



Howard Allen

**Annual Report to Annual General Meeting
Tuesday 8 September 2026**

Committee 2025 - 2026

Chairman:	David Barnett.
Vice-Chair:	Rena Souten.
Membership:	Jenny Bagworth.
Groups:	Rose Cuthbertson.
Treasurer:	Andrea Goodall.
Website and IT:	Roy Biggs.
Business Secretary:	Helen Wilberforce.
Committee member:	Judi Gibbons.
Committee member:	Sally Hedges
Committee member:	Geraint Johnes.
Committee member:	Janet Potter.
Committee member:	Peter Robertshaw.
Committee member:	Debbie Rogerson.
Committee member:	Keith Wilberforce.

Email: enquiries@holmevalleyu3a.org.uk

Website: <https://holmevalley.u3asite.uk>

Facebook: for members only: Holme Valley U3A

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/434128977300240>

Holme Valley U3A is a registered charity and part of the Third Age Trust.

Chairman's Report 2025/2026

Attending a meeting at the Civic Hall 12 years ago, April 2014, I put my name down as an interested party to the idea of starting the Holme Valley u3a. The list was not long but enough to form a small committee. I volunteered as the Treasurer which I held for 6 years after which I became Chairman held until now, 6 years.

Our Constitution states that 12 years should be the maximum for a committee member to sit on the committee without a break.

The committee has guided us to being a very successful u3a growing every year, we now have 700+ members. This growth has been mainly due to our Group Leaders and the diverse subjects and activities they cover. Future growth will need more Group leaders and more subjects and activities.

I would like to thank all my colleagues on the committee over the 12 years for their dedication and effort to keep us on track to achieve the very best for the Holme Valley u3a.

We also need more committee members, two of us are at 12 years' service and we need another two to complete the committee along with helpers to bring fresh ideas for the future.

I have enjoyed every minute of being a committee member and will continue to be a u3a member.

Thank you all who have re-joined or become a new member this year and I hope your committee will continue to fulfil their responsibilities to you all so we can LEARN, LAUGH, LIVE together.

David Barnett

Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on Friday 12th September 2025.

Held at the Methodist Church, Holmfirth

Members present: 116

Chair: David Barnett

Apologies: Sally Hedges, Helen Wilberforce, Keith Wilberforce, Jenny Bagworth, Judi Gibbons, Geraint Johnes, Michael Burn

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and was pleased to see such good attendance.

Chair's Annual Report:

The Chair spoke of another good year (to March 2025) with membership at around 600. A number of new groups have been set up and David gave thanks to all Group Leaders for all the hard work that goes on behind the scenes.

The success of our u3a (membership now at 650) means that the Methodist Church is overcrowded at monthly meetings and a future move to the Civic Hall is necessary.

David referred to the review which is taking place and asked members to please complete the survey which is to be emailed out as to how our u3a works and how it could be improved.

David urged members to look at our website and also at the u3a national website.

Subscriptions are to remain at £10.00 p.a. (£5.00 of this goes to the Trust.)

Members agreed that they had seen the minutes of the previous AGM and Special General Meeting (8.08.25), the accounts and the Annual Report.

Treasurer's Report: the balance sheet was displayed.

Election of Officers and Committee: The Chair proposed nominees for Officer positions and for the committee, as previously notified to

members. Both were accepted en bloc in the hall. The committee now stands at 14 members.

The Chair urged the need for new blood and invited members to attend a meeting; committee members do enjoy the meetings.

Kevin Byron then gave an interesting talk on “What Inspires Art”.

From our Groups Co-ordinator

Another busy year has flown by with our membership soaring month on month. In an attempt to keep pace, we have tried to increase the number of groups we have on offer and I am happy to report that this year we were able to add Intermediate Italian, Reflections, Greek Mythology and Open Water Swimming to our portfolio, so we now have 49 groups.

As always, I am grateful to all those who facilitate our groups; u3a could not exist without you. But, also as always, we need more - 49 groups for approximately 750 members is not enough!

So, if you think you could help to set up a new group, please do get in touch.

Rose Cuthbertson

Reports from Our Groups

Badminton

The U3a Badminton group is thriving. We currently have sixteen active members. We play from 1.30 until 3pm on a Monday afternoon at Holmfirth Civic Hall. New members are always welcome.

