

Chair's Statement Royston U3A AGM on 24th June 2025

Royston u3a has reached a 10 year milestone. From very basic beginnings in the Town Hall when we were unsure whether a second go at starting a Royston u3a, after a previous failure started by others a few years earlier, could work. Now, 10 years on I think I can honestly say that with over 400 members, it was worth the 'try' and has worked.

As Royston's largest non-profit-making charity, we have just celebrated a further full year of activities for our members. We have been and continue to be delighted to welcome a succession of excellent speakers at our monthly meetings who give talks on an array of topics covering historical events, film & entertainment, to police investigations tracing criminals. It has not always been easy to please everyone all the time but Royston u3a has tried to provide as much variety as possible with the wide range of subjects throughout the year. It was wonderful that some of our monthly meetings attracted a maximum capacity live audience at the Town Hall as well as via Zoom to make it possible for many members to enjoy the talks in their homes.

Aside from our monthly meetings, we are very proud of the exceptionally high standard of our quarterly newsletter, Royston u3a News, owing to committee members Pam Dajda for her excellent reporting skills and Ralph Gellert for all the work involved in putting the publication together. Thanks also go to our group leaders for submitting articles for editing prior to publication. Royston u3a News provides members with information of what events have taken place and also what future events are planned. Members can also check out what is happening by logging onto our website which is regularly kept up-to-date.

Our Theatre outings throughout the year proved extremely popular as they were all snapped by the theatre group members once publicised. These outings were socially enjoyable with plays performed in Stevenage, Cambridge, Milton Keynes and London. A big thank you goes to Deirdre Smith for planning, arranging and then making these outings happen so successfully.

All the interest groups did well over the year due to our outstanding and committed volunteer group leaders, some of who have led their group for years. Several interest groups

take place in group leaders' own homes such as the Book groups and the French group. A special mention should go to our 5-mile walking group leaders who try out any new walks in advance to ensure their suitability and safety prior to announcing them to their group members. It is worth mentioning that many of our other groups also require advance planning and significant research such as the Current Affairs group that provides members with accurate topical information for discussion. Group leaders also check in advance that venues are fit for purpose and that all groups fulfil the u3a's motto to learn, laugh and live. To all our group leaders, a big thank you. Royston u3a would not exist without your commitment, friendship and leadership. Hopefully, we will continue to expand the range of interest groups in the year ahead.

As a result of members ticking the 'Gift Aid' box on the membership form for the past few years, we were able to reclaim 25% from HMRC of each £1 received from members subscriptions. Due to this, the committee unanimously agreed to a reduction of the membership fee for the year 2025/2026.

In conclusion, our membership numbers have grown steadily over the years and continue to grow. Royston u3a provides members with activities and interests they never had time to pursue during their working lives. It also offers friendship and companionship post retirement. As Chair for the past 10 years, I feel fortunate to be part of such a worthwhile organisation; it has hugely enriched my life. I hope that it has also added something special to the lives of those who give their time as committee members, group leaders as well as to all our members.

Jackie Gellert
Chair, Royston u3a
June 2025