

## AGM Chair's report 2022-2023

I would like to begin my report today with a big thank you, to you the members for continuing to support our organisation and in particular helping to assist new members and make them feel welcome. We reached our target of over 1000 members demonstrating how Guernsey once again has gone against the trend as in the UK u3a membership has gone down!

To celebrate, Dave Gallienne and the Woodworking group designed and built a Commemorative bench from oak complete with engraved message. It was unveiled in March by Sue Knowles and other members of the original committee and the press covered the event. To encourage members to celebrate we held subsidised events in October where we offered every member a £10 subsidy to one of the three afternoon teas at Les Rocquettes Hotel, two lunches at the Driftwood or a disco and supper at the Wayside Cheer Hotel. Something to suit all tastes. I hope you managed to enjoy these events unfortunately, I managed to miss all of them as I came down with COVID .... timing was not great!

This year our monthly Coffee Morning venue changed from St Pierre Park Hotel due to increased rent prices and we moved to the Community Cafe at KGV which has been offered to us free so yet another saving!. We even had to change to a Monday morning for one of our months but don't worry we are back to Tuesdays first one of the month. Our last New Members Coffee Morning at the Vale Douzaine happened in November as we have now adopted a new 'Drop in Session' held every three months. Our first was held on the 18<sup>th</sup> April and our second 18<sup>th</sup> July. These take place 10-11.30 at the Community cafe and support new members to integrate into the organisation as well as enable other members time to give feedback and ask questions of the Exec Committee.

We offered a FREE Afternoon tea in April aimed at recruiting volunteers to help support us moving forward. It was a fun and interesting afternoon and we had over twenty people volunteering. One of our volunteers was Alison Green whose journalistic flair has been seen in the recent newsletters. Sue Thomson, Joan Norledge, Sue Taylor, Rachael Hockey, Val and Tim Tucker helped out at the drop-in session in July making members feel very welcome. Val Kirby, Heather Clegg, Jan Ogier, Pauline Allen, Jo McGinn, Jackie Nicole, Becky Elliot, Janet Falla, Wendy Wadley, and Ann Marie and Paul Ferbrache have been helping out with some administrative tasks, volunteered to cook cakes or organise events. Many thanks to these volunteers - you are making a big difference in making the organisation stronger. Thank you.

Unfortunately, we received the sad news about the passing of Bella Mahy who launched u3a's Walking Programme along with Bob Thompson. Mike De Carteret also died, he helped a number of you search into your Family Histories and also served on our Executive Committee helping to produce the history pamphlet which we issued last year. We thank them for their commitment to the cause. They will be sadly missed.

The number of Groups have continued to increase, in September Carol and her husband Gary Sheppard started the Le Roc Dance Group and then in April held a successful 60s and 70s Dance party at the Cobo Community Centre. Fancy dress, prizes and great food resulted in a very successful evening.

Local History with Gill Slimm and Local Heritage with Andy Walker began meeting in October, whilst a further Skittles group was added on a Wednesday, a fun, cheap social activity thanks to Mary Prevel and Janet Falla for becoming the Convenors. The Girls Breakfast Group was introduced this year by Rachael Hockey and Urban Photography proved popular thanks to Sue Le Feuvre. Glenys Stevens offered to set up a Board games Group and Jenny Tasker takes over from her in the Autumn. A Stamp Collecting group was established by Simon Coombes and Ken Gibbs and I know many members have given stamps. Finally, the Collective Gardening Group has been established and I'm pleased to say lots of produce is growing - who said you can never have too many courgettes!

The iPad group has always been popular and I was concerned when Penny Lythgoe and Sue Vermeulen told me they wanted to step down as Convenors. They couldn't, however, resist attending the Digital Ace event at Beau Sejour recently, where they proudly showed our u3a banners and helped spread the word about digital use. I'm pleased that Ian Daish offered to take over the group to help support those less technically minded. Julie Sexton

took over the Creative Stitches from Leila Le Messurier and Dave and Jos Mortimer took on the organisation of collating walks and emailing members from Bob Thompson.

A successful Quiz was held in April thanks to Karen Fooks and the Quiz group for organising questions, venue, food, and prizes it was a very popular event and many look forward to next year's event.

Our very own Drama Group entertained in December with Goldilocks and the three bears at the Vale Church Hall. This, as always, is a super start to Christmas with lots of laughs and local jokes thanks to Margaret Moffat's excellent writing skills.

