

Chair's Annual Report to the AGM 13th May 2025

I am coming to the end of the first year of my role as Chair of the Bury u3a Trustee Board, and what a year it has been. When I took on the position, I had no idea how interesting it would turn out to be. I have thoroughly enjoyed every minute and look forward to another year.

I have a few well-deserved thanks to make to my fellow Trustee Board members.

Where would we be without our Vice-Chair and Group Co-ordinator? Naomi Richardson has worked tirelessly to add new groups to the ever-expanding activities that we offer. Not only that, Naomi sets aside much of her time to engage with Group Leaders, giving them support and encouragement, especially those who are new to their role. I also have to thank Naomi for taking over early last year when I needed temporary medical treatment.

Jim Hobbins is about to start his sixth year as our Treasurer. He has kept exemplary records, giving us financial advice when we needed it. Our Business Secretary, Sue Smith, has helped me a great deal in my first year. I have learnt so much from Sue about running the Board and all the different issues that come with my position. Brian Brewster has arranged some fantastic speakers and musical performers for our Monthly Meetings, as well as being our representative at the North West Region of u3a's. Keith McCarren, and his wife Helen, have produced some brilliant Newsletters, keeping us all up to date with current events. Annette keeps a record of groups with vacancies, arranges joining sheets at the Monthly Meetings where members can sign up and is on hand to offer advice about any of the groups. Mary Holland is currently working with Yvonne Brunsden to compare our policies with those of National u3a and make our website easier to navigate. Mary and Yvonne have a huge task ahead but I have every confidence they can do it.

Other commitments meant that sadly three Board Members had to leave us during the year. I would like to thank them for the contribution they have made to Bury u3a in the time they have been on the Board. They are Karen Campell- Mathieson, Robert Abrahamsen and Sandra Mason. I wish them good luck for the future.

I want to thank those members who assist the Board with the essential back-up we depend on. Our Web Team, Richard Adams and Dave Lord; our Membership Secretaries Christine Kirkham and Philippa Marks; the Access Working Group run by Hilary McColl and Michele Clarke; the Finance Team, Jim Hobbins, David Gillett and Sandra Mason; our Venue Co-ordinator, Lyn Hughes and last, but certainly not least, Jo Mawdsley, my representative on the u3a Chairs' Forum and of course the organiser of our Coffee Mornings and Christmas lunches.

We have recently co-opted two new members to the Trustee Board, Yvonne Brunsden and Trish Howard and we have a further two members who will join the Trustee Board at the AGM. They are Alistair Scott and Stuart Holt. I hope all of you enjoy your time on the Trustee Board.

I've left my biggest thanks to last. That will always go to the Group Leaders and their Second Leaders for their hard work throughout the year. Without them we would not have a Bury u3a. The amount of time they allocate to running their groups is incredible. We have had many members who have taken the step from being a member of a group to running a group. I appreciate what that takes, I've been there! **You all deserve a huge thank you!**

Highlights of 2024/2025

Our membership goes from strength to strength. At the time of writing, we have 848 members; 105 active groups and 10 Registration Groups. The latter groups are just waiting for enough members to allow them to be an active group. We have 69 Group Leaders and 45 Second Group Leaders; many of whom lead more than one group.

In September 2024 we held our Open Afternoon. This will now become a regular feature of our programme. It was well attended with participation from many of our groups; a raffle with proceeds going to charity and a beautiful display from both our Water Colour Painting Group and Photography Group. We gained quite a few new members once they saw what we had to offer.

The Development Sub-group has been meeting regularly and has introduced many new items to Bury u3a.

In November 2024 the Development Sub-group issued a survey to all members asking questions like 'Are there any Group activities that we do not offer that you would like to take part in?'; 'Would you be prepared to lead a group with help from the Trustee Board?'; 'What do you find most useful on the website?'; 'Do you read the monthly Newsletter?' and 'Have you any feedback for the Trustee Board? The response was very encouraging with some great ideas.

As a result, they have introduced eight new groups and are still working their way through the list. They have made changes to the Newsletter that have been very well received. Thanks to Keith and Helen. They have also introduced Name Badges at the Monthly Meetings; thanks to Hilary for arranging this.

Waiting Lists are always one of their top priorities. Work is on-going to create new groups where they can. Your help in achieving this would be greatly appreciated. Please contact me if you believe you can help.

They have embarked on a major exercise where they are looking to update our Policies, Procedures and Papers and consulting with the Charity Commission to bring our Constitution in line with the National Model Constitution. At the same time they are working with the Web Team to re-organise the web site to make it more user-friendly. This is a big exercise, but I'm looking forward to seeing the end result.

In December we held our first Christmas-themed meeting. Another suggestion from the survey. The Music Appreciation Group provided the seasonal music; refreshments were provided and we had a quiz, courtesy of Naomi. Thanks to everyone who helped to make this a great afternoon. We are arranging a similar event for December 2025.

In January we were all surprised at the number of members who turned up for the Monthly Meeting to hear a talk about J F Kennedy. We had to ask for more tables and chairs to accommodate everyone. I'm delighted to say that those numbers have continued throughout 2025.

In February we held a New Members' Day at the Unitarian Church. Again, it was very well attended. Each of the Trustee Board members explained more about Bury u3a, including a history of our development; our groups; setting up new groups and how members could contribute if they wished. The Trustee Board were on hand to answer any questions.

In March, our usual venue, The Met, was unavailable and we used the Sanctuary in the Unitarian Church for the first time. It was a little different to what we were used to, but it all worked out well with a talk about the history of Israel.

In April, we held our Group Leaders Thank-you Day. We started with refreshments, followed by a short talk about our current groups. Then the Honey Badgers entertained us for almost an hour, then lunch and a quiz. We ended with a questions and answers session with all the Trustee Board. It was a really fun day to show our appreciation for all that the Group Leaders do for us.

What does the following year bring?

Firstly, our AGM on 13th May. Doors open at The Met, a little earlier than usual, at 12.30pm. We start the AGM at 1.00pm prompt. We need a quorum of at least 84 members, therefore please do your best to join us. At 1.30pm we have a speaker, Michael Knaggs, a local author who has published four books and is writing his fifth that features places local to the Bury area. This promises to be a very interesting talk.

In June we have arranged for the group Silhouette to play for us at the Monthly Meeting. They are a nine-piece band that play and sing popular songs from the 1960's. I know them well and I recommend that you try to join us on 17th June. More about that nearer the time. The entertainment for the rest of our Monthly Meetings has been arranged. You can find the details on the website.

If you would like to ask me any questions about this Annual Report, please contact me using the 'Contact a Member' on the website. Please do not 'reply' to this message as I will not receive it.

Thank you for reading my Annual Report and I hope to see you all at the Annual General Meeting in May.

Ian Worthington, Chair Bury u3a Trustee Board

