

Chair AGM Report 2025

This Annual General Meeting marks the end of my **three-year tenure** as Chair of **Hunstanton u3a**. When I first accepted the role, our constitution stipulated a strict maximum continuous term of three years in any office, a commitment I willingly undertook. As you are aware, that constitutional limit has since been thoughtfully amended. The three-year ceiling has been removed, replaced by a new maximum cumulative service of twelve years. Provided I receive your endorsement today, I intend to remain on the committee, dedicating my efforts to the management of **Hunstanton u3a's IT infrastructure**.

Succession and the Call to Service

My departure is not singular. Several esteemed trustees, some of whom have served the association for a **considerable period of time**, are also stepping down. While this necessary change brings us into alignment with the spirit of our constitution, it starkly illuminates a fundamental challenge that demands our immediate attention: the **recruitment and retention** of committee members.

The association currently faces critical vacancies: the posts of **Chair, Speakers Secretary, Membership Secretary, and Publicity Officer** all stand open. Regrettably, only a single nomination has been received across these four essential roles, coupled with a proposal to merge two of the positions. The vital offices of **Chair and Speakers Secretary** therefore remain unfilled. Ideally, we should witness numerous nominations, a genuine competition, and a robust democratic process to appoint our committee.

I implore every member to **consider joining the committee**. You are not required to commit to the new twelve-year maximum; you may offer your time and skills for a single year, or longer, as you choose. **This is your u3a**; its leadership is your prerogative and your responsibility.

A Measure of Success

My predecessor, Tony Taylor, concluded his final report with the triumphant declaration that "membership was UP, Group numbers UP and money in the bank - also UP." As the newly appointed Chair, facing such a formidable legacy, my first thought was a feeling of profound apprehension: could the trajectory now only be **DOWN**? **"Oh Dear, what have I taken on!"**

It is therefore with both profound satisfaction and immense relief that I can report to you today, in 2025, that the **membership is up, the number of groups has increased, and our financial reserves remain healthy**. The word 'relief' barely begins to capture the emotion of reporting this enduring success.

Gratitude for Collective Endeavour

This achievement is not mine alone. It is the result of a truly **fantastic band of souls** who have served on the committee and/or led our vital group activities. Without their dedication, **Hunstanton u3a** would simply not be the thriving, dynamic organisation it continues to be. My deepest **thanks go to all Group Leaders** for their tireless hard work in keeping this association alive and vibrant for our members.

I extend my **gratitude to all members of the committee**—both past and present. It has been a pleasure to work alongside you. Together, we have ensured that Hunstanton u3a meets the evolving needs of our members, responds diligently to guidance from the u3a Trust, and, critically, remains in full compliance with the Charity Commission's regulations. I must also acknowledge that, amid the procedures and protocols, we have managed to share moments of genuine levity and had a few giggles.

We are saying thanks and farewell to several valued committee members:

- A special commendation must go to **Angela**, who has hosted our committee meetings, providing not just sustenance but also very welcome lubricants! As Vice-Chair, Speakers Secretary, and a valued Groups Leader, her decision to divest herself of one of these critical roles is entirely understandable and justified. Her departure, however, **leaves us with the immediate and pressing need for a new Speakers Secretary**.
- I wish to profoundly thank our outgoing **Membership Secretary, Annette Francis**. Annette, with quiet diligence and the invaluable assistance of her husband, Peter, has consistently gone **above and beyond the call of duty**, ensuring that the process of joining Hunstanton u3a is clear, simple, and welcoming.
- Finally, **Addie** steps down as Publicity Officer, another individual whose efforts have significantly contributed to the growth of this organisation. While it is often said that the precise efficacy of advertising is unknowable, the steady increase in our member numbers stands as a testament to Addie's credit. The challenge of finding a successor for this role has proven impossible, leading to a proposal for the merger of the **Publicity and Events** functions.

I'd also like to thank the whole committee:

The Organisers

Thank you to **Virginia Young**, our Secretary. Virginia, your meticulous organisation ensures we're all on the same page. From minutes to correspondence, you keep the wheels turning smoothly. And to **Jacque Yaxley**, our Groups Coordinator—your work is vital. You ensure the heart of our u3a, our wonderful groups, continues to beat strongly and grow. Thank you both for your indispensable efforts.

The Money and Events Team

A huge thank you to **Pat Eckersall**, the Treasurer. Handling the finances of an active u3a is a significant responsibility, and we appreciate your careful management and clear reporting. And to **Verity Mitchell**, our Events organiser—thank you for giving us things to look forward to! Your hard work creating engaging events and gatherings makes our membership so much richer.

The Communications Team

Finally, our thanks to the communications experts. To **Ian Holland**, the Webmaster, thank you for ensuring our online presence is functional and informative; It's a key tool for our members. Also, taking the lead with Beacon and helping others to use the tool. To **Sylvia Pratt**, the Newsletter Editor, and **David LeMoir**, the Subeditor—thank you both for consistently producing an excellent newsletter that keeps us all connected and well-informed. The polished final product is a credit to your teamwork.

General Closing

"To the whole committee: thank you for your **commitment, enthusiasm, and good humour** over the past year. We truly appreciate everything you do to make Hunstanton u3a such a welcoming and successful organisation."

It's been a giggle, Norman