



Chair Report to the u3a Committee July 2026

1. Swanland u3a 30th Anniversary Celebrations

The success of our **30th Anniversary Celebration** held in May has already been well reported upon, so I will not dwell too much on it again. However, I would like to record my sincere thanks to everyone who contributed to making the day such a memorable occasion, and in particular to the members of the **30th Anniversary Sub-Group**, whose enthusiasm, planning and hard work ensured that the event ran so smoothly.

Our celebrations are not quite over yet. The final part of our anniversary programme will be the **Cake Cutting Ceremony** at the Social Event on **Thursday 3rd September**. I hope as many members as possible will join us to round off what has been a very successful year of celebration.

2. Convenors' Meeting

Following the Convenors' Meeting held towards the end of last year, I wrote to all our Convenors inviting their thoughts and suggestions for the future. Although the response was not overwhelming, I would like to thank those who took the time to reply.

The comments received were, on the whole, constructive and measured. The main observations concerned the comfort of the venue, which several felt was rather cold, and the difficulty of selecting a day that did not clash with Interest Group meetings. As our groups meet throughout the week, I suspect it will always be impossible to find a date that suits everyone.

One suggestion, however, particularly caught my attention. It was proposed that future Convenors' Meetings could include a short training or information session covering practical topics such as risk assessments, financial procedures and communications. I believe this is an idea worthy of further consideration, particularly as it could provide additional support for both new and existing Convenors.

On the subject of risk assessments, I appreciate that some members find them rather daunting. If the Committee felt it would be helpful, I would be more than happy to assist Convenors in preparing or reviewing their assessments to ensure that they are both practical and proportionate.

Overall, I was encouraged that no significant concerns were raised, and I made a point of replying personally to everyone who took the trouble to contact me. In view of the result, I believe it would be constructive and helpful for us to have a short discussion on the matter of future Convenor Meetings whilst we are together as a Committee.

3. Matters arising from Committee Meeting 16 April 2026

Members will recall that two matters arising from the previous Committee meeting required further investigation and resolution.

The first concerned a query raised by the Membership Secretary regarding the membership status of an individual associated with the Gardening Group. While the member maintains that both the Swanland u3a annual subscription and the Gardening Group subscription were paid in cash at the same time, no record of either payment has been identified and the funds have not been accounted for.

In the absence of evidence that the Swanland u3a annual subscription has been received, the Gardening Group Secretary has been advised that the individual cannot currently be regarded as a member of Swanland u3a and, consequently, is not covered by the benefits and insurance associated with membership. It is also noted that no membership renewal has been submitted on the member's behalf.

The matter will remain under review should any further information come to light.

The second matter concerned a late application from a member who wished to be considered for election to the Swanland u3a Committee at the forthcoming AGM. I subsequently met with the member to discuss the matter and we agreed that, in the circumstances, it would be preferable for the application not to proceed at this stage. I am pleased to report that the discussion was both positive and constructive, and the member accepted the outcome with complete understanding and good grace.

4. Documentation

Very briefly, it has come to light that a number of different application forms are currently in circulation for members wishing to apply for positions on the Swanland u3a Committee. In the interests of consistency and good governance, and subject to the Committee's agreement, Brenda Wilson has kindly offered to assist me in reviewing the existing documents with a view to producing a single, approved application form for future use.

5. Communication of Official AGM Notifications

At the previous Committee meeting, an action was agreed for the Minutes Secretary and Chair to review the timetable for the communication of official AGM notifications and associated documentation. The Swanland u3a Constitution sets out the timescales that must be observed for notifying members of the AGM and for the submission of nominations and other relevant papers. In order to ensure full compliance with the Constitution, whilst allowing sufficient time for the necessary administration, the following timetable is proposed for the Committee's consideration.

Date	Action
Week commencing 1 February 2027	Preparation of AGM notification papers for both email and postal distribution.
10 February 2027	AGM notification papers posted to members who do not have access to email.
16 February 2027	AGM notification papers emailed to all remaining members.
18 February 2027	Pre-AGM Members' Meeting, at which members will be advised that the formal notification process has been completed.
11 March 2027	Closing date for Committee nominations and membership renewal applications where applicable.
18 March 2027	Swanland u3a Annual General Meeting.

The proposed timetable is intended to ensure that all constitutional requirements are met, while providing adequate time for the preparation, distribution and receipt of the necessary documentation.

6. YAHR Meeting and Workshop ĩ Wednesday 15 July 2026

I will report to the Committee on the outcome of the YAHR meeting and workshop, together with any matters that I believe may be of interest or benefit to Swanland u3a. The main topic of conversation will be the perennial challenge of recruitment and retention to u3a committees. I will be attending with an open mind and hope in my heart!

Before leaving this item, I would like to record my sincere thanks to those Committee Members who have willingly represented Swanland u3a at meetings when I have been unavailable to attend. Your support is greatly appreciated.

7. Final Word

My apologies for the length of this report. However, I hope that by setting out the various issues in advance, it will enable us to focus our discussions at the meeting and make the best use of everyone's time.

Finally, may I thank each of you for the time, commitment and goodwill you continue to give to Swanland u3a. We are all volunteers, each bringing different skills and experience, but united by a common desire to ensure that our organisation continues to flourish for the benefit of both current and future members.

With my very best wishes,

Mark Sutcliffe

Chair Swanland u3a