**Members are doin’ it for themselves …**

Do you remember that great 1980s anthem by Aretha Franklin and the Eurythmics, *Sisters are doin’ it for themselves*?

In case you have forgotten, here is the message of the song:

*Sisters are doin' it for themselves
Standin' on their own two feet
And ringin' on their own bells
Sisters are doin' it for themselves*

What inspiring words! – and if it’s not too sacrilegious to adapt such a classic – I’d like to suggest that they could be applied equally to Croydon u3a members!

The u3a is a self-help organisation, founded on the idea that members work together to create a mutually supportive environment in which we can all learn and practise skills old and new, share our interests and enjoy meeting with others. **Members doin’ it for themselves** … **standin’ on their own two feet**!

Our Group Leaders play an important role, of course, in dealing with some of the administrative side of keeping the groups running – and how fortunate we are to have such a large number of wonderful Group Leaders willing to take this on!

Group Leaders show an enormous commitment to their roles – BUT they do need the support and active involvement of their group members! It is the responsibility of the members of the groups, as much as of the Leader, to ensure that everything runs well. Other people, as well as the Group Leaders, are needed to take on some of the administrative side of running the group – it can’t all fall on the shoulders of one person.

Some groups are now adopting a ‘Committee model’ – with the various tasks devolved to a team of several people. While there still has to be a ‘named person’ for the group, the Committee format means that responsibilities are shared and aren’t seen as the job of just one person. Also, of course, a Group Leader’s circumstances can change and somebody who has been leading a group may find they can no longer do so – or they may need a break for health or family reasons or for a holiday. The Committee model means that there will be others ready and willing to take over from the Group Leader when necessary.

Can I urge all group members to consider how the responsibilities for running their groups can be shared more equally among them? At the very least, Group Leaders should have a deputy to whom they can delegate some of the administrative tasks – or even better – please look at the possibility of having some sort of a Committee set-up.

**Maggie Chan**