

Exmouth and District u3a Trustees Report 2020 – 2021

This trustees report gives us the opportunity to reflect back over the months since our 'virtual' AGM in August 2020 and importantly gives us the opportunity to look forward. As a registered charity we are required by the Charity Commission and our constitution to provide this report for our members.

Treasurer

Richard Morgan as Treasurer and an Officer of the committee approaches all his work in a methodical manner, informing the committee on a regular basis and contributing to our discussions so that we are well informed. Thank you to Richard for preparing a separate report for this AGM and for ensuring that the accounts are audited by John Ward; very much appreciated.

Secretary and Facebook

You will of course have received all the information about our ninth AGM from our Secretary Ian McLauchlin. As one of the three Officers on the committee Ian is always busy but approaches the role in a conscientious manner enabling us to move forward with all the necessary information at our fingertips. We are most fortunate that Ian is happy to take on all that is involved with administering the voting at our second 'virtual' AGM.

Ian also manages our Facebook site; <https://en-gb.facebook.com/groups/exmouthU3A/>; a daily task undertaken with enthusiasm. With almost 200 members and many contributions, this is a great success.

Membership

Our membership of 878 includes members from our 'District'; Aylesbeare, Budleigh Salterton, East Budleigh, Ebford, Lympstone, Topsham, Woodbury and Woodbury Salterton as well as Exmouth. Annual membership remains at £12 and covers all meetings, our newsletters, U3A resources and Third Age Trust Magazine.

We have been most grateful to Olwen Smith who took over the role of Membership Secretary in August 2020. In 'normal' circumstances Olwen would have had a team of volunteers at Exmouth Pavilion helping with membership but in these unusual times Olwen has been working at home. She has certainly risen to the challenge and dealt with all membership matters in a most efficient way, writing articles for the newsletter, extending a warm welcome to new members and dealing with the task of renewals in a timely manner.

New Members

We know that a number of u3as across the UK have struggled to recruit new members and so we are delighted to say that since our last AGM 30 new members have joined us. Sad to say that Sheila Clarkson our New Members' Coordinator is stepping down at this AGM. Before our Lockdowns and restrictions she was active in organising New Members' meetings, so that members found out about all the activities we have on offer and in particular she made sure that new members became acquainted with each other. All of this took time to arrange and we would like to thank Sheila for all her efforts on your behalf. Although Sheila will no longer be a committee member she will still be willing to help as and when necessary.

Interest Groups

Lyn Holmes is our Groups Coordinator and keeps in regular contact with our Group Organisers via articles for the newsletter, many e-mails and by phone. As a committee, we have had to keep abreast of the numerous changes to government regulations due to Covid -19 and this has meant Lyn has had

to ensure that our Group Organisers have been kept informed about risk assessments for their groups. All this is additional work which Lyn has taken on willingly. With thanks to Lyn's enthusiastic input we are delighted to say that a number of new groups have started up or are in the planning stage.

Newsletter

We do appreciate the great variety of contributions from our members as well as from our committee. With many thanks to John Hunt every edition of our monthly newsletter has been a bumper edition and as one of our members said 'more like a magazine'. An enormous task each month from start to finish but managed so well by John in ensuring that there is something of interest for all our members. An attractive, colourful, informative newsletter with two versions each time; one for members with the 'Zoom' links and one without for the website and so all extra work for John for which we are most grateful.

Publicity

I am also sad to report that Camilla Benyon is stepping down from the committee. Camilla has been conscientious each month in getting our newsletters to the print –shop and distributed to our members without e-mail, not an easy task when we have had three Lockdowns. Additionally, Camilla has kept in contact with some of our members without access to the Internet; an important lifeline for those members. Camilla has kindly said that she is willing to continue to arrange for the printing and distribution of our newsletters.

