

Bu3a Chair's Report 2026

In Bu3a we seek to provide the opportunity for members to learn, enjoy and benefit from the specific interest groups they join. On the whole I am pleased to report the past year has seen us maintain a pretty sound position.

Overall membership has remained relatively stable. As I write Beacon shows that we have 271 members (last year the figure was 278). Of these more than 20% have joined during the year. This suggests that we are recruiting new, younger, members who will contribute to the continuing health of Bu3a.

This year there has been no increase in our membership fee of £20. Our finances are explained in more detail within the Treasurer's report. In short we remain just within budget and have reserves on which to draw should that be necessary. One step forward in managing our groups is that the executive committee has gained agreement that all groups with Bank Accounts should be subject to an annual internal audit.

Currently we have more than twenty active groups - eight of which have been formed in the last two years. Of particular note is the recent emergence of two new groups. The Theatre Group under Lindsay Jackson's leadership has had an enthusiastic start. The newly emerging Garden Group, with an emphasis upon visiting each other's gardens, will inevitable be a more seasonal affair and is looking forward to an active spring and summer.

By and large new groups do not simply appear. Leaders have to be identified - usually by others noticing their talents and asking them to offer their expertise. Then members need recruiting normally through word of mouth or via The Gazette. If you have ideas for new groups then do let the committee know and we will do our best to support your initiative.

As ever, my major thanks has to go to our Group Leaders, and their immediate helpers, who make all our activities possible. They are the life

blood of Bu3a without whom we simply would not exist. We members have a responsibility to give them as much support as we possibly can to ensure their job is enjoyable and they do not feel trapped in their role.

More than 30% of members contributed to the survey we conducted in the Autumn. Perhaps the main result was the feedback which stressed the importance of the social aspect of u3a life. By and large groups get this right - but we all need to make a special effort to welcome new members. There is always the danger of an existing, effective, close-knit group believing it is doing a good job. But the very virtue of a successful group can be intimidating and appear to be a closed shop for new members.

I can't write this annual report without thanking our Committee members. Specifically: Kath Hopkins who manages our finances; Richard Tucker performs secretarial duties; David Thornton oversees membership matters; Bernard McMahon is building our marketing portfolio; Ainslie Kelly is a conduit to our Group Leaders and, additionally, regularly attends to our technological requirements; Glenys Moore continues to edit The Gazette with aplomb and plays an active role in Meg Laird activities; Sam Lewis is "member without portfolio" but his extensive experience in Bu3a, and willingness to help is a constant source of wisdom for us all.

After almost three years as Chair I am stepping down. Ideally this will be at the AGM in March. However, when elected in 2023, the AGM was held in July and am happy to serve my full three-year term. We are actively seeking a chair and will report our progress at the AGM. I have thoroughly enjoyed myself primarily through meeting many members committed to the ideals of the u3a.

Do try to attend our AGM on the 26 March in the Friends Meeting House beginning at 10.00am. Your support will be most welcome. To make the morning even more worthwhile, member John Hopkins will, after the AGM, give a presentation describing his time spent in Dubai as an inspector of schools.

Peter Holt
Chair Bu3a
March 2026

