

PRESTON PARK U3A - CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2019

2019, has, as always, been another very successful year for Preston Park U3A. Our membership numbers are now hovering around the 480 mark all year, and although we lose a few members, we sign up 4 to 6 new ones every month.

I would firstly like to say a great big thank you to my committee (please stand up when I call your name), audience, please don't clap until I get to the end, or your hands will be sore: Anne Dale; John Colman; Kevin Thomas; Mary Ahmed; Marion Watson; Elaine Corcut; Sarah Richardson; Terry Careford; Julia Clark; Rose Stratton; and Chris Thorpe; and then, all of you that help in the day-today organising of Preston Park U3A, that keeps us running so seamlessly and smoothly throughout the year. THANK YOU!!

I especially would like to pay thanks to our committee members who are standing down this year under the rules of our constitution: Anne Dale and Terry Careford, who have been on the committee since our inception. But panic not!! We have a plan that will keep them gainfully employed by PPU3A for the next three years, more of that later. Both have agreed to carry on helping where they can in the future, which allows me to make the point to you all you don't have to be on the committee to assist in running the good ship Preston Park U3A !! Just turn up, and roll up your sleeves, and muck in. That's what we all do.

Interest Groups, the life blood of every U3A. Our Interest groups have continued to flourish this year, under the very careful hands on the tiller of Elaine & Sarah. We have sadly lost Astronomy, but they have started Pilates, with another class following swiftly on to do the same. At our last new members coffee morning a couple mentioned Mah Jong,

which we have had talked about before, so, I am sure that they will follow that up.

If anyone feels that they have an interest in a particular subject that we do not currently offer, that they would like to share, then please get in touch with Elaine or Sarah.

Social activities: Our legendary social groups continue to thrive, with John arranging ten days out this year, with the same again for 2020. We (that's Caroline & Alan) have been to Pashley Manor, Polesden Lacey, Goodwood races, where it poured with rain, and howled a gale, but still was a day enjoyed by all, ending up with a wonderful day @ Denbies winery in Corking two weeks ago. We (that is the three of us), are always open to suggestions.

Julia has concerts @ The Dome; Maureen, theatre visits; Ann Kerrison went to Herefordshire for 5 days, and so our entertainment, and enjoyment continues unabated.

An overview: One important change is that the Third Age Trust has decided to drop the University, from our title, which I always thought was a bad choice of words, and a misnomer, we are now, in future:
The Universal Third Age. Much more appropriate.

Planning: (1) We have been conscious of the fact that this hall, which I, and we, love a lot, is full to capacity on certain of our meetings, take the one in October with Geoff Mead. We usually have 110 - 120 which we can cope with,

but bearing in mind that our membership is now 480, if everyone turned up, we would have to hire the Brighton Centre. We have had four of our committee members searching for alternative local venues with little success.

Even Patcham Community Centre, which I thought was much larger than this hall only has a capacity of 120.

(2) We have been investigating installing a hearing loop system in this hall, and a permanent pa system with better acoustics, with speakers in the middle of the hall, where we are aware the sound bounces around from the pitched roof

(3) 2 years ago, the Third Age Trust launched a computer management system called Beacon, developed by U3A members, which could be a great benefit to, particularly our membership, very useful as we grow. This system costs £1 per member per year, and we think it is very cost-effective. There are over 380 U3A's in the UK, using it, but we have been very cautious in jumping in with two feet, but I suspect that we will adopt it next year.

Finance: This is a straight repeat of last year, let me state straightaway that neither Preston Park U3A, nor the Third Age Trust have done anything wrong, or out of place, but the Charity Commission has been tightening up it's rules and procedures. This means that we have to record, and show our accounts differently to what we have been doing in the past. Kevin will explain in more detail. We have tried to keep this short and succinct, but please bear with us, we will try to let you know how we now operate, as simply and concisely as we can.

Kevin

After Kevin:

So, I would finally thank you all for your support over the last three years, it has gone very quickly. It has been great fun supported by all of you, thank you very much.

May I wish our new chairman, and the committee good luck and fair sailing for the future!!!!

And now, will John please come and help with the Election of Officers and Committee members.