

AGM by Zoom – 17 September 2020. Chairman's report.

This has been a challenging and yet a momentous year.

Last September we could not have imagined just how much our lives would have changed as a consequence of a worldwide pandemic.

It remains to be seen how quickly we can return to normal living conditions, but I am pleased to say that we have adapted well to our changed environment.

With 91 % of our membership on the internet, the vast majority of members have been able to participate in U3A activities to a greater or lesser extent.

We held our first on line monthly meeting with Zoom in June and followed this up in July with another. Both were well attended. For the first time we held a monthly meeting in August, which was also well attended.

We were able to hold our Summer Party virtually on the advertised day, thanks to Zoom with monologues from **Ingrid Corrigan, Margaret Stanger** and **Paul Jerome** with a duet between **Ingrid** and **Howard Alston**, poetry from **Denise Bennett** and **Val Worthington** and a quiz prepared by **Peter Newman**. From the comments we have received, it would seem that the efforts of the organisers and contributors were much appreciated.

During the course of the year, we dissolved the original Havant U3A and created a new version with the benefit of incorporated status, becoming an Incorporated Charitable Organisation. This involved drafting a new constitution which required the approval of the Third Age Trust and the Charity Commission.

In the event, the Charity Commission approved our constitution on 27 February 2020. The application was approved within a week, although as a consequence of the disruption occasioned by Corona Virus, the change was not formally approved until 20 August, becoming effective on 1 September.

We say good bye to **Maria Pinto** from the executive committee, as she has returned to full time employment. She has helped **John Meacham** as the Groups Co-ordinator, and we thank her for all her efforts.

John Meacham has also decided to step down and we thank him for overseeing our groups, having performed this role with consummate enthusiasm and diplomacy for some three years. We are very grateful to him for undertaking this task. Subject your vote, **Robert Child** will take over this role.

Sandra Howells and **Jocelyn Booth** both had to step down because of other commitments

Philippa Gray has decided to step down as Secretary as a consequence of her commitment to so many worthy causes, and I would like to pay a special tribute to her.

She has been our Secretary for several years and played a vital part in preparing the new constitution, typing several drafts involving hours of work, and subsequently submitting the application to the Charity Commission. We could not have made the change without her. In addition she has carried out the manifold duties of secretary with remarkable efficiency.

Subject to your vote, Philippa will be replaced by **Peter Newman**.

I am pleased to say that the balance of the committee have agreed to remain in post for another year and others have agreed to join, subject to your vote.

I would like to thank **Margaret Stanger**, who is our Treasurer and has maintained the finances in good order, as you will hear.

We are similarly indebted to **Alison White**, our Membership Secretary, who has run the **Beacon** communication system and has sent out messages to members regarding meetings and helped run the Zoom conference system. I also thank **Pauline Freeman**, who has been our Information Officer and assisted **Alison**.

I say thank you to **Martin Owen** for your help in running our quiz at Christmas last year and for your support in matters relating to front of house prior to lockdown.

Elizabeth Jorge, who is now on her second spell on the committee, has taken over my role as Programme Organiser. She is a constant and invaluable source of helpful information. She has arranged our speakers for the coming year, all of whom can, if required, give their presentations virtually.

Our particular thanks go to **Geoff Worthington**, our Webmaster, for his considerable, untiring and enthusiastic efforts in maintaining the website and particularly in publishing **Read All About It**. He has played a key part in organising and running our Zoom meetings and our virtual Summer Party.

Ken Arkell was able to organise a successful trip to Canterbury before the lockdown.

Val Worthington & Alison Cook have assumed responsibility for running our trips, in succession to **Ken Arkell** but so far have been unable (because of Covid 19) to reveal their talents in this respect. We are, however, grateful to Val for continuing to undertake the role of welfare officer.

This had the makings of a very successful year with our membership having grown to almost 300.

From the beginning of this academic year we introduced a form of associate membership at a reduced rate for members of other U3As, who also belong to ours. The reduced figure takes account of lower central Third Age Trust fees payable by those with multiple memberships.

Many of our **Interest Groups** have adapted well to the changing and challenging circumstances in which we find ourselves and have continued to operate virtually very successfully during the lockdown.

May I say a big thank you to all of our Group Convenors. They each put in so much time and effort in running our groups. The success of our U3A in no small measure depends upon them.

I particularly thank those convenors who are now stepping down. Thank you for all of your efforts.

May I also make an appeal for new group convenors in these new and challenging times. We must assume that we shall emerge from lockdown before too long and we hope that our groups will flourish with renewed vigour.

The U3A ethos is for members to volunteer. The running of groups and activities cannot simply be left to others. Inevitably, there will be those who lead and others who follow, but you can help by

supporting your group in its activities and participating as fully as possible even in these unique times.

If you have a particular interest, which is not currently catered for, please make yourself known to our new Groups Co-ordinator designate, **Bob Child**, and if there is sufficient support, a new group can be established.

We did participate in the **Southern Area Regional** Quiz last October, although sadly we did not cover ourselves with glory on that occasion.

It seems an age ago now, but we enjoyed a very enjoyable and successful **Christmas Party** with ample food provided by Marks and Spencer arranged by **Geoff**. The catering was organised by **Ann Culter** and her dedicated team of helpers and compered by **John Burch**.

Over 110 people attended. We enjoyed a quiz and Los Ladrones, a group led by our very own **Geoff Porter**, gave us an excellent selection of Gilbert and Sullivan songs.

We have a virtual **Christmas Party** to look forward on the 17th December, using Zoom if we cannot meet in person. Following the outstanding success of our virtual Summer Party, I have every confidence that this, too, will be an enjoyable and memorable event.

We at Havant U3A have a challenging but exciting and interesting year ahead of us, which we hope will be very successful with your support.

Thank you.

John West, Chairman