



Registered Charity No: 1079444

Dunstable U3A Trustees' Annual Report: 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026

The Trustees will submit this Annual Report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2026 based on the requirements of the Accounting and Reporting by Charities Act 1993: Statement of Recommended Practice (2005) to the Charity Commission.

Structure, Governance and Functions

Trustees & Officers known as the Executive Committee

Chair Frank Shaw

Vice-chair Vacancy

Secretary Bob McGee

Treasurer Michael Dance

Trustees:

Membership Secretary Pat Boulton

Speaker Secretary David Courtenay

Group Liaison Officer: Elizabeth and Timothy Anderson

Social Media & Assets Register Secretary Nick Porter

Beacon Administrator Sue Porter

Non trustee positions

Minutes Secretary Dorothy Hodder

New Members Secretary Penny Tooth

Welfare Secretary Laina Geleit

Newsletter Editor Frank Shaw

Webmasters Andy Hodge/Nick Porter

Purpose. "By the members for the members"

The core objective of Dunstable u3a, (as per its Constitution) is:

"To help advance the education and, in particular, the education of older people and those who are retired from full time work by all means, including associated activities conducive to learning and personal development."

2025-26 Another busy year when much was achieved

The Trustees met 10 times during the year to manage the affairs of Dunstable u3a to ensure that its objectives and policies were maintained. The workload was shared by the Trustees according to their interests and expertise, many of them being in their roles for the second year but Pat Boulton and Nick Porter had been re-elected. We thank all the volunteers who have made a significant contribution.

Sustaining & building our membership

During the year 2025-26, 122 new members were recruited. However 102 members did not renew their membership for the 2026-27 year, resulting in a net gain of 20 members for the year to maintain membership at approximately 800.

Membership of Dunstable u3a remains a popular choice for people retiring from employment or no longer having childcare responsibilities. However, for many they are described as the sandwich generation with both elderly and grandchildren caring responsibilities. Dunstable u3a is recognized as one of the largest charity organisations in Dunstable providing a valuable educational and social network service for third agers.

The attendance at the quarterly New Members' meetings has been good, usually in excess of 10. At these meetings new members are given the opportunity to meet others and to discuss with trustees what they would like from their local u3a. It also helps us discover the attributes that the new members bring with them.

Dunstable 2025 Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The 2025 AGM, which was well attended, was held on 16th June in line with our Constitutional rules.

Trustees Nick Porter and Pat Boulton were re-elected to maintain the existing committee.

The presentation of the accounts was deferred to a Special General Meeting.

Members were entertained by two of our popular musical groups. The Ukulele group, headed by Peter Smith, greeted members as they took their seats. with a melody of uplifting and modern tunes. The in-person AGM was followed by the Dunstable u3a choir, conducted by Liz Higgins, who performed a variety of carefully selected inspiring songs.

Special General Meeting (SGM)

A fifteen minute SGM was held on the 19th January 2026 before the regular monthly meeting. The previously published accounts were presented and approved.

Monthly Meetings were held, with guest speakers, on the 3rd Monday of the month at the Dunstable Methodist church. Attendance has been strong, regularly over 150 sometimes over 200 members and there is a real buzz in the hall when the doors open at 1:15pm. We have had a variety of speakers during the past year. These ranged from factual educational talks to more light hearted entertainment, sometimes both such as the presentation by Professor Diamond about Punch and Judy.

The Monday meetings remain conducive for socializing, an increasingly important benefit to our members, particularly the newer members. We are grateful to all those who take on the many roles that enable the meetings to happen. We are seeking more helpers to share the load.

The 2025 Christmas Concert was another success and the members present were entertained with an excellent performance of music including some singalong performed by Dunstable u3a members. Special thanks to Pat Boulton for making it happen, the choir, the ukulele group and everyone who participated.

Social Group Outings

The Social Committee, consisting of a small team of dedicated and hard-working members, had a busy and challenging year. Many of the committee are new this year and have quickly established an

effective team. They again created a varied and attractive range of trips

We do appreciate everyone's hard work that enabled the trips to be enjoyed by many frequent trippers. Although a couple of trips had to be cancelled, there has been keen uptake for most trips. It is pleasing to see some of our newer members are already joining the trips and leaving positive feedback on their Facebook pages.

Group Activities

Groups remain the backbone of Dunstable u3a and many new members join the u3a seeking to join particular groups. Demand for group membership remains high with many groups having a waiting list. Innovative approaches have created increased capacity in some cases. It is also encouraging to see new groups being formed and others being actively researched.

This year the number of groups has grown by 10 to 92, covering a wide variety of subject areas. We are grateful to all of the leaders and coordinators for managing these groups, and the many others who support them. There could not be a u3a without them.