Database

The 'Beacon' database to which we subscribe holds all the details of our members, of payments and finances and some of our Groups. It has the facility for users to quickly and easily send emails to members. Dealing with problems, errors and updates is a "back-room" job, essential for running Exmouth u3a and for committee members. In addition, committee members can have a dedicated u3a email mailbox, a system which also requires administration and support. Training sessions – this year, via 'Zoom' – have also been planned, arranged and delivered to committee members and Group Organisers. So thanks to Maurice Chittock as Database Administrator for dealing with this very much needed technology.

Speakers and 'Connect on Thursday' sessions

We have continued to hold weekly Thursday morning sessions via 'Zoom', open to all our members. We have settled into a pattern of 'Open Informal Sessions' on the 1st, 3rd and 5th morning of the month, sometimes with short contributions from our members but always with the opportunity for a chat. Thanks to Ian McLauchlin for administrating the sessions and John Hunt for hosting.

As I am also Speakers' Coordinator as well as Chair it has been most reassuring to know that I could continue to book speakers for our monthly meetings which before Covid-19 were held in the Pavilion. Additionally, on the fourth Thursday of the month we have usually had presentations from our own members and such talent we have seen! Many sincere thanks to all those members who have contributed to these sessions.

We have certainly embraced video conferencing and I have been able to take full advantage of booking speakers from further afield as I have reported in 'My Chat from the Chair' in the monthly newsletters. With topics such as 'Incredible India', 'Cathedral Yard Fire Exeter', 'Birdwatching through Geological Time' and 'Death of Venice' we have enjoyed a variety of presentations delivered so well

by our distinguished invited speakers. I am delighted to say that I have booked speakers through to 2022; there is much to look forward to.

Technical Team

Our Technical Team of John Hunt, Ian McLauchlin and Maurice Chittock have continued to assist and support members with technical issues, thus ensuring that members can keep in contact with their Interest Groups and participate in our weekly sessions. Generous with their time, our team have made a positive difference to at least 100 members. From time to time, the team have also tested different systems and reported results and recommendations to committee. Special thanks to John Hunt who has ensured that our Connect and Learn site <https://sites.google.com/view/connectandlearn> always has something of interest and also for setting up and maintaining our new YouTube site https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCC_Wy5Vkb2C1itp1JhKtxAA All very exciting.

Website <https://u3asites.org.uk/exmouth/home>

Marion Ricketts has been diligent in her approach in maintaining and updating our website. Marion who is not on our committee, attended one of our committee meetings after the AGM so we could discuss changes which she implemented in good time and with the new national u3a logo as well. It is all looking very good.

Equipment

Melanie Parker has ensured that our equipment has been stored safely and she will be available to respond to any loan requests once restrictions are lifted.

December Entertainment

From the reports we had from our members they certainly enjoyed our entertainment in December. A lot of work for those of us who were involved in arranging that special 'Zoom' session but definitely well worth every minute we spent on it. In true u3a fashion, our members who contributed to this session were generous with their time and gave us all a great entertainment and much enjoyment.

Devon Link and East Devon Link Meetings

We continue to attend these meetings, which before last year were held twice a year. Due to the pandemic and to support each other in these uncertain times there have been more meetings. We have been able to share our experiences of using 'Zoom' with other u3as who had cancelled their meetings with the first and sometimes subsequent Lockdowns. Then we have been inspired by some ideas we have learnt about, such as Teignmouth u3a setting up their own YouTube site.

Looking Forward

Now looking forward to Wednesday 2nd June 2021 our working party of Lyn Holmes, Susi Aubrey, Mo Kendall, Maureen Phillips, Deirdre Mackness and myself are busy organising entertainment by and for our members for **National u3a Day**.

Finally on behalf of all the Trustees I would like to thank you, all our members, for supporting our committee thus ensuring that we have kept going and indeed embraced new ideas through Lockdowns and restrictions which have dominated our lives for the past year. As a movement we have much to look forward to in the year ahead; a special year for us as it marks our tenth anniversary and the fortieth for the u3a nationally.

Christine Chittock, Chair and Speakers' Coordinator 11th April 2021.