

1. Chair's introduction

I am pleased to present the following report on the third and final year as the Chair of u3a in Kennet.

This has been another year in which the very encouraging net increase in our membership numbers has continued and reached 758 by the year end. Several new Groups were established too widening the range of interests and activities that are available to local people. Our regular monthly meetings have become increasingly well attended supported by our 'Usefuls' team.

My thanks are due to all members of the Executive Committee and to our Group Leaders whose individual and collective efforts have contributed to the growth and continued development of u3a in Kennet during the year.

2. u3a in Kennet – aims

The u3a movement aims to provide 'public benefit' and the charitable purpose of u3a in Kennet is:

'The advancement of 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, in Marlborough and its surrounding locality'

thereby reflecting the Third Age Principles of membership, self-help learning and mutual aid.

3. u3a in Kennet

3a) Membership

The membership of the u3a in Kennet grew during the year and by 31st July 2025 comprised:

- Ordinary members - 742 (693 in July 2024) - 7.9% Increase (4.8% increase in July 2024)
- Retired member - 1 (1 in July 2024)
- Associate members - 15 (14 in July 2024)
- Total members - 758 (708 in July 2024) - 7.1% Increase (5.4% increase in July 2024)

3b) Groups – numbers / progress

Groups have flourished again this year thanks in particular to the hard work, commitment and dedication of our Group Leaders and to the enthusiastic support of the group members. There have been some changes in group leadership during the year: we welcome newcomers to the role and thank all those who are stepping down. In some cases, leadership has become shared between two or more people.

There are currently 70 groups available to members. During the year new groups have started up successfully. These include: the Motorcycle Group; Bus Adventures; Book Bunch and Forget-me-not. Some other new groups are beginning their meetings from September 2025. In other cases, discussion is underway about setting up new groups and indeed establishing second groups for some very popular subjects.

We would like to thank all Group Leaders for their work this year. Particular thanks are due to the members of the Usefuls' group who support the catering and other arrangements at our meetings and events.

3c) Programme of events

The well attended quarterly 'Kennet u3a Talks' continued during the year and we welcomed a range of interesting speakers who addressed the following topics:

30 th October 2024	Bob Holman	'Marlborough Underground'
12 th February 2025	Simon Clark	'What makes people believe things that are not true?'
9 th April 2025	Francis Cornish, CMG LVO	'The Arab/Israeli dispute: why is it so difficult to resolve?'
25 th June 2025	Barry Edwards	'The paperback revolution: the early history of Penguin Books'.

We held our monthly 'Coffee Exchange' sessions during the year at the Marlborough Town Hall. The events continued to be popular with current and potential members and the attendance figures regularly reached between 80 and 100 members per event.

Our speakers covered a variety of topics including:

- Ian Wyld: Bell ringing
- Councillor Jane Davies: The role of a County Councillor
- Dr Angus Tallini: How to live healthier and longer
- Gary Mumford: The 11 gardens at Avebury Manor
- Dr Jane Sellwood: Drinking water and waste water
- Nicola Abraham: The story of the Merchant's House
- Gary Gibbons: Uncovering Wiltshire's white horses
- Jane Fox: M C Escher: artist or mathematician?
- Peter Noble; The names of Savernake Forest

In addition our increasingly popular Art and Art History Group arranged a special event for all members on the rediscovery of Surrealist artist Henry Orlik which was introduced by the art historian Grant Ford.

A lunch was held during the year providing a welcome for new members enabling them to meet with Group Leaders and Executive Committee members and helping them to choose groups to join.

Two workshops were provided for members to assist in the use of ipads, mobile phones and laptops in recognition of the increasing importance of technology in modern life.

Planning commenced for another u3a in Kennet 'Special Interest Day' in collaboration with Marlborough College and other local schools. Titled '**Global tipping points**' the event was scheduled to take place in September 2025 and invitations were extended to other u3a's in the Bath and Wiltshire u3a Network and beyond and to local secondary schools.

3d) Governance, Trustees / Executive Committee membership / meetings

u3a in Kennet is led by an Executive Committee and governed by its Constitution which is based on the national model constitution and was adopted on 24th October 2018 and amended on 25th March 2021.

The Annual General Meeting was held on 30th October 2024 resulting in the election of John Slaughter as a Committee Member. Sadly John died in January 2025 having been an active Committee member and photographer at our events.

Three other Committee members were coopted during the year: Catherine Lockwood, Gavin Maxwell-Hart and David Pocock to provide support across the increasing range of activities and events.

The full Committee is shown below:

Officers:	Name	Position/s held
Chair	Jill Turner	Also Charity Commission Contact
Vice Chairman	Jeff Hide	Also Event Logistics
Treasurer	Alastair Sheen	
Secretary	Annette Weaver	
Other Trustees:		
Committee Member	Mike Morison	Membership Secretary and Beacon System Administrator
Committee Member	Hamzah	Technical support
Committee Member	Jill Chambers	Speaker Secretary
Committee Member	Alison Dewar	Supporting Groups
Committee Member	Georgina Neville	Supporting Groups
Committee Member	John Slaughter	(Until January 2025)
Co-opted	Catherine Lockwood	
Co-opted	Gavin Maxwell-Hart	
Co-opted	David Pocock	

In addition to the Committee members listed above the Committee acknowledges the support provided by members David Hammond (former Chairman) and Pat Harper in the production of publicity materials and our website respectively.

