

## Chairs report – Fiona McIntosh

Well, that was a worrying start to 2022, wasn't it? However, we hope that you all feel more optimistic about this coming year than you did 12 months ago. The good news in relation to our u3a activities is that many of our groups are back meeting face to face although remain cautious and are continuing on Zoom.

The committee's priority after lockdown was to encourage groups to restart. Because of this we lifted the minimum numbers needed before we would agree the cost of renting a room. This is a policy we will need to review soon, but we're really glad many of you have been able to meet up again in a variety of venues. We are very pleased to be able to use the fire station community room again and we are hopeful that the Library room will be re-opened soon.

### Monthly meetings

Our monthly meetings restarted in the Methodist Church in September with an interesting talk from Sarah Ward, local novelist. We used the main church area to help with social distancing and this first meeting was not without its problems – the amplified sound was not great and because of the light from the windows of the church the slides were difficult to see. However, thanks to Charles Huff our 'tech man' these issues have been much improved. We are continuing using the Main Church space for the next 2 meetings as we have an open forum Q & A session following the talk on 14<sup>th</sup> March and the AGM following the talk on 11<sup>th</sup> April. After that we plan to move back downstairs to the smaller hall.

We have an excellent and varied line up of speakers planned till the end of the year – a list is on the website and in Newslink.

### The future of your u3a

Most of this committee will have served their 3-year term by March 2023 and we will be looking for new volunteers to take over next year.

The following positions will be vacant following the AGM in 2023

Chair

Vice Chair

Treasurer

Business Secretary

Webmaster

Group Liaison

Membership Secretary

**You should be aware that we cannot function as a charity without a Chair, Treasurer and Business Secretary so all of these positions will have to be filled for Buxton & District u3a to continue. If any one of these is vacant, we would have to close down.** Please note that the current committee agreed to take on the extra responsibility of the unfilled roles but it would not be expedient to expect a new committee to function without a full complement of members.

If you are interested, we would be happy to have you shadow us for a time this year before committing.

### Financial situation

You will find a separate document outlining our financial position and you have already received a detailed paper from me outlining our subscription system and the plan for the working party to look into that, in detail.

### Future Events

Our first group outing this year is to [Bridgewater Gardens in Salford on 7<sup>th</sup> April](#) and we anticipate a really interesting day at this new attraction. We currently have a waiting list to go. Let me know if you wish to be on it. Full details will be sent out 2 weeks before.

As you already know, we had to cancel the Xmas afternoon tea party which was done in the best interests of our members as the Omicron Virus was on the way up! The good news is that we have a new date – [Tuesday April 26<sup>th</sup>](#) at 2pm and there will be some tickets available if you are now able to join us. Please email [Fionau3a@gmail.com](mailto:Fionau3a@gmail.com) or [andrewu3a@gmail.com](mailto:andrewu3a@gmail.com) or call me on 07957 242676 if you would like tickets – they are £10 each.

We are planning to hold a session on how to get to grips with Facebook in May/June. We now have a Buxton & District Facebook page but we know that many people are reluctant to use facebook so our Facebook coordinator Christine Billington will facilitate the session and then answer any queries you may have. More details to follow.

It is the u3a's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year and you will see in our Business Secretary's report we plan to plant a tree to commemorate the occasion This will take place in Whaley Bridge Memorial Park on the [30<sup>th</sup> September](#) – more details to follow.

We had a successful day at the Rotary Autumn fair with a lot of interest and a few new joiners. Thanks to the art club for their wonderful paintings on display and to the committee for making the stall look so interesting and approachable. We will be taking a stall at the next Spring fair on the [28<sup>th</sup> May](#). If you have anything you would like displayed to advertise your groups, please let us know.

If you have ideas for other events or would be interested in running an outing the committee would love to hear from you.

### Thanks

There are many people to mention and in no particular order, I would like to thank:

John Crowther for editing Newslink and remember to share with him information about your groups  
Janette Sykes for her excellent reviews of our speakers – if you have missed any talks Janette brings them to life again – you can read them on the website.

Charles Huff for his expertise and patience setting up and running all the technical equipment for our monthly speakers not only in the hall but also live on Zoom.

All the Group Leaders for keeping your members interested and getting your groups up and running again.

Christine Billington for setting up our Facebook page

Janet Bullard for offering to take on the role of PR & Marketing officer.

Lastly, the committee for all their dedication and hard work over the year.

Finally, thanks to you all for supporting Buxton & District u3a. It's not been an easy year and we appreciate all the help and enthusiasm from everyone.

