

Pontyclun U3A Chair's Report for 2018/19

Another year has passed, and we meet for our third AGM. In the previous two AGM's I have mentioned the U3A ethos of 'learn, laugh and live' and as with last year, I add friendship when thinking of our own special U3A.

Our leaflet, produced by Sarah Carmichael and Paul Frowen, not only gives us at a glance our calendar for the year, but it also in the pictures, embodies the U3A ethos of shared learning; 3 studious ladies and maybe for you all to enjoy a laugh, when looking at the other picture, to prove that there is life in an old dog!

Our year ended with 189 members and 19 groups, having added Music Appreciation, Cryptic Crosswords, Drawing and the Ukulele, to our previous list. Our Interest Groups continue to grow, both in membership and achievement. We no longer have an Art Appreciation Group and the Sewing and Craft Group has closed until Christmas time. A huge thank you to the leaders of those groups, indeed to all our group leaders, for the time and effort you have given and continue to give. Our groups are the backbone of our Association, the learning, the experience and the friendship that they afford. Please keep pushing your suggestions for new groups in our box.

And here in Pontyclun, we have not been too insular! We took part in the Wales Coast & Border Celebration Project last year, with five walks along the South Wales Heritage coast, from Porthcawl to Aberthaw, linking our walks to five historic pubs. Paul Frowen provided us with the history of these establishments, and Peter Cox worked with the project leader to produce the project logo. Also thank you to Peter for his work in keeping our website updated, ensuring that we are available and contactable world-wide!

And thanks to Gordon Hill we are now even tentatively dipping our toes in to the world of social media with our new Pontyclun U3A Facebook page! Thank you to all of you who are posting and sharing your groups' pictures on the page.

Pontyclun will be on the national map, as our project will be featured at the Wales U3A Conference in Llandrindod in early May and then beyond to the National U3A Conference.

This Summer, some of our walks are centred around Castles, which is the theme of this year's Wales U3A Shared Learning Project - I believe we really are pioneers here in Pontyclun!

As you know I/we are very keen to develop the Caring/Wellbeing side of our membership and this by coincidence, is now being promoted by the national U3A.

The importance of company, friendship, building of confidence, self-esteem is being recognised more and more, even by GP's, who are recognising that these qualities can be found by joining a local U3A and are even in some cases, 'prescribing' U3A membership!

My goal is that we co- ordinate and develop this side of our membership in the next few months, with us all contributing in any way we can.

Our Speakers over this last year, have been informative and varied. Marg, a huge 'thank you' yet again. And would you believe it, our Speakers have been arranged until next March.

This year, we will be moving to a new online membership and financial management system, reducing the amount of administration for the Committee. A huge 'thank you' to Gordon, who has taken on the role of our Beacon Site Administrator.

We have six members stepping down from our Committee this year:

Margaret and Paul Griffiths, Kath Clarke, David and Jacky Prior, Barbara Porter. On behalf of everyone sitting here, a huge thank you to you all, the pioneers of Pontyclun U3A!

Each and every one has given of their time, which at times is considerable, and energy to make our U3A a success. The Committee bonded from day one and, you know, without a Committee, nothing gets done. Indeed, there are certain roles we have to fill, otherwise we cannot have a U3A. A most sincere thank you to you all, from me and every one of our members.

I do want to mention one person - Sarah, our Secretary, who will be stepping down from the Secretary's role this year. She has worked tirelessly for our U3A, always achieving, and demanding perfection and nothing less. Personally, I could not have managed without her, she is always steps ahead of you.

We have new members joining the Committee: Sharon Corbett has volunteered to be our new Secretary. Sharon has been to a few of our recent meetings and spent time with Sarah and Gordon. Stella Reynolds will join Pauline Peck as one of our two Membership Secretaries. Gordon, along with his role of Beacon Site Administrator, is taking on the important role of Groups Co-Ordinator. Sheila Gifford remains as our Publicity Officer and will in September, begin the quest for finding our Speakers for after March next year. Paul Frowen remains as Deputy Chair, one of the necessary posts. Barbara Hancock remains as Treasurer, another necessary post. And Sandra Roberts is joining the Care/Wellbeing team.

None of this would continue without you our members, the very core of our Association.

Thank you for your suggestions, ideas and contributions and continuing support of our monthly meetings and groups. And most of all thank you all for your friendship!

A special thank you to the Group Leaders, who have taken on the role and who do spend a huge amount of time, either organising or arranging their Group meetings. Remember, any new ideas you may have for new groups or how we can improve things, just pop them in our suggestion box!

Chris
Chair Pontyclun U3A.