

Annual Report

It is an absolute pleasure to report that our u3a is going from strength to strength. We have more members running more groups than ever before and more members enjoying them.

Our membership settled to about 1,100 this year. This is an increase of 120 over last year - a result of gaining 260 new members and having 140 leave. Most of our new members learn about the u3a from existing members, so do make sure your friends who might enjoy the u3a know about us.

One of the real benefits of being a large(ish) u3a is that we are able to support a wider range of groups. Over the year, we added 16 new groups - more than ever before. The new groups were Beer and Cider Appreciation, Birdwatching (re-hatched), Bobbin Lace Making, Calligraphy, Canasta and Bezique, Craftastic, Early Music - Playing, Easy Riders, English Country Dancing, French Beginners, Go, Meditation and Mindfulness, Play Reading 2, Reading - Crime and Thrillers, Skittles and Worldviews. Thanks very much to our very busy Group Coordinator Jane Huff and more recently her deputy, Jayne Jones, for providing the support and guidance to the groups as they get going.

Being large does not suit everything though, especially if you are looking for a convenient way to have coffee and a chat with other members. For members who would like this opportunity, we are supporting the setting up of coffee groups. They are in place for Dorchester Centre and Poundbury, and, at the time of writing, we have members interested in setting up groups in three other locations.

Our growth also puts pressure on some of our more popular groups, and a few have waiting lists. Where we can, we will always try to increase the size of groups or have additional groups to satisfy demand. We are also improving the way we deal with waiting lists to ensure the process is transparent, members know the status, and we have the opportunity to respond.

We should never forget that we are a self-help society, with every group run by one or more members. You don't need to be an expert to lead a group. If you are willing to have a go, just bring enthusiasm, and you will get lots of support to do it. We need to thank 20 members for taking on Group Leader roles for the first time this year. Most took on the new groups, but some, of course, took up the role with an existing group. Five Group Leaders stepped down this year. I would like specifically to mention Andy Davies and Des Derrien, who led the Thursday walking group for many years, and Alan McLeish, who has led the Jazz (now Jazz and Blues) Group for more years than I have been a member.

Vibrant communications make our u3a more than just a discrete set of groups, and we cater for a range of member preferences from enjoying social media to being much more comfortable with hard copy. Our newsletter is the foundation, providing the essential information we need to enjoy the u3a; the Members' Update email keeps us up to date on all the important changes, and the website is always being available as the source of just about all Dorchester u3a information. Many thanks to Jane Huff for compiling the Members' Update, to Janet Gelernter, who is passing the newsletter editor role to Linda Chappell, and the website support team for all their work. We have recently added a private group for those of us who use Facebook to share information on a more ad hoc basis. Thanks to Julie-Ann Booker for supporting this initiative.

The First Monday Meetings continue to be our largest gathering of members. Christina Eury-Andrews took over finding our speakers and has provided us with both variety and excellent quality. My favourite this year has been the story of tunnels and an art teacher's war diary by Mary Smith.

When I consider all the activities we enjoy and all the organisation it takes, I find it impressive the number of members actively involved in making it all work. There are too many individuals to mention them all, but I would like to mention just a few stalwarts - Kate Harre collects the attendance sheets and fees from all Group Leaders and enters

them into the accounts; Ian Blaby has a number of roles, not least being the support and management of all our technical equipment; and for the Monthly Meetings, Kelvin Huff produces the slides, Niall Simpson has guided our parking, and Geraldine and Andrew Farrow are always there to set out the chairs and tables, and Jean Croot and Wendy Hilton continue to organise the tea and coffee service.

While it is heartening that we have so many members leading and supporting our activities, we still have a need for more. We currently have interest in starting five groups but no one to lead them. We find it particularly challenging finding members to join the committee and to perform roles needing technical skills.

Finally, I would like to thank our president, Margaret Pearce, and my committee colleagues. They have all shared the work of the committee and each made a significant contribution to running our u3a. In particular, our membership secretary, Chris Langthorne, and our treasurer, Nick Priddle, work hard to keep the machine's cogs turning.

Three of us leave the committee at the AGM this year. Peter Scaife has been a committee member for 11 years and performed a number of roles. My wife Jane, a committee member for over five years, apart from keeping me under control, has picked the jobs no one else volunteered for— not least organising u3a day, Christmas lunch, and FMM volunteers. I am also stepping down, having done the maximum allowed three years in the Chair. I look forward to having more time to attend some of the groups I have missed and enjoying our u3a for many years to come.

Alan Hopwood, Chair

Dorchester & District u3a

Registered Charity no. 1077305

Income & Expenditure Account for the Year ending 31st March 2025

INCOME	2024/2025	2023/2024
	£	£
Members Subs 24/25	13525.00	14960.00
Members Subs in adv.	5212.00	10437.00
Donations	285.00	197.30
Group meeting fees	9169.90	10659.16
Monthly meetings	583.03	1455.42
HMRC – Gift Aid	743.48	2403.19
Riviera Travel etc	2026.72	1066.55
Advertising	560.00	600.00
Sundry Income	338.42	99.77
Third Age Matters	102.85	233.80
Interest on a/cs	<u>625.52</u>	<u>285.25</u>
Subtotal	33171.92	42397.44
TOTAL	33171.92	42397.44

EXPENDITURE	2024/2025	2023/2024
	£	£
Hall /Room Hire	20434.00	17399.15
u3a Capitation & News	3712.68	3718.75
Capital Expenditure	nil	132.27
Group Expenses	477.52	217.24
Facilities & services	374.06	764.44
Newsletters	3931.01	1758.20
Committee Expenses	120.81	289.91
Speaker fees	480.00	295.00
Refreshments (FMM/NM/GL)	91.50	130.44
Beacon expenses	1056.00	396.66
u3a Day	nil	00.00
Sundries	<u>15.90</u>	<u>00.00</u>
Subtotal	30693.48	25102.06
25/26 subs in advance	5212.00	10437.00
Shortfall for year	<u>-2733.56</u>	<u>+6858.38</u>
TOTAL	33171.92	42397.44

Balance Sheet for the Year ending 31st March 2025:

Accumulated Funds	2024/2025	2023/2024
	£	£
Balance as at 1 st April	30859.56	13564.18
25/26 subs in advance	5212.00	10437.00
Shortfall for the year	<u>-2733.56</u>	<u>+6858.38</u>
TOTAL	33338.00	30859.56

Location of Funds	2024/2025	2023/2024
	£	£
Lloyds Bank current a/c	3596.25	6208.40
Lloyds Bank interest a/cs	29702.10	24576.58
Petty Cash	<u>39.65</u>	<u>74.58</u>
TOTAL	33338.00	30859.56

2024/25 Year-end accounts prepared
and submitted by :

N.Priddle
(Hon.Treasurer)
Date2025

I have examined the income and receipt vouchers,
also the bank statements which support the income
and expenditure account for the Year ending
31st March 2025 and am satisfied that they show a
true and accurate record of the affairs of the
Dorchester & District u3a.

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(Alison Neil, Independent Examiner)
Date2025

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(Hon. Treasurer)

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Alison Neil
(Alison Neil, Independent Examiner)
Date 13.5.2025