We recognise that events happen in life that mean leaders cannot continue indefinitely and there are benefits whenever we are able to create options for such circumstances. It is helpful to give as many members as possible the opportunity to experience some of the tasks and satisfaction associated with being involved in facilitating groups to prepare for such events and encourage them to create new groups.

Tim and Elizabeth, the Group Liaison Officers (GLO's) have used their proactive approach to optimise the membership experience and generate growth. Unfortunately they are unable to continue and we need replacements to come forward urgently.

It is pleasing that exciting potential new groups continue to be suggested, some require further research to create a viable route to their creation.

On 30th January 2026, group leaders met for an education & social gathering with the trustees at Dunstable Golf Club. Brief presentations were followed by a Q and A session. A buffet lunch provided an opportunity to socialise and a variety of issues to be discussed.

Replacement of outdated equipment included replacing our mobile phone

Group leaders continue to be encouraged and supported in the use of the Beacon management system to improve communication and manage group capacity. They are also encouraged to make use of the Website and Facebook to interact with their members and create wider awareness.

Communicating with the Membership

Keeping members informed remains a priority. The monthly **Keep in Touch (KIT)** newsletter is distributed by email where possible, however we still have 69 members who do not have email. We continue to minimise the rising cost of postage by committee members hand delivering half of them.

We continue to encourage members to receive the bi-monthly **Third Age Trust Matters magazine** as it contains a wealth of information about what u3a's are doing in many parts of the country. Regional Bulletins are distributed by email.

A Factsheet is given to members attending monthly meetings. It provides updates on speakers, group availability, coach trips and travel, requests for assistance and latest news. Putting KIT letters and Factsheets on the website eases and widens access. **Our Facebook page** remains an important facility for keeping our members informed, but is even more important in helping generate the wider awareness of the u3a that we are seeking.

East of England Representation.

Two trustees now cover the East of England. Ian Mathews was recently joined by Ruth Freedman, she will cover Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Suffolk and Norfolk, Ian will cover Essex and Herts.

Financial Management

The 2025-26 Annual Accounts form part of these AGM documents circulated to the membership and you will see that we hold a healthy financial reserve. Many of our operational costs are increasing but suffice to say we still finish this year in a strong financial position. We have continued to manage our members' fees in a prudent manner with all purchases having to pass a 'value for money' test. Last year expenditure exceeded income by around £4,000. We do however currently hold reserves which exceed requirements by around £15,000 which we plan to reduce. To that end we plan to hold the annual membership fee at the current £15.00 in 2027/2028.

Independent Examiner of Charity Accounts.

We propose to continue using Terry Thatcher to examine our accounts.

Role of Trustees

Dunstable u3a is fully compliant with the requirements of our Constitution (formally adopted on 21st June 2021) and the model Trustee Code of Conduct which outlines the 6 main duties expected from Trustees in performance of their role. (The Charity Commission essential trustee guidance)

Summary

This has been another exciting year. Thank you not only to those who have performed the roles but also the many others who have given their support to make it work. We go forward towards the AGM in a good situation, but recognising the future constraints we shall face from having some key roles vacant.

Nominees:

We are pleased that we have had some response to our request for your support but not sufficient to enable us to fully maintain the current levels of activity or to grow.

The candidates for election at the 2026 AGM are:

Chair: Frank Shaw(2829). Proposed by Sue Porter : Seconded by Nick Porter

Secretary: Timothy Anderson(1997). Proposed by Elizabeth Anderson : Seconded by Pat Boulton

Treasurer: Michael Dance(2869). Proposed by Nick Porter : Seconded by Sue Porter

Trustee: David Courtnay(2880). Proposed by Frank Shaw : Seconded by Pat Boulton

Trustee: Linda Lawson(331). Proposed by Ronnie Richardson : Seconded by Stella Denholm

Trustee: Sue Porter(2653). Proposed by Nick Porter: Seconded by Frank Shaw

Trustee: Martin Wild(2947). Proposed by Frank Shaw : Seconded by Tony Hopper

Pat Boulton and Nick Porter have each served one year of their two-year term, and are remaining as Trustees.

Looking to the future

Dunstable u3a is a vibrant, thriving self-help organisation which provides members with numerous opportunities to keep on learning, experimenting and finding activities that keep the brain and body fit and healthy. It also provides a unique environment in which mature people can enjoy beneficial social interaction.

It is a well-established and purposeful organisation. It is financially strong and provides excellent value for money, social & educational services for its members. With a growing membership there is opportunity for further development.

The only constraint is finding volunteers to take on the roles necessary to enable it to function and thrive. The committee will continue to strive to support it with the available team. All members are encouraged to join the committee and to help our u3a thrive.

Approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by

Frank Shaw. Chair

May 2026