

CHAIRS REVIEW - April 2025 to March 2026

It does not seem that long since I composed my last AGM address and yet how much the world and prices have changed!

Once again our membership hit the 400+ mark by the end of March 2026. We are fortunate we have a reasonable mix of active and sedentary groups for our members to attend. So this review is also a reminder that our U3A exists for the sole purpose of enabling enjoyment through pursuit of activities by all our members.

We have continued our programme of improvements to the 'Upper Room'. As agreed at last year's AGM, we replaced the chairs (the old ones being returned to the church). Hopefully members find these more comfortable - I know that my back feels 'easier' after a group session in the room. We also purchased a new computer to ensure available technology is up to date and secure. Apart from that we continued the "running repairs" such as fixing and painting the main door (My thanks to Dennis Pavitt and Dave De Burton on this)

Again at last year's AGM it was agreed to reduce the Upper Room fee to £1.00 per group session in view of the charges introduced for Bone Hill Car Park. We hoped that this would encourage more groups to take advantage of this facility.

Another challenge this year concerned our Monthly Lunch Group. At last year's AGM it was agreed that rather than being self-supporting, a budget of £1000 be set aside to improve the quality of the speakers, to be paid out of our u3a funds. This we hoped would re-vitalise the meetings. However, we were then faced with the Royal Hotel raising their price by 35% - which was obviously not acceptable to our members and prompted a venue change. Also, as speakers are booked a year in advance, the quality will hopefully begin to improve from now on and be more entertaining to our members.

The move to the Durrant Hotel has so far been a success story. The attendance has risen and very few complaints received regarding food quality. I would like to give special thanks to Dennis Pavitt and Helen Summerhayes for their dedicated negotiation with the Durrant Hotel staff during the changeover.

On finances, the decisions consciously made at last AGM regarding the reduction of the Upper Room charge and the Monthly Lunch Speaker Fee have had effect. However, the deficit is in line with our Fiscal policy commitment to reduce capital funds year on year. We believe this is acceptable if it encourages more members and groups to join in these activities and hence worthwhile.

This note is an ideal opportunity to remind you that your Committee is always looking for new ideas, new enthusiastic helpers. If you want to step forward for nomination to the Committee, by all means put your name forward to be added to the list of members being elected to the Committee during the AGM.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all our Group Leaders for the hard work they put into making Torridge U3A attractive to our members. My thanks also go to all the other members of the Committee for their efforts to help keep our U3A on an even keel over the past year.

Graham Thompson

Chair, Torridge U3A