

# AGM 2023: Chairman's Report

David Jones, 26-Jan-23

With the end of covid restrictions, this year has been much better than the previous two. Our monthly meetings are now in the Clifton centre and most groups are meeting face to face.

U3A is a valuable Organisation for retired and semi-retired people, providing social intercourse, learning and entertainment. I hope you are all getting the most out of it, if not have a chat with me or any of the committee and look around at all the different groups, there is something for everyone.

We have 35 groups, including 5 new groups, Creative Writing, Cycling, Jazz Appreciation, Rock Band & Rummikub, we have lost, for the time being, Whist, Spanish, Square Dancing & Ten Pin Bowling. We are looking for a new leader for the Singing for Pleasure. Most groups have reverted to face to face meetings, although one or two find Zoom more convenient.

There have been a great selection of speakers for our monthly meetings this year, thanks to Janet Baldry. You never know what to expect, I was not particularly looking forward to "A History of Child Rearing" but it was fascinating. Similarly I had no great expectation from the Launton Bell Ringers, but they gave us great entertainment and a good start to Christmas. Mike Luff has arranged a great programme for this year, you will see it on the Information Card, available at the next meeting.

Our membership is now approaching 300 with new members exceeding members who have left, but we are still struggling to recruit new committee members. With 3 proposed new members (2 co-opted last year, Val Day and Doug Irvine), we are in a much stronger position than we were last year, but we are still in desperate need of a vice-chairman. It is not an onerous task, although with luck he/she will take over as chairman when I escape! But my job is easy, I just delegate everything.

We have had one big success this year, at last we have bought a new PA system. I believe Christine as chief protagonist is so pleased she has agreed to pay half the bill!

There were two big celebrations in 2022, U3A's fortieth anniversary and Bicester U3A's 35<sup>th</sup>. Our Picnic in the park was great fun and was enjoyed by

all, so much so that many members want us to celebrate our 36<sup>th</sup> anniversary (but perhaps on a slightly reduced scale).

The 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary “Picnic in the Park” at Chesterton Community Centre was a great success, many thanks are due to the organizing sub-committee Jan, Carolyn, Margaret, George & Dave T.

The annual holiday was a great success, we went to Belfast. We travelled by coach to Fishguard, ferry to Dublin and on to Belfast in our coach, a long day! We had great days out to Giant’s Causeway, Mount Stewart, the Titanic Museum and Crumlin Road Gaol. The worst thing was that several of us came back with covid. Many thanks to Audrey for organising the trip, it was particularly good for me to reminisce, my parents lived in Belfast for 15 years and I had many happy holidays there.

And finally I must thank all of the committee for their hard work during the year, I couldn’t have done it all on my own! Many thanks to Janet and Alan Marshall for their steadfast organisation of the raffle throughout the year and thanks also to Sue Wilde for organising the refreshments – where would we be without our cup of tea!. Particular thanks to Dave Thornton who has done 9 years service on the committee as chairman, group co-ordinator newsletter editor and has been our mainstay as far as U3A rules & regulations and the constitution, I must also thank all members for their support during the year the turnout for the last meeting was particularly spectacular.