Some of our groups are out in the Community - the Creative Stitches Group demonstrated their talents in the Town Church Christmas tree festival held in December. They created beautiful hangings to dress one of the many Christmas trees that could be found in Town Church. The Singing group entertained at a number of venues and received much praise. The Beach Wombling group completed a litter pick at the Guernsey Together Music Festival in June and also thanks to Nandra Torode, Convenor of the Woolly Jumpers Group for organizing to send knitted Baby items to Ukraine.

We have also had offers from Convenors to put on workshops Karen Winter held Needle Felting Workshops for beginners making three dimensional structures while Dave Ford Convenor of the Drawing Group held very successful Pastel Workshops for beginners.

Please join me in showing our appreciation for our superb Convenors.

Our Speaker's Secretary, June Le Poidevin is stepping down this year having been on the Executive Committee for a few years and has organised many interesting speakers and liaised with the Villetta Hotel to provide tea and scones the perfect way to spend an afternoon.

In November she invited Commander Colin Ferbrache OBE who spoke about his 25 years in the Royal Navy where he saw much action. In February, she organised for the Gold Accredited Guernsey Guide, Gill Girard to share her fascinating knowledge of Guernsey and in July it was John Burley who entertained our members.

Thank you June for your service and it is hoped you will perhaps still organise a few talks as you seem to know so many people.

An important part of being a member of u3a is having the opportunities to make new friends and where better than at one of our many Social events. Before I go on to list the events I would like to say thank you to you our members who have over time got used to using the dreaded Eventbrite. By booking on line it has helped Mary and Gill as it sorts money, produces lists and sends reminders. Please do talk to us if you are having difficulties with booking for events as it certainly seems to be the way forward. So what have we enjoyed this year.

There were two Spectacular Christmas Lights tours in the lanes of Guernsey with a very entertaining and enthusiastic coach driver. We had several visits to the Fab Lab at Guille-Allés Library in December where our members received instructions on cutting edge technology from the Library staff who helped members download photographs and print onto mugs, cushions and baubles. There was a talk on Modern Art by David Pipon in February. We enjoyed an alternative Christmas Lunch at Les Cotils in February. In March there was a tour of Randall's Brewery costing just £10 for the tour and lots of beer tasting! 80 members visited the Cinema in March a real treat to see the Guernsey musical 'A La Perchoine' telling the story of evacuated children during world war II. March was certainly a busy month when 45 members attending a visit to the Fire Station with a fire safety talk and many demonstrations.

In April there was a Pre-Easter Lunch booked at the Peninsula Hotel and a Hanging Basket workshop at Queux Patio Plant Centre. Then two visits to the Victorian Walled garden with lunch at the Saumarez Park Tea Rooms in June.

July was another equally busy month with over-subscribed visits to the Dairy, Pitch and Putt Crazy Golf at Oatlands and 6 tours of Hauteville House.

Mary and Gill do a super job in coming up with ideas of where to go then they complete the preparation work in looking at menus, trying to get reduced prices and sorting information for newsflashes. Thank you both for the work you've done this year and we look forward to what you have planned for the coming year.

In the background the Executive Committee have been looking at publicity and how we can spread the word about what we have on offer. Special thanks to Ian Souter and Hazel Solway who have been at the centre of producing our first poster and in getting it distributed and put up on boards around Guernsey. They also had a major role to play in developing our second Poster Competition which is running until the end of this month. So please get those entries in. We want pictures of what u3a means to you. You can enter as many entries as you wish.

I would like to say a special thank you to Hazel for stepping in at the last minute and offering to organise all the paperwork for our AGM this year and she is even writing the minutes. This year, Hazel is stepping down from the Executive Committee and will be very much missed – thank you for your calm, organised manner.

Another important person standing down from the Executive Committee is Ian Daish. In previous years as Chair he steered us through two lockdowns and recently has played an important role liaising with the Third Age Trust as Vice-Chair as well as coordinating the Media Team. The Media Tamara vital being responsible for newsflashes, newsletters, website and sorting databases. This year he has even found time at Coffee mornings to help members get tickets for events when they have trouble with Eventbrite. A special thank you to Ian for all of his work over the years as he takes a well-earned break from the Executive Committee.

We have had a busy year and I would like to say big thank you to my Executive Committee, sub-committees, Active Volunteers and Convenors who work so hard to keep the organisation running so smoothly. Thank you.

I want to finish by sharing a note which was sent to me this year by a member as I think it sums up our organisation so well: She wrote -

"I feel very blessed to belong to u3a: meeting many new friends and trying a whole variorum of activities. There is such variety: something for everyone. Please pass on my thanks to all involved: how fantastic to have this organisation in Guernsey."

Jane Pearson  
Chair – u3aGuernsey