## Committee reports

### Business Secretary Report – Sue Vernon

The year, as business secretary, has consisted of the routine administrative tasks involved in running our monthly committee meetings and dealing with the statutory requirements of the Charity Commission and Third Age Trust. A new venture has been to organise the trip to Bridgewater Gardens on 7<sup>th</sup> April and liaising with High Peak Council to arrange a tree planting to commemorate the u3a National Movement 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary on 30<sup>th</sup> September in Whaley Bridge Memorial Park. Also, along with Tineke and Fiona, I've enjoyed and appreciated the help of Christine Billington who has helped in a non-committee role to set up and maintain our Facebook page.

Finally, I'd like to remind members this is my last year's term as business secretary. If anyone wants to find out more about the role and/ or shadow me in preparation for taking up the post in April 2023, do contact me.

### **Treasurers report - Joe Brown**

The 2021 year shows a £4,304 surplus, with a much reduced membership. As it is expected that venue hire will rise significantly in the 2022 year (with more groups meeting in paid dearer venues) a rise in annual subscriptions is sought to £40. The Committees hands are tied in this regard, as it must have a required level of reserves. Even at £40 subscription, a deficit is projected for the 2022 financial year.

For those of you who do not gift aid, please reconsider this; it costs you nothing and provides a valuable source of funds to your U3A.

I am very grateful to Prem Kumar for continuing in his role as Examiner. He also provides significant support and advice in financial matters.

### **Group Leader Liaison report – Andrew Matthews**

Can we, can't we: shall we, shan't we? Group Leaders have had their fill of decision making and form filling. So many thanks to them all for their resilience and understanding, particularly when accosted by yet another questionnaire in their email box. Much of what has happened has been amplified by Fiona in her chair's report. Losing the Fire Station and the Library as free venues has had big ramifications for the running costs of some groups and spending in general. Non availability of venues for groups who historically met on certain days has resulted in lowered attendance when these groups had to change their times. Despite all the difficulties, group numbers are now increasing, with many approaching their pre-Covid numbers. Always looking for new venues, group leaders have identified the Conservative Club and Trinity Church as welcoming, good-value venues.

Sadly, we have lost some groups over the year: Table games, Book group 2, French conversation and Shakespeare but that has now re-started under new leadership.

Many, many thanks go to Judy Barratt who has led both the French and Shakespeare groups since Buxton U3A was founded and also to Lyn Noble who has handed over the leadership of the Art group after 26 years. The Monday and Tuesday Badminton groups still search for a suitable venue after fire destroyed the Fairfield Sports Centre.

### **Webmaster report – Tineke Bosma**

Regular updates are made on the B&D u3a website on all the general pages. Although the package this website is based on is limited in its capacity, we are making use of it as much as possible. The Welcome page has seasonal pictures as well as a text box to say what u3a actually is and does and a banner which is updated every month. We replaced the page name of "Ad-Hoc" to "General News" and the Events page with information about all the general meetings, the talks as well as a link to the fantastic reviews of the talks done by Jeanette Sykes. The different group pages are edited by the group leaders themselves.

There have been a total of 13000 hits on the website during the year of 2021 which is encouraging. Specific increases were on pages such as: About Us, Groups, Events and General News. There is also a link to our Facebook page on most of the general pages. In addition to keeping the website up to date the Webmaster also does all the emailing from the u3a B&D email address.

### **Membership Secretary – Gwyneth Rees**

As you will recall subscription renewals for 2021 were postponed until 1 July so my first full year in post commenced with a round of phone calls asking for legacy standing orders to be amended or cancelled. I now wait with baited breath to find out how many are still lurking in the background. With a reduced subscription for the nine months just ending we had hoped to retain as many members as possible. However uncertainties of further lockdowns were still impacting our activity and by the close of the renewal window on 31 July 2021 our membership had reduced to 344.

The good news is that following easing of restrictions, gradual increase in group activity and a very successful promotional event at the Rotary Autumn Fayre, I can now report there has

been a steady increase over recent months such that our membership now stands at 415. Well done to all of you for making our newbies feel welcome, keep it up.

Of course there is still much work to be done to get back to pre-pandemic levels, so recruitment and raising the profile of u3a both locally and nationally will be the focus for 2022. Many of you will have already have seen the new tri-fold leaflet, to compliment this I organised the design and print of three roll-up banners to make us more visible in the community. They will be used at the monthly meetings but they need to be used more widely; so if your group meets in a public space, please have one of them on display.

And finally – membership subscriptions of £40 are due on, or shortly before, 1 April 2022. I will enjoy issuing you with a new digital membership card (actual ones are available) and challenge you to see just how much learning, laughing and living you can do with it.

**P.S. Remember your u3a does not run itself, volunteers are needed to step into our shoes  
- one size fits all.**