary and Groups Co-ordinator); Steve Gibson (Vice Chairman); Pat Harkness (Minutes Secretary) and Keith Hardness onto the committee with Hilary Farrer (Chairman and Webmaster), Janet Dutton (Membership Secretary) and Andy Trappe remaining on the committee.

The committee met six times over the year to discuss various aspects of u3a business

Acknowledgements

- Treasurers - Geoff Stockdale and Gill Birks plus independent examiner Catherine Garrett
- Membership Secretary and Beacon Administrator - Janet Dutton
- Website – Hilary Farrer
- All committee members
- Third Thursday Together organisers – Janet Dutton and Hilary Farrer
- Newsletter editors – Geoff Stockdale, Beth Banks and Martina Davis
- Group Leaders – without them there would be no u3a
- All those who have helped in any way e.g. serving refreshments at TTT meetings and welcoming newcomers to our coffee mornings.
- All our members who have contributed to make Carlisle & District u3a a success

Hilary Farrer
Chairman