

Outgoing Chair's Report (Peter Carter)

As I come to the end of my time as Chair of Cowbridge u3a it is, perhaps, appropriate to reflect on the last three years, my term of office, rather than focus only on the last year. When I took over the position of Chair from Douglas Guy in 2023. I suggested that I was disinclined to propose any drastic changes to the ways in which we operated and that any changes that might occur should be evolutionary rather than revolutionary. I also expressed my wish that both membership and the number of constituent interest groups would increase. In 2023, we had 265 members and 23 interest groups. There have, of course, been changes during the last three years although these have been introduced as smoothly as possible whilst we continued with our usual regular routines of General Meetings, Coffee Mornings and monthly bulletins. We have attempted to move with the times and amongst the innovations have been:

- the adoption of the u3a Beacon system for administration;
- development of our use of social media for publicity and communication;
- the creation of a new website;
- generation of closer links with the national u3a and Third Age Trust; and
- closer links with neighbouring and regional u3as.

More recently, Cowbridge u3a has been closely involved in a number of public events which have made us more visible to a wider audience. For example, we have:

- attended community events such as fetes and fayres (using our splendid new gazebo);
- hosted a u3a Quiz for neighbouring u3a groups (six south Wales u3as joined us with 17 teams entered); and
- celebrated our 30th Anniversary with a very well attended Open Day with entertainment and refreshments provided, at which our interest groups put on displays and demonstrations of their activities.

Whilst I am both proud and happy to be able to report these successes to you, it would be quite wrong for me to take credit for them. They are the result of initiatives and hard work by each and every member of the Cowbridge u3a committee and I would like to place on record my gratitude to everyone who has served on the committee during my three years in office. Membership numbers tend to fluctuate. As a direct consequence of the teamwork of the committee we do continue to attract new members. This, however, has to be balanced against those members we lose, sometimes because they move away from Cowbridge but sadly, because some – especially the more senior members, pass away. These are always poignant moments when we remember their contributions but share our sorrow. Nevertheless, our membership now stands at 312 and we have 26 interest groups.

September 2026