

Trustees AGM Report 2026

Welcome to the 33rd Annual General Meeting of Burgess Hill u3a. While members have come and very sadly have also left us, the organisation that was launched back in the early 1990's has continued to respond to changes and challenges. Many willing volunteers have guided, and prudently managed our affairs over the intervening years. Those of us who have been privileged to be part of this have definitely "Learned, Laughed and Lived" a lot thanks to the u3a.

So what HAVE we been doing? Well, now more than 60 Interest groups meet in over a dozen locations in and around Burgess Hill and we see that our real strength is in our 600 members' skills, abilities and "real life" experience. Many thanks go to our indefatigable NewsLink editors who publish our guide to each and every one of these groups 3 times a year. There are games like Bridge, Canasta, & Mah Jong, Language studies, Physical Activities, Scientific and Artistic Interests and even 4 lots of Grumpy Old Men (who aren't really - Grumpy, that is). NewsLink editions are published for Spring, Summer and Autumn: there is no Winter in the u3a! Here are just a few of the year's highlights and some plans.

In May we finally managed to win the coveted inter u3a Quiz trophy against local rivals Haywards Heath and Hurstpierpoint Hassocks & Ditchling's finest! And of course many of us also enjoyed our May Co-ordinated Summer Walks with longer, medium and shorter options followed by tea and cake together at Burgess Hill FCs clubhouse. Then there was the August u3a Summer Tea Party, the September holiday to Bournemouth, and an October Beetle Drive (you don't know what that is? - well, come to the next one and see that no insects are harmed!). There was our October U3A Matinee of Downtown Abbey (and "The Choral" recently and another later this year), the November Xmas Quiz (see the picture in U3A Matters) and finally our December Xmas Lunch at the Thatched Inn.

Maintaining that momentum early in the New Year a very successful Domino Drive was held which generated requests for an early repeat. Look out for more news in your emailed Newsletter. Late last year Steve Furber, your Events Coordinator, asked for event ideas and new helpers in the email Newsletter. Steve is delighted to report that we now have an Events Group, which gratifyingly consists of several members new to u3a organising, plus a couple of "old faithfuls". The ideas are already flowing, with plans being developed for a guided visit to the newly refurbished Preston Manor, a local Transport History Study day in conjunction with BH Heritage and Historical Association, and possibly an Eastbourne Theatre matinee trip by coach.

Do you remember, too, those memorable Monthly Meetings: Sarah Milner - fantastic favourites on her violin, or our very own Don McBeth outlining the miracle that we all keep in our pockets. We also heard about climate change, recycling, and "so far, so good" from Malcolm Wells who was once mistaken for a member of the Royal Family in Buckingham Palace. You missed out if you missed those.

You might even be surprised to find, if you attend one of our board meetings (aka committee meetings), that our Trustees don't really have horns and occasionally even laugh (very quietly, of course). We hold open meetings which will be announced in the email Newsletter as soon as possible and we'd love to have YOU aboard, too. Unfortunately our recently appointed Chair finds his health prevents him at present from taking the active role we know he wishes to have. Paul, concentrate on getting well again, we wish you a speedy recovery and hope you'll be back in the Chair soon.

Our thanks are due to Anthony Vander Willigen who steps down from Treasurer, Carol Ashburner who steps down from Assistant Treasurer (and who has been a Trustee for over 10 years), and to Anne Anthony who steps down from Venue Bookings this year. Please remember too the true core of our u3a - the Group Leaders and Convenors without whom there would be no activities to attend at all.

But we're very pleased that after the AGM we expect to be having a number of new Trustees joining the Board, as well as an earlier Trustee "returning to the fold". Our u3a can only grow and develop by using everybody's talents, and we hope that our new trustees will tap into the array of skills, talents and experience of our u3a members. We want to explore as many new ways as possible of getting the guidance of our organization into the hands of you, the members. We are a Mutual organization, one that works best when we're ALL actively involved in "making it happen". Remember, if we all sit back and let someone else do it for us, soon nothing will be happening at all.