



ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES

6th April 2023

As Chairman, I am presenting this year's report from your committee, the Trustees.

The last year has proved to be very successful, emerging from the Zoom era to live meetings again. Our audience has grown from strength to strength, with around 100 attending more recent monthly meetings. This, despite a drop in overall membership from where we were before Covid hit us. Today, our membership stands at 275, still a pretty healthy number. We held a new Members coffee morning on 11th April that was very well-attended and another is being planned.

Likewise, there has been a fall in active Interest Groups from 40+ to 25 since 2020, but has maintained this number over the last year. The fall is partially explained by the loss of around 45 members since 2020 and partially because some group leaders have either moved away from the area or have given up their role as leader and no-one else has taken their place. Duncan Livingstone has tried very hard to get more Interest groups running and is always available to discuss with members how this can be done. As I have often stated, as has Duncan, that anyone can form an interest group should they wish and provided that 2 or 3 other members share that interest then they are considered to be viable. I would also like to say that if you would like to start a group it doesn't mean that you need to be the leader. Indeed, any member of a group can be chosen as a nominal leader.

Like all voluntary organisations, we rely on our members to ensure that our u3a is run as a viable, useful and happy membership-based organisation. This is working well. We have an active and keen committee without whom we could not operate.

Having said that, we could do with one or two more volunteers to bring fresh ideas to our u3a, to share the workload and as potential successors to existing committee members. Our Constitution specifies how long a member can be on the Committee. This is usually three years but can be extended to 6 years.

Since our last AGM Helen Rowland offered to re-join our Committee as Programme Secretary and I am very pleased to report that she has taken on this role with her usual enthusiasm. We have had some excellent Speakers this year and more to follow in the ensuing months

Special thanks again are due to Georgina Livingstone who, whilst not a committee member, has continued to publish our Newsletters; she is, of course, dependent on all of us to feed her with news and photographs.

We have very effective members on the committee, Lynda Brooks as Secretary, Pat Cooper as Treasurer, Lesley Morris as Membership Secretary, Barry Davies as Health & Safety Officer, June Shepherd as Publicity Secretary and Duncan Livingstone as our Groups Coordinator.

I won't go into the work of each of these, but they are all necessary and important roles that keep our u3a functioning and they are all performing splendidly.

My term as Chairman is effectively over after this meeting/AGM with Fanny Grey taking on the role from 1st May. She has been extremely helpful as Vice-Chairman on the committee and in standing in as Chairman in my absence and I am very confident that she will make an admirable Chairman of our u3a.

Fanny's role as Vice-Chairman will be taken by Peter Sorrell who has been persuaded to come back into the Committee and we are very pleased to welcome Peter.

Of course, the above two changes are subject to ratification at the AGM but, as I write this report, there have been no other nominations for any of the Committee roles.

I would like to highlight a few of our groups:

'Looking at Buildings' has proved very popular and every month has visited a different location and a programme is already planned to the end of this year.

'MOTO' is growing to the point where it might need to consider splitting into two as the numbers are perhaps becoming too great for one group. At the last count there were 40 participants.

'Metal Detecting' is proving equally successful, although no Anglo-Saxon or Roman Hoards have yet been found. We may have to consider having a waiting list as interest in this activity is growing.

Pétanque, Mediaeval History, Table Tennis, Bird-Watching, Gardening, and many others are also doing very well.

Over the past year we have had, as is quite usual for us, an eclectic but interesting range of speakers. We do welcome any feedback you wish to give us so that our future programme can be planned and if you have any ideas for future speakers, please do let us know.

If you know anyone who might be interested in coming to one of our meetings as a guest, please bring them along; they might even consider joining us!

The Group Leaders coffee-morning was gratefully held on 16th May at the Friends Meeting house in Frenze Road with many groups represented. We plan to hold another new members event later this year.

Last year I mentioned an Open Day to invite the public to find out about our u3a. An awareness and recruitment occasion! We had intended to do this late last year, but felt that we were not quite ready in terms of recovering from the Covid limitations. I am pleased to report that it now going to be held on Saturday 15th April.

You will be pleased to know that we are again not proposing to increase our Annual Subscription this year.

This year we are celebrating our 20th Anniversary and Fanny and Helen have organised a special lunch following a special talk (on Dad's Army), to be held at the Corn Hall on September 7th – more details to follow with ticket sales starting at our July meeting.

I cannot not mention the excellent Christmas Lunch, organised by Fanny & Helen with help from other committee members that took place last December – we are looking forward to this December!

A word about our website – a problem arose late last year when all those (some 500, I believe) u3as that used the same website hosting organisation found that their websites had all disappeared overnight. To cut a long story short, we have had the structure of our websites eventually though only partially restored, but with all the photographs and all the files lost. We are gradually reinstating the content of the website. Please bear with us as we strive to make our website fully useful again.

This report would not be complete without sincere thanks to Alannah Cripps and others for managing the kitchen in providing our coffee & cake, Carol Nutt, et al, for registering all our members on arrival and the volunteers "meeting & greeting" our guests and new members.

Thank you for your support and please remember that your Committee is here to serve all of us. We would be pleased to hear about any ideas or issues you have.

Finally, I have to say that I have had a very happy 4 years as Chairman which was only made possible by an extremely supportive committee and a clearly appreciative membership.

A copy of this report will be posted on our website!

Tony Callender (*Chairman*)