

## **Dart Valley u3a - Chair's Report October 2021**

This has been a second unusual year with the continued effect of the Coronavirus being felt across the globe - and of course that includes the Dart valley!

This has of course resulted in the majority of our u3a activities being conducted online, and I guess a lot of members by now have much improved skills using packages like Zoom and Facetime. At the time of writing there is still much unease, and many are choosing quite understandably not to attend in-person events. I hope attendance will be good at our u3a AGM on 14 October, but we shall see!

At the moment the committee has decided to continue to meet online by Zoom, mainly because of the pandemic, but also of course because of the difficulty over recent months of finding anywhere to park in Dartmouth. I would like to take the opportunity to thank sincerely all my committee colleagues who have "kept the show on the road" during challenging times (it is probably obvious, but let's remember all are volunteers who give their time and effort for free).

There are many others who deserve thanks, so forgive me if I don't mention all by name, but once again a big thankyou to group conveners – this at heart a learning organisation, and they are all at the very core of what we do.

Remembering the new u3a strapline "Learn, Laugh, Live" I am aware also that many members join because of the wish to make and keep new friends, and to have social interaction with fellow members – and they have been a little "short changed" recently for unavoidable reasons, so let us hope this will improve from now on. The media are saying it's going to be a difficult winter, but even if there's a shortage of turkeys we can all enjoy and benefit from u3a activities!

We have, as at the last time numbers were reported, 444 members of whom 74 have not renewed (some of whom live away from the Dart Valley). This is a good number, which will hopefully again approach 500 as the effect of the pandemic eases.

Again, for obvious reasons, there have been virtually no social activities to report on since the last AGM. Let's hope for better times to come!

It has been a strange year, but I am constantly bringing to mind the well-worn phrase "life is the art of the possible". There's lots of things we can't do at the moment, but we can all focus on what we can do. I am always grateful that that in a local community like ours there is so much willingness to give time and contribute to voluntary activities – none of us actually has to do any of this, and yet u3a thrives because members give their time, learn and enjoy.

So thankyou to everyone, It's good to be chair of an organisation we can all be proud to be part of!

Howard O'Keefe

October 2021