

**Dawlish & District u3a**  
**AGM September 2025**  
**Chair's Report**

It is very pleasing to report that our membership continues to be at levels which would have been considered unachievable not so many years ago. We currently have over 170 members, and if the normal ebb and flow of recruitment continues, we are likely to approach 200 again before the end of the year.

What is more important than numbers is that our members get a great deal from their involvement in the varied life of our u3a. Whether it is the social side at our monthly meetings, or the friendship and support from belonging to interest groups, and the stimulation that comes from enjoying interests and learning, membership of our u3a is a vital part of life for a great many people in our community.

Members of the committee continue to work hard to support the work of interest groups and look after members. At the forthcoming AGM, two of our most valuable and dedicated members will be stepping down after outstanding service. Kate McCarthy will leave the committee and leave a vacancy as Membership Secretary and Vice Chair, but I am pleased that she has indicated that she will continue to act as Beacon Administrator, an important role in ensuring that our affairs are run efficiently. Michael Heyden will also step down from the committee and from his position as Secretary. Before he took on that role, for some years he was our Treasurer. In both capacities, he has given members great service, and his contribution – and dry wit - will be missed. I am reassured to know that he has offered to provide help in the future should we need it.

It is invariably the case that it is the Treasurer who is at the heart of a well-run organisation, and that is certainly true for us. A year ago, George Mansfield took on this role, I think it is fair to say with a certain amount of trepidation, but he has risen to the challenge impressively. He seems to be unfailingly patient with those who don't always heed his advice or deadlines, and can always be relied upon to sort out any problems which arise. Having gone through the annual cycle of financial affairs, I hope he finds his second year in post will have no surprises!

One long overdue innovation in our affairs is the creation of a Facebook page, with the initiative taken by Charlotte May. For some people this is a prime way to keep in touch with all sorts of people and organisations, and we ought to have had a presence in social media long before now. I understand that the numbers following and liking what they read are growing strongly. This Facebook page works alongside the newsletter and website in providing a good flow of information for existing members as well as other people who might like to join us. Miggie and Dave Pickton are exceptional webmasters, having a command of the technical side of management as well as great experience in understanding how users of the site can best access the wealth of information it holds.

Roz Summerton does a great job in compiling and editing our newsletter, almost never failing to meet her deadline of publishing a new edition by the first day of each month. In total, we are able to show the world how much the Dawlish & District u3a offers to enable us to Learn, Laugh and Live.

It is always good to see new groups being formed, and there is plenty of scope for more. One new arrival is the Bridge Group, which was created and led by Charles Greenleas, a highly skilled player who is encouraging a good number of members, of different levels of ability from beginners onwards, to learn this challenging card game. If any other members see a gap in our provision for a group which they would like to create, just ask Barry Baker about how to go about it.

While committee membership and officer roles are important, I think it would be fair to say that the work of conveners matters just as much. We should all be grateful to conveners for giving us the lead in organising and supporting activities throughout the year. There are some groups where new conveners are needed, and I hope that those who have not previously taken on the role will offer their services. Without conveners, very little would happen, and sadly some groups will lapse unless a new convener steps forward! Please think about what you can do to contribute.

Speaking for myself, I have enjoyed another u3a year of interesting and varied talks at monthly meetings, fascinating interest group meetings, unlikely adventures, sober wine tasting, and lively friendships. Being in the u3a is an important part of my life, and it is a pleasure to be able to contribute to its continuing prosperity, as Chair and through participating in several of our interest groups. Thank you for all your support contributions throughout the year.

John Vick  
Chair  
Dawlish & District u3a