



## Dunstable

Registered Charity No: 1079444

### Dunstable U3A Trustees' Annual Report: 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025

The Trustees submit this Annual Report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025 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

##### **Non trustee positions**

**Minutes Secretary** Dorothy Hodder

**Beacon Administrator** Sue Porter

**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."*

#### ***2024-25 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 new to their roles. The Trustees thank Bernie for supporting the transition and organising the celebration of our 25<sup>th</sup> year. We also thank all the volunteers who have made a significant contribution.



### **Sustaining & building our membership**

During the year 2024-25, 108 new members were recruited. The 2025 membership renewal resulted in the majority of living members renewing, with the exception of members who, through a combination of ill-health or relocation, decided not to renew their membership. By April 2025 renewal period, we are pleased that the total membership had stabilized at over 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.

Attendance at the quarterly New Members' meetings has varied. 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 2024 Annual General Meeting (AGM)***

The 2024 AGM, which was well attended, was held on 17th June in line with our Constitutional rules.

Many new members were elected to the committee: Chair Frank Shaw; Treasurer Michael Dance; Secretary Bob McGee; Trustees Sue Porter, Gail Dance, Elizabeth Anderson, Timothy Anderson, David Courtenay.

Following the formalities of the AGM, members present 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.

**Monthly Meetings** were held, with guest speakers, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month at the Dunstable Methodist church. Attendance has been strong, often with attendance 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.

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.

### **25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations**

Bernie Naughton led and organised a very successful celebration of our first 25 years. Starting on the Thursday, sharing birthday cake with us under the clock tower was one of the first activities that our new MP undertook. Celebrations in the Town Centre on Saturday at a special market drew a lot of interest. Through music and dance and intriguing stalls we won many new friends and reaffirmed many existing ones. On the Sunday our 25 longest serving members were invited to a special tea party where many happy memories were shared. On the Monday our monthly meeting was replaced with a party worthy of such a memorable event. The new Chair Elect of the Third Age Trust,



Allan Walmsley, the Mayors of Dunstable and Houghton Regis all joined our celebrations. Certificates were presented to our 25 longest serving members and past Chairs. Then we were entertained by a professional 'Rat Pack' singer with a suitable medley of songs. And of course there was cake! We also got ten minutes of air time with an interview on BBC Three Counties Radio with Babs Michelle.

The 2024 Christmas Concert was another success and the members present were entertained with an excellent performance of music, singalong, magic and a short sketch, all performed by Dunstable u3a members. Special thanks to Pat Boulton for making it happen 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. They again created a varied and attractive range of trips. It is pleasing that a recent request for new committee members to replace those standing down has received a positive response.

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.

Payment by card is now possible and improved card processing facilities are being researched. Notable successes include the visit to the Black Country Museum and the Christmas trip which was heavily oversubscribed but unfortunately the venue could not accommodate any increase in numbers. Those fortunate to get seats had an Abba good time!

### **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. There are now 82 different Groups 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.

The Group Liaison Officers (GLO's) are kept very busy, particularly with their proactive approach to optimising the membership experience.

New groups launched this year, it is pleasing that exciting potential new groups continue to be suggested. Some require some research to create a viable route to their creation, these include a county history group and a possible film group.

On 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025, group leaders met for an education & social gathering at Dunstable Golf Club. They met the trustees and were informed about a number of changes. All group leaders were made aware of the latest version of the Group Leaders Handbook, which is available online to ease common access to the latest updates. A buffet lunch provided an opportunity to socialise and an open question session in the afternoon allowed a variety of issues to be discussed.

Replacement of outdated equipment continues including the purchase of a new pool laptop. The



central assets register has been reviewed and updated.

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 more than 80 members do not have email. The rising cost of postage for these was reviewed and where possible committee members now hand deliver almost 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 the above information on the website and Facebook eases and widens access. **Our Facebook page** remains an important facility for keeping our members informed, but is even more important in helping generate wider awareness of the u3a that we are seeking.

### **Third Age Trust (TAT) AGM October 2024**

In October the Dunstable u3a Chair attended the TAT AGM at Milton Keynes. The new Chair, Allan Walmsley had previously visited our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations so was already aware of us. The main topic was the new structure to better enable the Trust meet the needs of the organisation whilst handling the increasingly challenging external bureaucracy. The proposed structural revisions were strongly supported. The drive to increase national membership was also featured. Promotional activities include PR initiatives and advertising on Boom Radio. Passing on our TAM magazines to not yet members is another initiative.

### **East of England Representation.**

The trustee for the East of England Maurice Austin, has been replaced by Ian Mathews, effective from April 2025.

### **Financial Management**

We have continued to manage our members' fees in a prudent manner with all purchases having to pass a 'value for money' test. To that end we plan to hold the annual membership fee at £15.00 in 2026/2027.

The 2023-24 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. Due to the retirement of our previous Independent Examiner and other changes, we have had to change our provider of this mandatory service. We chose Terry Thatcher.

The Accounts were not fully completed in time for their approval at the AGM. A Special General Meeting was therefore held on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2026. More than 200 members attended who voted very strongly to accept the accounts with only one vote against.



### **Role of Trustees**

Dunstable u3a is fully compliant with the requirements of our Constitution (formally adopted on 21<sup>st</sup> 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 an exciting year with many people taking on key roles. Thank you not only to those who have strived to take on those roles and make them work but also the many others who have given their support to make it work. We thank Bernie Naughton for all she has done to form the team and prepare an environment in which it could flourish. We go forward in a good situation, but recognising the need to broaden participation in preparation for next year when many officer and trustee roles will be required to be filled.

