

Membership Secretary's Annual Report 2024/25

At the end of 2024 we had 695 members of which 113 were new members who joined throughout the year. For our new membership year, 2025, the renewal period has been very encouraging. We have 683 members presently registered as Current (paid-up members). From our final membership number for 2025, there are 16 who have informed us of resignations and to date there are 86 outstanding renewals. The outstanding renewals have now been lapsed as per the renewal process. I would like to thank all of the members who have taken on board the renewal procedures throughout this period.

I am pleased to report that we have already had 71 new members join us for 2025 and welcome them to our Branch.

In June 2024 we still had 170 membership cards awaiting collection from members. Our progression into increasing how we use the functionality available on the Beacon database has significantly improved our membership systems. One of the key changes we made in 2024 was the introduction of trialling how we produce and distribute membership cards. In July we made the decision to email membership cards to new members who joined throughout the year. From the positive feedback we received from new members we decided to roll this out across the whole membership during the renewal period.

For membership renewal we offered a two-tier approach to distributing membership cards. Continuing the status quo of preparing and printing membership card to those who were unable to print their own cards. 170 renewing members have received their cards either during the monthly meeting or by providing a SAE. The remaining members (513) have received their card via email.

The majority of members have seen the introduction of this two-tier system as a positive step to improving how we renew existing members. It has enabled members to print their own membership cards in a timely manner without the need to collect them during one of the monthly meetings. Also, it has eliminated the need for sending SAE for posting, reduced the time between applicational/renewal and receipt of cards once we receive confirmation of payment.

I recognise that change may create challenges, and feedback is really important to us. We value your comments. Your feedback will be part of a review into the whole process of how we communicate and renew members going forward as we are always looking for ways to improve our offer to our members.

We held 2 new members informal meetings in April and October 2024 - where new members were invited to a coffee morning. These provided good opportunities to meet other new members. The welcome meetings are hosted by the Chair and other committee members, and they enable new members to find out more about how u3a works and to ask any questions.

Sharon Baines, Membership Secretary