

CHAIR'S REPORT 2025-6

This is my final report as Chair, as I come to the end of my tenure as a Cu3a Trustee. I've really enjoyed working with so many lovely people who make Charnwood u3a the thriving organisation it is.

It isn't possible to meet everyone, of course, when our membership is just over 1000 and we have over 90 groups. There is some duplication in that number: it includes five Walking, seven Table Tennis, four Pilates and three Scrabble groups - ample proof if we needed it that being in the u3a exercises both mind and body. But we're always looking to expand our offer, so it's been great to see new groups starting, like the already popular Get Active, Stay Seated - absolutely not a contradiction in terms, I'm assured! We have lost some groups this year, for a variety of reasons. When a group loses its leader, it can be hard to find someone to take over and equally hard to organise an extra group when there are members on the waiting list. But organising a group doesn't have to be onerous and it's good to see more groups this year sharing responsibilities, in the true spirit of the u3a movement. Remember that there's plenty of help and advice for any member thinking about starting a group, including help with initial expenditure.

As a registered charity we have to have a number of official documents. Over the past year the Committee approved a new Privacy Policy, reviewed our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy and updated our Potential Venues List and Accessibility Audit. We also undertook a successful review of our groups' risk assessment procedures.

All of these documents are available on our website, which continues to develop in the capable hands of Martyn and Stephen, our Web Manager and System Administrator respectively. A Stop Press banner, Contact form and New Members Page were among additions to the website in 2025, while work continues in 2026 with specific focus on the Events and Group Finance functions. The Web Support team is committed to making the Cu3a website as inclusive and accessible as possible and welcomes all comments and suggestions from members, while Phil Bass and his team offer a range of IT support for members, including one-to-one consultations. The details are on the website and in our monthly newsletter.

Everyone is a volunteer in Charnwood u3a, giving generously of their time and expertise, and we encourage all members to participate in whatever way they can. We'd especially like everyone to log into our website, www.charnwoodu3a.org.uk, not only to explore its ever-expanding content, but to check the personal information we hold and to provide emergency contact details. The safety and security of our members will always be a prime concern and keeping accurate records is an important part of this.

We enjoyed an excellent programme of speaker presentations at our monthly meetings over the year. Among my favourites was *Made in Leicester*, which brought back (mostly happy!) memories of my time as a Saturday Woolworth's girl. It's always good to showcase the talents and knowledge of our own members: Jim Miller's fascinating talk on *Forgery and Fraud* left us inspecting our wallets for counterfeit coins, while the Cu3a Drama group gave a festive farewell to 2025 with their production of *A Christmas Carol*.

My warmest thanks to all our group leaders - without them the u3a wouldn't exist - and of course our committee members, who give their time and energy to keep our organisation running. But we also couldn't function without all the volunteers in crucial support roles, like the Welcome and Refreshment teams, technical support at monthly meetings, and the team of organisers for the Speaker Programme. Helen, our newsletter Editor, continues to produce twelve pages of entertaining and informative content every month and is always happy to receive contributions from members.

Joining me in stepping down from committee are two of our Trustees, Geetha Bala and Sue Ronald. Grateful thanks and best wishes to both of them.

Finally, a personal thanks to everyone for your support. It's been a privilege - and a lot of fun!

Pam Upton, Chair

Charnwood u3a

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