### ***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 now in its 25<sup>th</sup> year since inauguration. It is financially strong and provides excellent value for money, social & educational services for its members. With a membership of over 800 members and a strong committee we can offer security and further development. The committee will continue to aim to recruit both members and leaders to sustain its growth and popularity in the future. It will also seek to increase the range and capacity of activities to maintain and improve the membership experience and to continue to provide good value.

Approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by

Frank Shaw. Chair 21 January 2026



Statement of Assets and Liabilities Dunstable u3a Main Account for the period from 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025		
	31st March 2024	31st March 2025
	£	£
Balance b/fwd at 1st April	31,618.88	28,676.52
Receipts inc transfers	36,183.98	35,448.06
Less: Payments	-49,997.84	-50,179.75
Transfers	10,270.50	-1,000.00
Plus outstanding payments	1,081.50	0.00
Less outstanding deposits	-600.50	0.00
Balance c/fwd	28,556.52	12,944.83
Statement of Assets and Liabilities Dunstable u3a Social Account for the period from 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025		
	31st March 2024	31st March 2025
	£	£
Balance b/fwd at 1st April	1,078.90	2,726.27
Plus Petty Cash at 1st April	104.39	89.31
Total b/fwd	1,183.29	2,815.58
Bank Receipts	9,731.00	13,405.39
Less Bank Payments	-8,098.71	-13,440.95
Petty Cash variance	0.00	10.12
Surplus/Deficit	1,632.29	-25.44
Balance c/fwd	2,815.58	2,790.14
Represented by:		
Cash in Social Bank	2,726.27	2,690.71
Cash in Petty Cash	89.31	99.43
Total	2,815.58	2,790.14
Statement of Assets and Liabilities Dunstable u3a Membership Account for the period from 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025		
	31st March 2024	31st March 2025
	£	£
Bank Balance b/fwd	7,353.75	6,979.24
Plus membership receipts	10,171.99	12,050.06
Less transfer to main/deposit accounts	-10,270.50	-18,500.00
Less pending deposit	-276.00	0.00
Surplus/Deficit	-374.51	-6,449.94
Bank Balance c/fwd	6,979.24	529.30
Statement of Assets and Liabilities Dunstable u3a Deposit Account for the period from 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025		
	31st March 2024	31st March 2025
	£	£
Bank Balance b/fwd	0.00	0.00
Plus transfers in	0.00	19,500.00
Plus interest	0.00	103.84
Surplus/Deficit	0.00	19,603.84
Bank Balance c/fwd	0.00	19,603.84

I confirm that these accounts are correct according to the information and explanations provided. 30.11.25



Receipts and Payments: All Dunstable U3A Accounts for the period from 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025		
	2024	2025
	All accounts	All accounts
Receipts	£	£
Group income	34,839.70	35,220.51
Inactive group balances	44.00	58.45
Gift Aid	1,076.28	0.00
Membership subscriptions	10,157.48	12,119.06
Social Committee trips receipts	9,731.00	13,405.39
Sales of u3a diaries	116.00	0.00
Interest	0.00	103.84
Miscellaneous	125.51	100.10
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>56,089.97</b>	<b>61,007.35</b>
<b>Payments</b>		
Group payments	32,648.07	35,183.04
Social Committee trips payments	8,067.63	13,440.95
Third Age Trust Membership subscriptions	3,168.00	3,348.00
Third Age Trust mailing	1,170.59	1,387.00
Beacon and Licences	868.00	936.21
Trustee expenses	247.93	420.42
Stationery	481.66	13.90
Postage	1,060.25	530.39
Toners/Cartridges	2,283.28	0.00
Printing	1,082.24	994.61
Purchase of u3a diaries	197.99	0.00
Account examiner fee	200.00	480.00
u3a meetings	0.00	1,017.30
25th Anniversary celebrations	0.00	1,237.12
Monthly Speakers	966.80	764.04
Hall hire and catering	4,837.37	2,994.91
Miscellaneous	288.19	411.31
<b>Payments sub total</b>	<b>57,568.00</b>	<b>63,159.20</b>
Asset purchases	531.55	461.50
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>58,099.55</b>	<b>63,620.70</b>
Net of receipts/(payments)	-2,009.58	-2,613.35
<b>Cash funds last year (as per Bank+petty cash)</b>	<b>40,155.92</b>	<b>38,471.34</b>
Plus outstanding payments	1,081.50	0.00
Less outstanding deposits	-876.50	0.00
<b>Cash funds this year (as per Bank+petty cash)</b>	<b>38,351.34</b>	<b>35,868.11</b>

I confirm that this account is correct  
according to the information and explanations  
provided

*✓* *Walter Terry Thotches, examiner*  
30.11.25





**Section A**

**Independent Examiner's Report**

**Report to the trustees/  
members of**

Dunstable U3A

**On accounts for the year  
ended**

31 March 2025

**Charity no  
(if any)**

1079444

**Set out on pages**

1&2 (double sided)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31 March 2025.

**Responsibilities and  
basis of report**

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

**Independent  
examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

**Signed:**

**Date:**

30 November 2025

**Name:**

Terence Thatcher

**Address:**

27 Bowland Crescent

Dunstable

LU6 3QD