Jen Allison

Art Appreciation Group

It's been a great year for the group; numbers have swelled to 28 and sadly given limited space we've had to close the group to new members. It's always a lively session with a varied range of presentations from group members for part of each session followed by informal discussions and quizzes. We've had a lovely trip out to Wortley Hall to hear about the history of the building and its artworks, as well as enjoying lunch together. We've also had the pleasure of a fascinating presentation on George Stubbs and his links with Wentworth Woodhouse by their volunteer art curator, Caroline Krzesinska. Lots planned for the year ahead for the third Monday of each month, a day I always look forward to! I'm hugely grateful to the group members who give their time to research artists and put together interesting talks that everyone appreciates so much.



Beverley Haynes

Boules

The boules group meets weekly (bar the winter months) outside Honley village hall at 2pm on Wednesdays. The group is small, friendly and extremely welcoming of new members. Novices are particularly welcome, and the group can provide equipment. Boules is a simple game, but one that provides great enjoyment - come and try.

Geraint Johnes

Spanish

There's precious little to say: we have been going for a long time but also because at least some areas that we cover are approximately A level standard. The class would be suitable for someone with a level of Spanish round about GCSE but practical experience perhaps in Spain or South America would also work. It is not a question of excluding anyone, but it would be very difficult for a beginner or near beginner to cope with the activities. These include a lot of listening- mostly to me - some speaking, reading and writing. We cover grammar in some detail and are at present working on the past tenses of verbs.

Bernard Redfern

Guitar Group

We are technically full but as we rarely get 100% attendance we could squeeze in another player.

We would particularly welcome Ladie(s) to try and balance the genders and assist the singing.

Richard Evans

Reflections

We are a new group this year.

Originally, I thought that we would be writing our autobiographies – but we are so much more! A good few of us do have ambitions to write something, but not always an autobiography and rarely looking to formal publication. And one group member is making a model of her childhood community! Another writes poetry. Sometimes we write something to share with the rest of the group. Or we might bring in a photograph. We talk a lot! And we find it quite therapeutic.

And themes we have explored include:

Looking Back

Forks in the road

A letter to your former self

A letter to someone significant in your past

Those long hot childhood summer days

We meet in the Wesley Room on the first and third Tuesday of the month from 10 – 12.

You are welcome to join us.

Helen Wilberforce

Maths is Fun

This is a small friendly and believe it or not enthusiastic about maths group We meet alternate Tuesdays 11am to 12 noon in the Holmfirth Methodist Church

I provide all the materials and our subs are just enough to cover the room rental

We cover anything people want to look at and I am on hand to make suggestions We have covered a wide variety of topics in the past ranging from the use of scientific calculators to various methods of

doing long multiplication It's surprising how many weird and wonderful ways there are!!

When we resume in September one of the class wants to look at Geometry The emphasis is always on it being fun It is nothing like many of you endured in your school days No prior knowledge is required so come along and give us a try

Fiona Platt

Crown Green Bowls

Every Thursday afternoon, 2pm to 3.15, weather permitting.

Venue: Meltham Sports Club

Player advised to bring water and wear covered in footwear.

Group Leaders Alan Watson and Steve Cook.



We are a small, friendly group who welcome new players. We have a wide variety of experience, from complete beginners to people who play in Leagues. If you've ever fancy trying bowls why not pop along and give it a whirl. We have some spare bowls for new players to play with.

For more information contact Alan Watson on 07974397088.

Janet Watson

Style

We are a small, friendly group who meet most months. Full details on the website. We have discussed how to tie scarves, tried on spectacle frames, decluttering, our favourite accessories and make-up. Everyone welcome

Rena Souten

Beginner's Latin

The Beginner's Latin Group could now cautiously start describing itself 'intermediate'. A dozen of us are well into our second study book, after about 18 months together.

We are a happy mixture of those who have started from scratch, and those whose memories needed a bit of scratching to invigorate their Latin from previous studies. Somehow it seems to work, all ably guided by Richard, who steers us through the grammar, together with our own efforts at home to prepare work independently.

Sue Mosley

Italian Conversation

There is only usually 4 to 6 people twice a month at our meetings and we choose our topic or themes sometimes but usually like to just 'wing' our Italian conversation as we feel fit on the day. With the group being so small this casual approach works for us.

We would very much like to thank Liz Stead for being our excellent group leader for the past few years. She has moved to Harrogate now and we wish her the best for the future.

Maree Hearsum

Garden Group

Our year started in March with a visit to Yorkshire Garden Centre at Shelley for a tour and talk on rose Pruning and low maintenance gardening.

In April we had a talk on All season gardens followed in May with a guided tour and visit to one of our members gardens.

In June we visited the gardens of David Brown then in July Penistone Community gardens, always popular!

Plans for the rest of the year include a date out lunch and tour at Renishaw gardens, a tour with the horticultural team at Chester Zoo, A talk on butterflies, Wentworth Garden centre and gardens. We finish with our annual Xmas meal at a local garden centre.



