

Chair's Report for AGM

1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025

2024/5 Committee

Chair: Ros Garside

Business Secretary: Paul Webley

Treasurer: Joan Spencer

Membership Secretary: Roy Hodson

Other members: Roger Broadie (website), Phil Barker (comms), Maureen Grace and Alison Wright (Groups Secretaries), Dianne Excell, Dave Marshall, Francis Marslen-Wilson.

This has been my third and final year as Chair of Bradford u3a. As with previous years, it has been a mixture of successes and unexpected challenges. We have managed the more difficult issues through the hard work of the committee and many other members, and we hope that you have all enjoyed the good times and the wide range of activities on offer.

We have continued to increase membership to a high point of 318 at the end of the last membership year. Many thanks to all of you who have helped to recruit new members either by sharing your experiences with friends or by supporting our membership events in the Broadway, at St Blaise Day at the Industrial Museum and at the Peace and Crafts Fair in Saltaire. Another crucial route for new members and for keeping existing members up to date is our website which has continued to improve this year under Roger Broadie's expert leadership. Roy Hodson is also doing a very good job as membership secretary recruiting new members, handling renewals and ensuring that all details are up to date. In a first for our u3a, our Creative Writing group performed at Bradford Literature Festival. This was an excellent event in its own right and was also another way to raise our profile.

Our interest groups are at the heart of most members' experience of u3a. I would like to thank all the Group Coordinators and especially the Group Secretaries. Maureen Grace carried out this role very effectively for many years until she stepped down and left the committee in December 2024. Since then, Alison Wright has taken over and has been an excellent successor to Maureen. As well as groups, events are a highlight of many people's involvement in u3a. The annual trip to Holker Hall was a great success thanks largely to Jean Blackburn. Other day events have included outings to the northern towns of Sheffield, Doncaster, Rochdale and Blackburn as well as several theatre visits.

Our Wellbeing Event this year focused on Housing Needs for Older People and was very well organised by Phil Barker and Alison Wright. Participants found the day very informative and there is a wealth of information on the website provided by all the speakers.

Our monthly speaker programme has provided a fascinating series of topics led by experts from both within and outside our u3a. Many thanks to them all. Our programme for 2025 to 2026 looks equally interesting and varied. Coffee and quiz mornings have continued to be popular, particularly during the winter months.

Our major challenge this year related to the closure of The Bradford Club at quite short notice. The Club provided an excellent venue for us for a number of years and many members were sad about its closure and the implications for the way we run our u3a. We were pleased to be able to say goodbye to staff who have looked after us very well over the years and to wish them all the best for the future. Thank you all for accepting changes of venue at short notice and for adjusting to the inevitable changes this has brought about.

We are optimistic that the Bradford Arts Centre will provide us with a first class new home once it reopens early in the autumn. Access will be easier and there will be more comprehensive refreshments available on site. We are also delighted that the arts project that members have undertaken in partnership with Kala Sangam (now Bradford Arts Centre) will be displayed in the Centre soon after the venue reopens.

As this is my final report as Chair, I would like to acknowledge the individual members who have taken the trouble to give me encouraging feedback. I would like to thank the committee for their support and to give particular thanks to the other committee members who are stepping down. Phil Barker has been a stalwart member of the committee for 8 years and has provided a strong guiding voice for the communications group. Joan Spencer has been an excellent committee member for 8 years and treasurer for 3 years. I would like to thank Paul Webley for his outstanding contribution as Business Secretary. He has led the committee very effectively in ensuring that all our policies and procedures are up to date and fit for purpose.

I am delighted that there is continuity on the committee and also the opportunity for all u3a members to vote in new committee members at the AGM. I would feel even better if someone were to put themselves forward as Chair either at the AGM or as an offer for the near future.

Thank you all for your encouragement and for your patience when things have been difficult. I hope that Bradford u3a continues to go from strength to strength in the next few years.

Ros Garside, Chair