

# e-BUZZ

## INTERIM CHAIR'S MESSAGE

It seems that we are well into April showers, although the rainfall has been happening for a long time. It doesn't take much for the ground and ourselves to get saturated. I seem to remember a brief exposure to sunlight until the rain restarted. The amount that has fallen should be enough to see us through the summer, but it was a bit of a shock to read that due to a lack of new reservoirs the water hasn't been stored properly and a hot summer could deplete reserves. So lucky you if you have a rain butt.

I have an allotment where I do manage to grow reasonable vegetables. Not so in my first year where enthusiasm took over from common sense. I transplanted carrot seedlings into the ground closely watched by two seasoned allotment gardeners having a cup of tea. When finished I stood up expecting praise, only to be told that "they won't grow". Asking why they went into a long advisory session about the carrot fly and the onion fly and stony ground etc. Why did they not tell me earlier?

The answer was that I had to find out for myself! Yet they were right and I learnt a lot. The stony ground produced carrots that were, to say the least, odd shapes and in some cases positively rude! Looking reasonable on the outside the carrot insides were decimated!

Let's just say I would not have served them up to friends and family. In fact, I didn't serve them at all – the compost bin benefitted. You will be pleased to know that I have tried again and managed at least half a dozen carrots that were edible!

Now I tend to plant vegetables that cannot easily be bought: ones like Pink Fir Apples. If you are in the know, you know that these are potatoes with a long and knobbly shape but a superb taste. Sometimes the shapes produced cause a lot of smiles. The joy of tipping out a potato bag and scooping up these tubers is well worth the wait. If you are a gardener, try them.

We are moving quickly into the holiday season. Perhaps you have already chosen your summer break if you go on one. Perhaps we might have a summer like 1976 – remember that one? Well maybe not to the extent of hose pipe bans or water rationing – just really a change from all the rain. Water butts must be full. I'm off to devise plans for an ark.



**PAULINE BUTTLINGS**

**INTERIM CHAIR**

**DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS TO THE SUMMER BUZZ**

**10<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2024**

**[bu3anews@outlook.com](mailto:bu3anews@outlook.com)**

**AGENDA**

1. Chairman's Welcome and Introduction to the meeting
2. Approving the Minutes of 27<sup>th</sup> AGM held on June 5<sup>th</sup> 2023 (as printed in Spring Buzz 2024) and any Matters Arising
3. Receiving and approving the Chairman's Annual Report (as printed in Spring E-Buzz 2024)
4. Receiving and approving the examined 2023-24 Accounts (as printed in Summer Buzz 2024)
5. Election of Executive Committee Officers (closing date is Friday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2024)
6. Approval of Alan Swann to continue as President of Barnsley and District u3a
7. Appointing examiners for the accounts for the year ending 5<sup>th</sup> April 2025
8. Considering all resolutions previously submitted in writing and any other business previously notified. (Closing date is Friday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2024)
9. Date of 29<sup>th</sup> AGM to be confirmed as Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2025

**Bu3a Executive Committee 2024-25**

Nominations received:

2 year terms:

Pauline Buttling preferred roles as Chair and Social Secretary

Hannah Lucas preferred role as Business Secretary

(1 year term)