Rosie Norbury

Open Water Swimming

11am met at the NT car park in Marsden for a Sparth swim on 29 July.



Julio Nunez

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Discussion Group

Our popular discussion group starts again on Monday 14th September at 11.00am. The dates and topics will be listed on the website. The final session of last term talked about 'what makes us laugh' and the general impression was it is the old comedians and TV comedies we remember the best. We will probably start the September term on a more serious note, with an expert leading us on the small steps we can take to limit the impact of climate change. There is room for a couple more members in the group, which has welcomed several new faces over the last year. Do get in touch if you enjoy a good chat on a wide variety of topics.

Anne Baldwin

Days Out Group

Having last year celebrated its tenth anniversary with a memorable seven-day trip to Northern Ireland your Days Out Group entered its second decade of operation with a return to its original annual pattern of six trips (or seven if allowing for the Xmas trip having to run twice in order to assuage demand).

A summer's day trip to see behind the scenes of Tennants Auctioneers first saw some free time in Bedale, where the Group Leader attended the Visitor Information Centre in order to seek inspiration for future trip destinations only to find that its volunteer warden was no less than the Days Out Group Leader for Bedale U3A and very interested to hear of the places to see should they trip to Holmfirth!

The 2025 three-day trip saw the Group exploring a number of fascinating attractions around Bristol and Bath and which included a lunch served under the wings of no less than a genuine Concorde aircraft! Amazingly Harewood House was a new Group destination, when the decorated House started our Xmas trip and which also included a traditional Xmas lunch (with all the trimmings) in Harrogate before an evening stroll around the RHS Glow at Harlow Carr Gardens.

2026 had a gentle start as its first day trip took in a surprisingly impressive Rochdale Town Hall before a journey over the Pennines in glorious Spring sunshine for a guided tour of Halifax's Piece Hall. The second day trip stayed in Yorkshire but also featured superb weather as the Group enjoyed a walking tour of York's lesser-known highlights before an afternoon tea at, and full tour of, Ryedale Vineyard.

The 2026 three-day trip extended to no less than four days of yet again almost perfect (perhaps it was a little too hot?) weather as the

Group explored the delights of the area around the city of Winchester. With visits to Salisbury and the New Forest the itinerary's variety (amazingly without a single railway journey!) appealed to all and concluded with lunch on board a horsedrawn canal narrowboat.

The Group's recent trips mean that it has become a hostage to its own success with all trips now quickly filling to capacity, and often beyond with not insignificant reserve lists. Whilst not ideal the Days Out Team of six members can at least bask in the knowledge that their trip programmes are being met with support and even enthusiasm. Unfortunately, the current level of demand for trip places has meant that for the remainder of 2026 the Group has temporarily, and for the first time, had to close its doors to new members but it is hopeful that this situation will reverse as we move into 2027.



Martin Shaw

Singing for Wellbeing

As a group leader of fortnightly Sing for Wellbeing sessions, I find them very rewarding and a bit magical. The focus is and always has been on having fun, improving wellbeing, building community and having more fun. I am (Moir, group leader) a member of the Natural Voice Network whose ethos is to promote singing as the birthright of everyone. I am supported by marvellous volunteer Jean. Sing for Wellbeing sessions usually have between 15 – 20 people attending and we learn songs both familiar and new. New members always receive a warm welcome and soon pick up songs through osmosis from other members. There is no need to be able to read music as all songs are taught by ear through repetition, and there is no audition. From starting as a group of tentative individuals just over a year ago it is a delight to witness the growing confidence, and sometimes surprise, of members as they hear the harmony they are creating and enveloped by. There is a mountain of evidence that identifies many benefits from singing together with other people including: reducing stress hormones and feelings of isolation and loneliness; improving lung function and improving concentration and memory to name but a few, and all from having some fun singing with other people!



Moir Wade

The Easy Walking Group

It's been a pleasure to welcome some new members to the Easy Walking Group this year. The numbers on each walk average around 12 people and we enjoy varied walks in fields, woodland, country roads and tracks. It is always a delight to discover unfamiliar areas, and we are indebted to members of the group who volunteer to prepare and lead interesting walks for us.

We meet on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays each month but in recent weeks we have decided to cancel walks when it has seemed the sensible thing to do – generally because of the extreme heat but on one occasion because of a thunderstorm!

Walks are around 3-4 miles long, avoiding stiles and steep gradients wherever possible. As the photo shows we enjoy walking, but we also love a sociable lunch afterwards!