The Executive Committee met on five occasions at two monthly intervals during 2024-25.

The Chair joined the regular meetings of the national u3a Chairs and the Chair and several Committee members attended meetings of the Bath and Wiltshire u3a Network during the year with a specific focus on aspects such as overall governance, finance, groups, publicity and sourcing speakers.

3e) u3a in Kennet – local publicity and profile,

Our growing membership indicates that u3a in Kennet is becoming increasingly well known in the local area. We believe this is a consequence of our positive publicity initiatives including our flyers and website, regular meetings and events, local media notably 'Marlborough News' and significantly through members sharing information with friends and relations. 'Word of mouth' is an important means of communication about the benefits of membership.

Local organisations continued to make connections with us including the Marlborough Lit Fest, the Marlborough Festival and a local Care Home with interest in exploring membership for some residents.

3f) Open Day – 25th September 2024

u3a in Kennet held its annual Open Day event on 25th September 2024.

Following the arrangements of previous years the Open Day aimed to increase the u3a profile in Marlborough and the surrounding area. u3a in Kennet was showcased with a video about the organisation as well as a poster exhibition in the Town Hall along with art work, photographs, music and crafts from the Recorder Group. Committee members and Group Leaders welcomed visitors to the exhibition to offer information

4. Communications: newsletters, website and social media

Regular and effective communication with members was maintained with monthly newsletters and the annual Yearbook.

The website was updated regularly with new events and information about group activities.

A new 'Welcome leaflet' was produced identifying the meeting arrangements for all of the groups on a one page document along with a new publicity flyer local leaflet for wider publicity.

In addition u3a in Kennet has two Facebook pages: one for members and a public facing version.

Further local publicity was secured with a link to u3a news in 'Marlborough News'.

5. Financial matters

5a) Treasurer's Report and Accounts for the financial Year 1st August 2024 – 31st July 2025

u3a in Kennet is a voluntary self-help organisation that seeks to advance the education and social interaction of older people and those who are retired from full time work in Marlborough and its surrounding locality

The u3a operates through a Committee of Trustees elected at its Annual General Meeting. It mainly carries out its activities through groups led by Group Leaders.

The main source of income is member subscriptions. The accompanying accounts show that subscription income increased by 5.0% compared to the income received in 2023–24.

The total general income for the year was £12,454 (£10,421 in 2023–24).

The main areas of expenditure were:

- Third Age Trust (National u3a) £5,436 (48%)
- u3a in Kennet Coffee Exchanges & Kennet Talks £1,524 (13.5%)
- u3a in Kennet Yearbook £1,522 (13.5%)
- u3a in Kennet Administration £1,430 (12.7%)
- u3a in Kennet New Member Lunches £780 (6.9%) u3a in Kennet Grants to Groups £325 (2.9%)

The National Capitation, Beacon management fees and u3a Matters Magazine postage were 12% higher this year because of the increase in the number of members and increased magazine postage costs.

Venue hire and refreshment costs for u3a wide events were a little higher than in 2023–24, There were no expenses incurred attending any national or regional u3a meetings

Our regular Coffee Exchanges & Kennet Talks regularly attract 100–120 members and continue to be very popular. A New Members' Lunch was held in Kennet Valley Hall in November 2024. The cost of this event was £780 plus £66 for the hire of the Kennet Valley Hall (total cost: £846)

Total general expenditure for the year was £11,275 (£10,285 in 2023–24). This resulted in a surplus of income over expenditure for the year of £1,178 (£136 surplus 2023–24).

Reserves of £16,538 (£16,420 2023–24) were held at the end of the year.

Groups income totalled £15,259 (£15,363); Groups expenditure totalled £14,687 (£13,998 2023–24). This resulted in a surplus of £571.

Group funds carried over in the bank totalled £5,306 (£4,836) at the year end. A total of £354 was also carried over as cash.

Total funds held at the year–end (including Groups cash) were £23,379 (£21,649)

The Accounts for 2024–25 have been examined by Mr Kiaran Roughan, a u3a in Kennet member who is not a Trustee or Committee Member.

Alastair Sheen, Treasurer, September 2025.

5b) Asset register

The u3a in Kennet asset register was checked and updated during the year. The total value of assets remains within the limits of the standard u3a Trust insurance policy.

6. Summary

Following the challenges imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic, u3a in Kennet continued to grow and developed its range of support for members during the year August 2024– July 2025.

The Executive Committee thanks all Group Leaders for their active and committed support for u3a in Kennet and all members for their interest and involvement.

Report prepared on behalf of the Trustees of u3a in Kennet by Jill Turner, Chair and Contact for the Charity Commission. chair@u3ainkennet.org.uk

September 2025.