

Chair's Report

This has been such an unusual year. I agreed to take the Chair in April 2020 just as Covid struck and brought everything to a halt. As the date approached it was obvious the AGM would have to be postponed until July due to the Covid 19 restrictions.

We decided to adopt Zoom and continue our monthly Committee Meetings via this medium. The AGM was then held within a Committee Meeting on July 13th via Zoom as face- to- face gatherings were prohibited.

We decided to ask speakers if they would be happy to address the Monthly Meeting via Zoom. Fortunately several people agreed and the meetings attracted up to 150 members each time. Thanks are due to Janet Potter for finding very interesting speakers for us.

We are working from home using Beacon System and G-suite ensuring the committee can work efficiently and maintain regular contact with the members.

David and the Technical Team have continued to upgrade our IT systems with innovative ideas such as the ability to join our u3a and register for courses directly on-line via the website. The Courses Team and Tutors introduced courses on Zoom and there have been over 500 members joining these courses. Ursula will give more information about courses in her presentation following this.

Canterbury and District u3a is well represented in the national u3a picture. National and regional summer schools are well supported by our members, both as participants and tutors. Last year's summer schools had to be cancelled for obvious reasons. However,

members took part in classes via Zoom and two of our tutors ran three days of on-line singing which was enjoyable if not 100% satisfactory. One tutor is currently engaged in teaching 'Song Throughout the Ages' via Zoom at our national winter school.

We renewed the Memorandum of Understanding between our U3a and the University of Kent. Rona heads the research team as they continue this collaboration and are planning interesting projects for the future.

A keeping in touch letter is sent once a month ensuring a connection is maintained with members. Ursula, Pat and Robert instigated a monthly Bulletin to be sent to members via email. For people without email a posted Bulletin and a keeping in touch letter is also sent each month. We also have a buddy system for these members where someone telephones them at intervals. Newsletters from the National Office are sent to members who are encouraged to engage with activities listed.

Chat sessions via Zoom were introduced three times a week and over Christmas for members who are in need of company. Very good friendships have been formed and we all enjoy being in touch with other people on-line whilst being unable to meet physically with friends and relatives.

Due to the Covid pandemic, initial renewal of membership in 2020 was slow. However, this improved over the subsequent months and many lapsed members re-joined. I am very happy to report we now have 1,037 members!

Work is in progress to update our Website. It would be lovely to have more photographs of activities members have enjoyed during this year, so please do think about sending them to us.

I attend the Network meetings and maintain contact with other chairs of neighbouring u3as. I also attended the National AGM via Zoom.

Thanks are due to Roger and Margaret Lansdell who have organised two holidays which have been postponed from 2020. In July they are heading for Northumberland and then in September to Northampton. I am sure participants will enjoy these eagerly anticipated breaks.

The Committee have worked extremely hard to ensure we provide the best service we can in the circumstances and ensure Canterbury u3a continues to thrive.

So huge thanks to the committee and Tutors for their wonderful work but I would also like to extend our thanks to all of you. Your unfailing loyalty and support has encouraged and invigorated us all. At this point I would like to pay tribute to the members who have died this year, they have all been valued members some of whom have contributed enormously to the success of our u3a

The future

You might have seen that June 2nd is designated u3a Day. As a committee we decided to delay any involvement until the autumn as restrictions would limit any activity we would plan for. However, you will see we are planning two picnics in July and August details in the Summer programme which you will receive shortly.

We anticipate that face to face meetings will be possible in the Autumn but we will keep you updated once we are sure our actions are safe and in line with Government and TAT advice.

The office volunteers are coming back on rota from the 23rd June so the office in Orange Street will be manned on Wednesdays and Thursdays 11 am to 1 pm every week from then. So messages can be

left on the office answer phone and meetings arranged there. So do come in and see us.

Thank you all once again.

Christine Plant