Jane Chesman

Digital Photography

This has been an enjoyable year with members sharing around 60 photos at each of our monthly meetings. We have kept to themes, one for each month. The quality of our photos steadily improves, driven by sharing and constructive technique. Our 2024 project on the Graveship of Holme lives on, and is now centrepiece of the new Graveship Room in Holmfirth Tech.



Vince Cunningham

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Canasta Group

Canastarers all seem to be happy, friendly people, although sometimes a bit sneaky when they try to lure opponents into playing the wrong card. They meet at 10.00a.m. every other Wednesday at Wooldale Community Centre, which is nice and warm in winter and with sufficient blinds and windows to keep the room cool in summer.

Many of the group started out as complete novices but now play the game with confidence. Many of them have taught family to play, spreading the fun around the country.

There are 16 members in the group and there is room for at least four more so don't be shy and call or email to express your interest.

Geoff France

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Ukelele Group

Our group are now in their 12th Year and thriving. We have 24 members, all now accomplished players, who can play most songs with confidence.

We work our way through the whole of our repertoire adding new songs as we go, a system that seems to work well.

We rehearse at St John's Church Upperthong on a fortnightly basis; we play for 1 hour and finish with coffee and cakes.

We are having a busy year, having performed at:

- Holmfirth Festival of Folk in the Jamboree with other groups
- Emley Open Gardens at a garden in Flockton
- Burton Open Gardens playing at 3 venues
- Netherthong Church Afternoon Tea Event
- Greenacres Care Home in Meltham
- A member's Birthday /Anniversary Party

We have a number of other gigs in the pipeline to finish off the year.

We are at full capacity due to venue restraints and not now taking on any new members.

Looking forward to another busy time in the New Year.



John Senior

Walking/Coffee Group

We are a small group who meet weekly on a Thursday morning. Our walks usually last about 2 hours and are 3-5 miles long. As well as keeping us fit, it is a very sociable group. We walk throughout the winter but adapt our routes to avoid wet or muddy paths. If the weather is not good we still meet for a ☕, 🏠 and chat.

Our walks generally take us round the Holme and Colne Valleys but occasionally we venture further afield.

As one member said 'One of the great pleasures is discovering new places and paths they were unaware of despite them being very local, combined with fabulous views'.

Janice Wood

Ambling Group

Our ambling group is now in its 11th year. Mostly short flattish walks on Wednesday's. We have enjoyed some nice canal, reservoir and woodland walks and have enjoyed a bus trip to Castleton. The Tuesday group will resume when we have some new members to make it viable again.



Denise

Music Appreciation

In our sessions on the last Tuesday afternoon of each month at the Methodist Church meeting rooms in Holmfirth we cover a wide range of music. Thanks to laptops and the use of a very good projector belonging to the U3A we have the benefit of videos of the music makers as well as the sound.

Although the core of the music is classical we also cover folk music, Hollywood musicals, jazz, world music, dance, aspects of pop, comedy and anything else we can think of – we’ve even had a little live music thanks to our mainstay, Alan Hicks.

Each session is divided into two halves with different themes and presenters (usually Alan or me, but several other members of the group have come up with themes for which they have selected the music). Two hours of delight, verified by the happy mien of the members.



Mel Crann

Theatre Group

The Theatre Group, run by the volunteer Theatre Team, Andrea Goodall, Linda Hollingworth, Roger Lancaster and Pat Whalley have had yet another busy year.

Mirroring the growth of u3a membership, the Theatre Group now numbers 382 members, who each receive a monthly update of productions on offer via email. One or more of the Team are at the Theatre Desk at monthly meetings, and we often find that new

members joining the Holme Valley u3a pop across to the Theatre desk and sign up there too!

The members of the team thoroughly enjoy the work we undertake. We love theatre and share the organising of trips according to our own interests. However, with increasing numbers every trip is taking longer to administer and there is a limit to the number of shows we can take on. We are currently overstretched, and new members of the team are urgently needed. In a recent update we put out an invitation to any Theatre Group Members who might be interested in working with the Theatre Team to come to chat to us at a monthly meeting or get in touch by email.

We love to hear the many kind words of appreciation, but the greatest thanks we could receive would be for members to:

- Pay for tickets by deadlines requested without the need for time-consuming reminders
- let us know immediately if they find you are unable to attend a show so that we can offer seats to those on the reserve list in good time.