Trudy Atkinson preferred role as Membership Secretary/Simple Membership Manager

Helen Dew preferred role as New Members' Secretary/Penistone Manager

Jo Kasperek preferred role as Publicity Officer

Jean Embury preferred role as Activity Safety Officer

Mike Hird preferred role as Buzz Editor

Jane Barry preferred role as Treasurer Support

Vanda Outram preferred role as Webmaster

Karen Hodgson role to be determined

~~~~~

Niall Clarke will continue as Treasurer for a second year.

The roles of Vice Chair and Development Officer are available.

**SUE STOKES**

# BARNSELEY u3a 2023-24 ANNUAL REPORT

The 2023 AGM had fourteen applications, from a membership of about 1200, to create a full Committee, a situation contrary to many other u3as. However, there were several changes during the year. The Vice-Chair and the Business Secretary left due to personal reasons; the latter role was taken on by a Committee member. The Buzz Editor resigned from Committee but stayed as Buzz Editor. Following the departure of the Chair, an Acting Chair and an Acting Vice Chair were appointed. A new role of Monthly Members' Meeting Co-ordinator was created. Members joined the committee to take on roles as Webmaster and Development Officer.

In September 2023, Bu3a returned to its 'original' home of Priory Campus, after a forced absence due to the pandemic.

The Committee considered succession planning, personal data protection and embedding Simple Membership as the critical communication platform and database system. The issue of raising funds for other charities and organisations was addressed. Consultation with the Charity Commission and the Third Age Trust confirmed Bu3a's constitution precludes Bu3a from directly fundraising. When Risk Assessment and Copyright issues needed attention, Bu3a had Committee members with former relevant experiences. Activity Safety Checks (formerly Risk Assessments) and PAT testing of electrical equipment was efficiently carried out in an ongoing programme during the year. The majority of the 34 venues used by Bu3a met Safety Check requirements by December 2023.

Copyright and its complexities caused considerable concerns. Workshops were offered to all Group Coordinators with information pertinent to the nature of their activities. A policy and an information video were produced to support current and future Coordinators and members re copyright issues.

Many new groups started in 2023-24 including: User Friendly IT Devices, Laughter Yoga, Concert Party, Beginners' Guitars, Encaustic Art, Life Before Us, Modern Jive, and Eating Out in Penistone. A procedure for setting up New Groups was established.

The Cycling Group celebrated their 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary by riding from Old Moor to Sprotborough. The Motorbike Group spent 5 days in Wales, riding 150 miles each day. Walking Cricket was featured on The One Show after a visit by Angela Rippon. Bu3a members participated in the first county match between Yorkshire and Worcestershire. Walking Football members played in a 6-a-side South Yorkshire tournament.

On the musical front, the Choir had a capacity crowd for their Christmas concert in their new venue in Wombwell. The first post-pandemic Ceilidh was predictably sold out. The Old Blowers developed a programme of performances in local schools and Flutes Galore performed at external venues as well as at the regional Music Fest. The Concert Party will play for the Mayor's "Final Countdown" event. Stringalongs also perform for external audiences.

The Travel Group delivered an extensive programme of day trips and short breaks to Great Yorkshire Show, Northumberland, Alvaston Hall, Studley Castle, Beverley and Castle Howard.

The annual Christmas meal was well attended and, as always, well complimented.

The Buzz format changed to a slimmed-down printed version, with additional material available online. Visuals and external extracts in The Buzz are tightly managed to comply with copyright rules. The Interim Buzz was renamed the 'e-Buzz'.

Subscriptions remain unchanged for 2024-25. An annual shortfall of £6-8,000 in our Blue Box income and room hire expenditure was published. Our healthy reserves and increasing membership enable meeting this gap in the short term.

The March '23 Consultation survey outcomes were shared with members. The 38 respondents, from a membership of 1200, wrote a lot and most of it was fulsome praise. The 'apparent' apathy could be read as near total-satisfaction with what was already on offer in our 125 groups.

The Events Team ensured Bu3a are active participants in the Barnsley ageing well community by raising our profile at events including Penistone Show, Darton Community Gala, Barnsley Main Heritage Day and several Ward Alliance and Age UK localised events. New banners were created for the Penistone Drop-In and for The Old Blowers. Bu3a once again took centre-stage in Experience Barnsley with a display of Food Memories.

# BARNSLEY u3a 2023-24 ANNUAL REPORT - contd

The sold-out Yorkshire and the Humber Regional Summer School had 5 of the 10 tutors from Barnsley u3a, and several Bu3a attendees. Bu3a is a member of SYNETH (South Yorkshire Network) working with neighbouring u3as to share good practice and consult on common issues. The Treasurer attended a regional Treasurers Workshop resulting in a networking support group.

