

Haslemere u3a – Chairman's Annual Report 2025–2026

Reporting period: 10 November 2025 – 9 November 2026

It has been a busy and rewarding year for Haslemere u3a, and one in which we have made significant progress as an organisation.

Following our AGM on 10 November 2025, there was a substantial change in the leadership of the organisation. Four new Honorary Officers – Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer – took up their roles, together with new Bookings and Speakers Secretaries. The Committee comprised twelve people in total.

There was no time for hesitation. Almost immediately, the new Committee began work on the programme of activities and events for the year ahead, beginning with the planning of our Christmas Party (2025).



Christmas Party 2025 – members enjoying an afternoon together

Events and activities

The committee decided that the Christmas Party should be an opportunity to give something back to members. We therefore set aside **just under £500** to enhance the event, and the result was a **record attendance of 120 people**. The party was a great success and the feedback from members was exceptionally positive.

The experience also led us to develop a more structured approach to planning events. We have subsequently used a simple planning template for major activities, reviewing what worked well and what could be improved and carrying those lessons forward.

This approach has helped us deliver a number of successful events during the year. The Group Leaders' Party in July, held on a particularly warm summer's evening, attracted a record attendance and again received excellent feedback.

We also changed the name of our traditional Enrolment Day to **Open Day** and introduced a revised format in August. The response was outstanding and demonstrated the enthusiasm of both existing and prospective members.



Open Day 2026 – members and prospective members exploring what Haslemere u3a has to offer

Two **New Members' Welcome Afternoons** held in April and early October this year proved very successful in helping new members understand what Haslemere u3a has to offer and, importantly, how they can become involved.

Our new Speakers Secretary has developed a full and varied programme of meetings which has proved popular with members.

We have also raised our profile in the wider community through our presence at a number of local fetes during the summer, and we organised successful visits to Chartwell House and Tudeley Church.

Membership and communications

Haslemere u3a continues to be a vibrant and attractive organisation, and **membership has grown by 14% since early October 2025**. This is a very encouraging achievement and reflects the appeal of what we offer to the local community.

Our **twelve newsletters** during the year have provided members with a regular source of information, containing a wide range of interesting and varied material.

The new website **Welcome page** and the development of our **Photo Gallery** have also helped us present Haslemere u3a more effectively, both to existing members and to people considering joining.

Groups

Our groups remain at the heart of Haslemere u3a. The number of groups has now reached **73**, providing members with a very wide choice of activities and interests.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our **Group Leaders and Organisers** for their steadfast and enthusiastic efforts throughout the year. They are, in many ways, the **unsung heroes of Haslemere u3a**, giving their time, energy and commitment to make our groups possible and ensuring that members have the opportunity to enjoy the activities and interests they have chosen.

Our joint Groups Coordinators have worked hard to support existing Group Leaders while also helping members who wish to establish new groups. Their work has been particularly important as membership has grown rapidly.



Group Leaders and Organisers – the people who make our groups possible

I would also like to acknowledge and thank those members who support Haslemere u3a by working quietly behind the scenes. **Lucy Krawczyk**, through her work in hospitality, **Nic Monks**, our Webmaster, and **Dave Andrew**, our Beacon Administrator, all make an important contribution to the smooth running of the organisation. We are also grateful to the many other volunteers who have helped with events and activities throughout the year. Their contributions are often less visible, but they are greatly valued.

Looking ahead, we need to ensure that our growing membership can translate into opportunities for participation. Some groups are already full, while finding **suitable meeting space** can be difficult. Addressing **group capacity** and identifying additional venues will therefore be an important priority in the coming year. To encourage the development of new groups, the Committee has also agreed to provide **seed funding** to cover some of the costs they face during their early stages.

Growth also brings another challenge: **we need more members to step forward and get involved**. As the organisation develops, we need more people willing to contribute their time, skills and ideas, whether through the Committee, our Groups, Events or other activities.

The u3a model is built on an organisation **run by its members, for its members**. Its success depends on a shared willingness to contribute, rather than relying on a relatively small number of people to do most of the work. We need to continue to foster a **culture of participation and contribution**, in which members feel encouraged to get involved, take initiative and help shape the future of Haslemere u3a. The more people who contribute, the more we can achieve together.

Administration and organisation

A considerable amount of work has taken place behind the scenes to improve the way Haslemere u3a operates.

Bookings have been handled very efficiently, with procedures streamlined and administration tightened. We have also established **Google Workspace** for Committee use, giving us a more effective way of sharing and managing committee information. We are grateful to our outgoing Secretary for his contribution to the committee and for the work he undertook during his time in the role, including helping to establish Google Workspace.

The roll-out of **Risk Assessments** has continued efficiently and is helping us maintain appropriate standards across our activities.

We have also begun to develop more collaborative ways of working through **sub-teams**, allowing particular areas of work to be taken forward by smaller groups rather than relying entirely on the full Committee.

The administration surrounding this year's AGM has been particularly challenging because our Secretary had to step down owing to a change in personal circumstances. Nevertheless, the necessary work has been completed, with the Chairman and Vice Chairman taking on the additional administrative responsibilities.

Finance

Our financial position remains healthy. At the time of writing, our finances are **approximately £2,000 ahead of the equivalent position last year**.

Importantly, we are not simply relying on our current position. A financial plan has been developed to help us look ahead and make sensible decisions about how our resources can best be used for the benefit of members.

Looking ahead

The Committee has worked throughout the year against **eleven Key Priorities**, which are set out towards the top of the Documents page on our website. These priorities have provided a useful framework for deciding where our efforts should be concentrated.

We have also continued to look for opportunities to innovate. Alongside the website developments and Google Workspace, initiatives such as **Tea and Tech** and the use of sub-teams are helping us explore new ways of supporting our members and our volunteers.

Overall, I believe **Haslemere u3a is in a strong and exciting position**. We have a growing membership, a wide range of groups, a strong programme of speakers and events, healthy finances and a Committee that is committed to improving the organisation.

Looking ahead, our challenge is to build on this strong position: ensuring that new members can find their place, that our groups have the space and support they need, and that more members feel encouraged to contribute to the organisation's future.

I would like to finish by thanking everyone who has contributed during the year – the Committee, Group Leaders, volunteers and, above all, our members.

Haslemere u3a is what it is because of the willingness of its members to contribute their time, enthusiasm and ideas. I hope that during the coming year even more members will feel encouraged to get involved.

Thank you.

Roger Abayasekera
Chairman