

Pontyclun U3A
Chair's Annual Report for 2016/17

Dear Member,

I find it difficult to believe that we - Pontyclun U3A – are celebrating our first anniversary. The idea is that time goes more quickly as you get older, but that a year has passed since our inaugural meeting even allowing for age, is unbelievable. I hope you agree with me, when I say that it has been a very successful year.

Firstly, I want to thank our Committee for their unstinting effort, enthusiasm and determination that our association would be a success. I would personally like to thank Sarah, our very, very, efficient Secretary, who has kept us all informed and for her involvement along with Peter Cox for developing our website. And Barbara our Treasurer, who has with such patience, dealt with our bank, a less determined person would have given up!

Sadly we are losing two of our Committee members, Jennie and Gwynfa. Ladies, thank you both and a big thank you to all our Committee.

And secondly, thank you to all of you our members, without who, there would be no association - no Pontyclun U3A. I like to think that the over-riding impression as we have walked through that door to our meetings is one of friendship, a place where we have felt comfortable to come alone.

We have 141 members and we have 15 established groups with three new possible groups – Italian, Petanque and Bird Watching. We are also introducing other crafts into the existing craft group. All this, in a community that already has so many successful activities.

The U3A ethos of learning from one another prevails throughout all our groups, along with the gradual willingness for individual members to take responsibility for different aspects of their group. The interest groups are the energy of our U3A. I think that perhaps we are less bureaucratic and formal than many associations but I think the leaning towards informality suits us!

I hope you all have a copy of our personalised Pontyclun U3A leaflet, which at a glance gives us our programme of speakers for the next year, all of whom I am sure will inform and entertain us to the same degree as our speakers have this last year. It is no mean achievement to have engaged these speakers, Margaret I thank you! And thank you to all on the Committee who have been involved in compiling the leaflet and our newsletter.

May I thank all of you for your generosity when we have had a speaker who has shared their work within a charity with us, and for your ready acceptance of us having a charity, MacMillan, which is very close to many hearts.

Our groups, many of which started with two or three members have grown in numbers, commitment and enthusiasm, But you know, the number of members in a group does not matter – it is not a symbol of its success! A comment from a book group member - “I have read books that I would not naturally have read – and enjoyed them.” And from a Lunch Group member - “Going out with the U3A Lunch Group is the first time I have gone anywhere on my own since my husband died.” Comments we can all be proud of!

As the year has unfolded, I hope that your Committee has listened to your suggestions. Please keep them coming! Jackie and David have formed our ‘Meet and Greet’ team which I know has been a success. Never hesitate to make suggestions and share your ideas – pop them into our box – which in itself was a member’s suggestion. Aren’t we lucky to have Café 50, our meeting venue for most of our groups? Another example of the active community in which we live!

U3A – University of the Third Age – a time to learn, laugh, live, with no exams! I think we in Pontyclun U3A can add friendship to that mantra, and this is what will take us forward to another successful year.

With best wishes

Chris Dickson

Chair Pontyclun U3A