The trips this financial year to date (shown below) have all been very popular, allowing us to travel by coach:

	TOTAL PRODUCTIONS 2026/27		5	
	TOTAL ATTENDEES 2026/27		207	
Month	Production	Genre	Venue	Attendees
Apr '26	MB The Red Shoes	Ballet	Bradford, Alhambra	37
May '26	Miss Saigon	Musical	Bradford, Alhambra	40
Jul '26	Brassed Off - 1	Musical	Leeds Playhouse	47
Jul '26	Brassed off - 2	Musical	Leeds Playhouse	35
Jul '26	Jersey Boys	Musical	Bradford, Alhambra	48

We were overwhelmed by the numbers wanting to see Brassed Off at Leeds Playhouse and Roger, egged on by Pat, took the brave (mad?)

decision to organise 2 trips in one day; matinee and evening a total of 82 members in 2 coaches. Everyone enjoyed the show, but Roger’s final comment was ‘Never Again!’. Increased numbers of members wanting to see productions may result in us arranging 2 trips to popular shows in the future – but they won’t be on the same day!!!



Productions Planned for 2026/27

Month	Production	Genre	Venue	Attendees	Organiser	Mode of travel
Aug	High Society	Musical	Leeds Grand	48	Pat	Coach
Sept	Emerald Storm	Dance	Leeds Grand	32	Andrea	Coach
Oct	Car Man	Ballet	Bradford Alhambra	33	Pat	Coach
Nov	Man for All Seasons	Play	Lowry, Salford	47	Roger	Coach
Dec	A Little Night Music	Musical	Manchester Royal Exchange	49	Roger	Coach
Feb	The Rise and Fall of Little voice	Play with music	Lowry Salford	22 so far	Roger	?
Mar	Hadestown	Musical	Lowry, Salford	21 so far	Andrea	?

Pat Whalley

Craft Group

17 regular members have enjoyed another busy year, and we are now settled in our regular home at the Basement Art Room, Holmfirth Tech. Many thanks to Manager Sally and her team for all their help and support.

Several members have led new projects. Thanks to Yvonne Donkersley for teaching us the wonders of Paper Marbling; to Margaret Hicks for showing us how to make Fabric Easter Wreaths; to Jane French for introducing us to addictive Diamond Art and after

wanting to try it for some time, I researched and led on Cyanotype printing (sun printing). Thank goodness we were blessed with lots of sunshine this year

Our Monday Afternoon Session at the Tech is followed by the Children's Art Group and we were delighted to be invited by leader Chloe to assist with preparation of props for the Arts Festival Parade in June. We had an excellent time, and our efforts were much appreciated. The Parade was a huge success, and we look forward to being involved again next year.

Members enjoy the social side of our meetings as well as learning and developing new skills and we would welcome new members. We meet at Holmfirth Tech, Basement Art Room on the 2nd and 4th Monday of each month from 1.30 – 3.30pm



Pat Whalley

Wine Tasting

The 2025/26 season has been one of progress for the Wine Appreciation Group. Many of the tastings have been organised and presented by individual members sharing that duty. November 2025 saw Suzanne and Chris presenting wines from Saumur and Vouvray. The Christmas party held at Helme Edge Vineyard featured a blind tasting led by Jane and testing our diagnostic skills. In April Mike presented a selection of Italian appassimento wines made partly

from sun dried grapes to enhance the sugar content. Otherwise, Alan led tastings of wines from Burgundy, Lanzarote, Mediterranean Islands and Aldi supermarket. Mel took us to his favourite area, Alsace and remote corners highlighting relatively unknown wines. The summer party in July featured examples of Cremant from Loire, Alsace and Bourgogne. These turned out to be very good value substitutes for Champagne.



Alan Calder

Reading Group

We still meet on the first Wednesday of every month at 1pm in the room above the Methodist Church. We would love you to come and give us a try. New members are always very welcome. Whether you like detective novels, thrillers, sci-fi, fantasy, romances, historical fiction, westerns, the classics or anything else (if there is anything else!), we cater for all tastes. One of the great things about a reading group is you read books that you might not have chosen yourself and then, unexpectedly, discover a new favourite author. Everyone has the opportunity to suggest a book to discuss for the next month.

Last year our reading list included:

- Cahokia Jazz - Francis Spufford
- Lying in Wait - Michel Bussi
- The Boy from the Sea - Garrett Carr

- On Beauty - Zadie Smith
- A Narrow Door - Joanne Harris.

Linda Wilkinson

Dates for Your Diary 2026

These meetings will be held at 10.00am at the Civic in Holmfirth. Huddersfield Road, HD9 3AS.

11 August 2026	Sandra Barber Me and my camera.
8 September 2026	Carol Tetlow Stethoscope Secrets.
13 October 2026	Christine Green Playing with knives- Paper cutting.
10 November 2026	TBA
8 December 2026	Holme Valley u3a Guitar Group and Ukelele Group. Christmas Meeting.