

## AGM MARCH 28 2024 : CHAIR'S REPORT

A warm welcome to you all and thank you for attending today and supporting the hard work that the committee and group facilitators have carried out during the past year. I would particularly like to welcome any new members who may be joining us for the first time.

This is my final Chair's report after almost two and a half years in the role. It gives me great pleasure therefore to report on a vibrant, friendly, fun and supportive u3a that has gone from strength to strength over the past two years.

Our membership numbers continue to increase and currently stand at 130.

As our funds are showing a healthy surplus, the committee has decided to reduce the annual membership fee from 15 to 10 pounds. You will be asked to approve this decision later on the agenda.

Angela Ellis, our Membership Secretary, does a sterling job in keeping the database up to date, sending out letters of renewal, preparing membership cards, handling enquiries and checking your membership details at the monthly meetings. I would like to thank her personally for her dedication and support over the past two years. I would also like to thank Wilma Currie for her valuable help with the running of the meetings.

The monthly social meetings have continued to be very well attended, largely thanks to the engaging, informative and lively speakers who have agreed to come along and talk to us. I would like to extend a big thank you on your behalf to Helen McClean, our Social Secretary, who has done an admirable job in sourcing such a varied selection of subjects and people.

We have been delighted to showcase some of our Interest Groups at the monthly meetings. The February meeting welcomed the ten members of the Photovisions Group, founded by Mairi Christie at the very inception of our u3a and now run by Aileen McLaren. Linda Turner gave a brief and entertaining explanation of each photograph in the exhibition. The hall was packed and members were greatly impressed with the quality and range of the work on show.

The Creative Writing Group, facilitated by Barb Taub, chose last September's meeting to formally announce the release of their debut Anthology, showcasing tales of love, friendship, and adventure in stories and poems written by its members. Like our photographers, our writers feed off each other's ideas and enthusiasm...they all bear witness to the underpinning ethos of the u3a movement: that people learn most by doing and learning from each other.

The list of Interest Groups we have on offer has increased over the past year and now numbers 20. New groups include MarJong, Musical Appreciation, Absolute Beginners' Ukulele and Film Appreciation...with a beginners' Japanese course, Debating and Line Dancing Groups looking for interested members to sign up so they can get started. There has also been a splendid 6-week *Introduction to Yoga* course which we are hoping will be repeated in the not too distant future. Unfortunately the Gardening and Badminton Groups have folded due to lack of a facilitator... hopefully this will only be temporary and other members will step up and restart them.

Group Facilitators were invited to an annual Thanks and Development meeting in February which was well attended. Thank you to all all of them for their enthusiasm and willingness to give their time and energy to bringing us together and helping us learn and laugh with each other. Maggie Howarth has been an excellent Groups Coordinator over this past year and has helped enormously with the setting up of new groups.

Before I finish, I will make an appeal to keep the Isle of Arran u3a going. We all have a mixture of skills so please think about sharing yours and enabling our u3a to carry on.

Karyn Wilson Hill