



Chair's Report for AGM September 2023 to July 2024

2023/4 Committee

Chair: Ros Garside

Business Secretary: Paul Webley

Treasurer: Joan Spencer

Membership Secretary: Linda Riordan (resigned due to ill health)

Other members: Roger Broadie (website), Phil Barker (comms), Alison Wright, Dave Marshall

This has been my second year as Chair of Bradford u3a. It has been a successful year, but we have also had to address a few challenges.

We were delighted to welcome Kersten England as our president at the last AGM. We have also continued to have an excellent committee with a wide range of skills, and I'd like to thank them for their work on everyone's behalf. I'd also like to thank the wider team – group coordinators and others who ensure that our groups are effective, and members who help with meetings. We have had very good secretarial support from Julia Mort, and I would like to thank her for her contribution. We also appreciate those members who have joined a rota to take minutes since Julia stepped down.

One of our ambitions this year was to raise our membership to over 300. At the end of the 2023/4 membership year, we had 309 members which is our highest number ever. Thank you if you were one of the people who persuaded others to join as this is one of our most successful recruitment methods. We have also raised our profile in several ways to encourage recruitment. We have a page on the electronic sign board in City Park and we have distributed fliers at a range of venues including Broadway, City Library, St Blaise Day at the Industrial Museum, the Peace and Crafts Fair in Victoria Hall, Saltaire and the Literature Festival. Thanks to Roger Broadie and Phil Barker we have a much-improved website. This provides up to date information for members and is designed to be of interest to potential members as well.

We hosted a wide range of well-received speakers at our monthly Wednesday meetings. Groups continue to thrive. We currently have 38 groups and new groups this year include Cool Hand Ukes and Beginners' Latin. One of the challenges we have had to address is a change to our partnership with Bradford

Club, where many of our groups have met for some years. We are pleased that we will continue to hold our speaker meetings at the Club and that one or two larger groups are carrying on using the venue. We are also grateful to other groups and especially their coordinators for making sure that they have a suitable place to meet from September. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to Maureen Grace who is stepping down from her role as Groups Secretary. She has done an excellent job with quiet efficiency, including helping groups to manage the relocation to new venues.

In addition to regular groups, a successful innovation this year has been the introduction of Quiz and Coffee Mornings. These enable members to socialise with different people and to show off their incredible knowledge. The Christmas lunch was a success as usual and was a very good social occasion. The summer trip to Tatton Park was also a winner thanks to very good organisation by Jean Blackburn. The trip was very much enhanced by a private tour of the house and an overview of its history. Other one-off visits have included Hepworth Gallery and Carnforth Heritage Centre.

We have continued to benefit from our partnership with WestNet, currently made up of Bradford, Craven, Horsforth, Ilkley and Settle u3as. This gives Bradford members access to other groups and events across the region and is a good enhancement to what we offer for those who can travel a little further. The first ever u3a National Festival took place in York in July. Bradford u3a was well represented through delegates, volunteers and a tutor. Yorkshire and the Humber Region (YAHR) supports all u3as locally and also held its annual summer school in July.

We have a number of priorities for 2024/25. A key one is to continue to work in partnership with Kala Sangam to develop our contribution to Bradford City of Culture 2025 (BD25). We also intend to have a focus on the housing needs of older people and an event is being planned for next March. We will need to monitor how smoothly the changes of venues are working for groups and we will be continuing our publicity drive as well as the focus on raising our profile. We welcome additional ideas for further development as our ultimate aim is always to meet members' needs and to enhance our offer to you all. We achieve that by having active members who, together with the committee, contribute to our overall effectiveness. We need to continue to address succession planning as several members of the committee will be stepping down in 2025.

If you can offer support in any way beyond what you currently do, please make contact with me or another committee member. Thank you for everything you are already doing and please enjoy Bradford u3a to the full.

Ros Garside, Bradford u3a Chair