

## Chester U3A

### Chairman's report 2022/2023

This year has been a very successful one for Chester U3A. We have bounced back extremely well after COVID: We have more members – now almost 1000 – a healthy range of groups and we have enhanced access for many members by continuing to live-stream (and record where we are allowed to) our Tuesday meetings. Our Tuesday meetings now attract as many people on-line as come to the Festival Church, effectively doubling the attendance. We have continued to attract excellent speakers on a huge range of subjects and our Tuesday and Thursday meetings are both social occasions and opportunities to learn something new.

2023 was our 30<sup>th</sup> birthday year and we celebrated in a small way with a cake at the meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> September - which was also our first meeting at the new time of 2pm. We have reinstituted other activities post-Covid: our programme of social visits is expanding and we have re-established a lunch for group coordinators. This is very important to us, because many of our members throw themselves wholeheartedly into the activities of one or more of our 70 groups and sometimes do not experience the togetherness of our regular Tuesday and Thursday meetings. They too need to see themselves as full members of our U3A.

Another highly successful feature of Chester U3A is our Chester Times newsletter. This is one of the ways we try to let members know what is going on around the groups as well as at the regular plenary meetings. We are lucky to have such a good publication and we have an archive of almost all of the issues of Chester Times and its forerunner newssheet. Some future historian might find it fascinating.

I wanted my report to be a positive celebration of what we are and what we do, but I do not want to give an impression of complacency. I am aware of ways in which we could do some things better and there are two areas in which I would particularly like to see us improve. Our web site has been hit by problems at U3A centrally and we have struggled to keep it up to date and fully functional – we will try to do better next year. The second area in which I think we could do better is in welcoming new members and again we are trying to improve the sometimes daunting experience of walking through our door for the first time.

Finally, I must record my thanks to all our committee members and group coordinators – without you we have no U3A. I particularly want to thank our retiring committee members – I was elected to chair your meetings when I knew almost none of you and had very little experience of how Chester U3A runs. You have both taught me and supported me – thank you.

Peter Goodhew, October 2023