Tarporley & District u3a – Chair's Statement 2025-2026

It has been an honour to serve as Chair of Tarporley & District u3a this year and to be supported by a great team of volunteers who keep our u3a thriving. Evidence that we are indeed thriving is that this year we already have six new interest groups up-and-running and two more to start in January.

My great thanks go to those members who have volunteered to start these new groups. As well as new groups, we have new members – at least 70 this year so far. New ideas and new members are the life-blood of this and all other u3as. Without them, the organisation can only stagnate and ultimately cease to exist.

At their meeting in January 2026, the trustees took note of the Charity Commission's guidance on Public Benefit which states that a charity cannot exist solely to benefit its own members unless a sufficient section of the public can, in principle, become members, and the membership structure ensures that the charity's purposes can be carried out for the public benefit. We took into account that at least 30 per cent of local inhabitants are eligible to join Tarporley & District u3a, having permanently ceased full-time employment. We considered that membership (at an equivalent cost of just £1 per month) is not prohibitive and ensures that our activities remain sustainable, so that we can continue our educational purposes (as broadly defined by the Charity Commission). We therefore concluded that we continue to meet the criteria for registration as an educational charity.

I am happy to report that over the last year, your Committee has continued to make progress in ensuring that everything is ship-shape for the years to come. Thanks to Andy Barson (Website and Communications), we have a new online application process which I am sure has been a great help in recruiting new members. Andy has also ensured that our committee records and decisions are all stored online on Dropbox, so that present and future committee members have ready access to all the information they need to keep the show on the road. The Committee has also developed a risk management matrix to ensure we recognise any risks potentially affecting the organisation's continued existence and that we put in place an action plan to mitigate those risks. And, speaking of risk, all our interest groups now have in place risk assessments covering their activities. Eddie Lyne has been tireless in keeping us all on track in this respect.

It has been a great pleasure to work alongside this year's Committee, all of whom have made a real contribution to our u3a. I am particularly grateful to Gwyn Jones (joint Vice Chair) who, in addition to taking on the role of Membership Secretary, has been very diligent in ensuring we don't stand still as an organisation; to Angela Wilson, who has been a reassuring colleague and a model of efficiency as our Secretary, and to our Treasurer, Simon Dunning, without whose hard work we really couldn't keep the show on the road. I am pleased to report that our finances remain on a sound footing with adequate reserves. Thanks to Sue Hardacre, who was co-opted onto the Committee this year, we have become more active in the local, regional and national u3a so that we can continue to learn from what other u3as are doing. Gill Moroney (joint Vice Chair) has continued to do a great job of bringing to us an outstanding programme of talks at the Monthly Meetings. And my grateful thanks go to Hektor and Togg (I mean Angela Green) for their commitment and hard work in keeping the Newsletter going!

We are very grateful to Jan Linsell and Pat Tyson-Jones for their many contributions and also for their tireless organisation of so many expertly arranged trips and outings

which have been a highlight for so many members. Pat's safeguarding expertise has also been vital, especially as none of us is getting younger.

A reduced number of nominations to the Committee this year means that we have one or two spaces for new members on the Committee – please do step forward if you are at all tempted. We need you and we will make you most welcome!

Peter Schofield, October 2026