

## Chairman Annual Report

### Cheshunt U3A Annual Report November 2017 – October 2018

Cheshunt U3A has now been operating for eight years and due to the voluntary contributions made by many members, it continues to grow year on year. At the end of the membership year, October 2017, we had 682 members while in October this year our total stood at 802. This increase in numbers has been stimulated by many things but I believe one key element is the friendly and vibrant atmosphere created by everyone.

During the year there have been a number of new interest groups start up including, a New Members Group, Canasta, Curry Club and Walking Football. In addition there was a second Almost Loose Women Group and a fifth Explore London Group added. Along with the existing groups these provide a wide spectrum of interests for members, but there is always room for more.

We attend quarterly meetings with other local U3As to discuss ideas and best practice and this year we have signed a Group Share agreement with Broxbourne, Lea Valley, Ware, Hertford and Waltham Abbey. This agreement means interest groups at these U3As, at the group leader's discretion, can open up their attendance to members of these other U3As. We hope this will help groups with only a few members to flourish.

The guest speakers at our monthly meetings have entertained us with a variety of subjects including talks about, British Coastlines, Gemstones, The Red Arrows and the young wildlife photographer Tom Mason's presentation The Bear Necessities. We do take note of feedback from members, and other U3As, when deciding whether to book the speakers for future talks. Some may return, some may not.

We have continued to build on our local community links through our eBuddy project in conjunction with Herts Regional College. Also the photography group was asked earlier in the year, to help St. Marys Church at Churchgate celebrate their 600 year anniversary by entering photographs of the church into a competition. Out of all the local groups who were invited, the competition was won by one of our members and three of our entries were selected for a 2019 calendar the church produced and sold to raise funds. Along with these local activities, the Line Dancing Group held a coffee morning and raised £300 for Macmillan Cancer Support.

We continue to offer local groups, outside of the U3A, the opportunity of attending our monthly meetings allowing them to promote their organisation. This year we have included Cheshunt Bowls Club, Local Libraries, Age UK, LV Healthy Memory Cafe and Borough of Broxbourne Planning Dept. Although our focus is always on running and growing our U3A for the benefit of the members, we believe that by encouraging this open approach to others, it gives us a higher profile locally. These organisations now know who we are, where we are and what we do.

Nationally there are over 1000 U3As with a total in excess of 420,000 members. Each U3A is a mutual aid organisation, operationally independent but a member of the Third Age Trust, which requires adherence to the guiding principles of the U3A movement. Also as a charity we are required to abide by Charity Commission rules. As a result we were called upon this year to make minor changes to our constitution and to comply with the introduction of General Data Protection Regulations. Among other things this resulted in members having to complete an extended membership form which included a requirement to express their wishes about receiving the Third Age Matters magazine. Introducing this form, enabled us to comply with legal requirements of GDPR whilst trying to minimise the effect of these changes on the membership.

All of the things I have covered in my report, only happen as a result of many members giving their time and effort voluntarily. These include the Really Useful Group, RUGS, running the tea bar at various meetings throughout the year as well being available to provide help with any number of other jobs that come up. The Group Leaders and their assistants who do so much to organise groups that provide a great deal of enjoyment for members who have mutual interests. Those people who run the books, jigsaws, DVD and Crime Prevention stalls at the monthly meetings. The volunteers who help at the registration membership and raffle tables. And last but not least the members of the committee who take on their individual roles with enthusiasm and commitment making this organisation tick. I would like on behalf of all to thank every one of these people for the work they continue to put in month on month.

A special thanks goes to Toni Walsh, who after five years in the role of secretary is stepping down from the committee. She has been instrumental in helping us grow and in keeping up with changes and information coming out from the National Office as well as being our representative at several national AGMs. Also in that time she has had to deal with the foibles of three different Chairmen, making sure she kept us all in check.

Also thanks should go to the staff here at Laura Trott and the sound engineers from the Spotlight who all work hard to make us feel at home and accommodate most of our needs.

The final thanks go to you the members for making this a pleasant and vibrant organisation to be part of. I believe that this collective spirit will ensure Cheshunt U3A continues to be a place people come to make friends and enjoy it playing a big part in their third age.