Barnsley now has over 1340 members who receive excellent support from the Group Coordinators who put such skill and effort into their group activities. Our thanks go to each of them.

In looking forward, Barnsley u3a has a firm base and a diverse population. However, we are aware of the need to attract younger members, either newly retired, semi-retired or those with time to commit to our principles and ethos. It is an ongoing challenge as we age that we have to be open to change. Bu3a's Committee, Support teams and Coordinators are exemplary and all credit goes to them for the hard work and time they give. It must be recognised that all these members are volunteers and that all members can volunteer to join and be welcomed.

**SUE STOKES**

## SPRING BUZZ - CORRECTION

The Monthly Meeting for May will be held on **Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May** and NOT 13<sup>th</sup> April as stated in the Spring Buzz.

Apologies for the error and hope this doesn't cause members any inconvenience.

## MEMBERS MONTHLY MEETING - NOTICE

The following plan will be put into place if the meeting needs to be cancelled at short notice.

This could be due to poor weather or other circumstances such as a boiler or electricity failure at the venue.

The Chair or Vice-Chair will send out an email to members. It is therefore important to check your email prior to setting out.

I appreciate that this plan will not work for all, but it is the best and quickest option at the moment.

**HANNAH LUCAS**

## SOCIAL EVENT

### RACE NIGHT

**FRIDAY 10<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2024 – 7.30pm – 10.30pm**

**GILROYD SOCIAL CLUB**

**£10 TO INCLUDE PIE AND PEA SUPPER. VEGETARIAN AND GLUTEN FREE DIETS CAN BE ACCOMMODATED: PLEASE STATE YOUR REQUIREMENTS WHEN ORDERING**

**CONTACT PAULINE BUTTLING, SOCIAL SECRETARY**



## Fit for the Future a u3a wide consultation on governance

Extensive details have been mailed to all u3as since the end of January and are also available on the website at [www.u3a.org.uk/fitforthefuture](http://www.u3a.org.uk/fitforthefuture). This is a very short version outlining the main points about which many members have asked questions. It is important to remember these are drafts – the Board will decide on 19<sup>th</sup> June whether to propose the change and u3as will be able to vote at the AGM on 16<sup>th</sup> October. If proposed, the resolution will require a 75% majority of the votes cast in order to be approved. Please remember to register when requested to do so.



**For u3as there will be no change** to their independent operation or committee and trustees' responsibilities or charity status. However, u3as will have more opportunity to influence the development of the u3a movement with enhanced representation and two-way communication.

**Why make changes?** The present structure is out of date and the way in which trustees are elected does not ensure the Board has the necessary skills and experience for today's charity requirements. Trustees also have a huge workload resulting in a shortage of volunteers for the job.

**A possible solution:** Disband the present Board of 18 members and reform it with a maximum of 10 u3a members, experienced in oversight and compliance, who are elected nationally (rather than regionally as at present). Their suitability might be identified by a Nominations Committee.



**Form a u3a Council** which would have powers delegated by the Board and would be composed of u3a members elected by and representing the regions and nations, together with some ex-officio members such as Strategy Group chairs and Network Link. The two bodies would liaise closely, with the chair of the Council being an ex-officio member of the Board (without a vote) and a Board member, probably the vice-chair, attending Council meetings.

**Responsibilities:** **The Board** would continue to have a legal responsibility to act on behalf of the Trust; to provide oversight of the Trust's performance; to ensure compliance with charity and corporate law; to ensure financial integrity and to approve the final annual budget and strategy. **The Council** would give u3as a much greater voice than at present; it would have the time to identify and discuss the needs of u3as; to consider u3a-wide priorities; develop and participate in u3a impact assessments and encourage participation in initiatives. It would contribute to the overall budget and strategy of the Trust and oversee and co-ordinate the work of the Strategy Groups. Representatives would act as spokespersons for the u3a movement in their region; be key contacts to liaise with other organizations and be a conduit for strengthened two-way communication with the u3as and networks in their region or nation.

**Will this change cost more money?** The Board will be much smaller and conduct most of its meetings on line, as will almost all other committees and any working groups etc. The Council will meet in person but probably only twice a year and its other meetings will be on line. It is therefore anticipated that there will be very little, if any, increase in costs.



**Consultation** is open until the end of April but please send any comments or suggestions in as soon as possible, either to your Regional / National Trustee or email them to:

[governance@u3a.org.uk](mailto:governance@u3a.org.uk)