

This year has flown by as I've settled into my role as Chair, assisted by a strong committee and our u3a has gained in energy and numbers. Our membership has increased to more than 155 (and counting) which is higher than pre- Covid.

The last year has had some stand-out events:

Platinum Jubilee Celebration Garden Party last August, which 44 members attended. The Balls' afternoon tea in a box, the entertainment and camaraderie between members made it special. Thanks to the team who worked hard to make this happen (Kathleen Marlor, Janice Wilson) plus all the members who volunteered to set up/clear up.

Open Day this March, lead by new Groups' Coordinator, Jean Thomas (with lots of help from Kathy Clegg). Most groups were represented on the day and there was lots of interest from visitors and members. There were a good number of new members who signed up on the day so thanks to all the Convenors who worked to get their stands set up and manned, plus all the members who supported the day. Special mention about the refreshments- all those cakes donated by members made it very special - and the volunteers (ably organised by Kathleen M). Thanks to you all.

Beacon: Another big thank you must go to Janet Porter who took on the challenge of setting up the Beacon system, which manages the membership data for our u3a. It's been a steep learning curve and she is doing a brilliant job. We're still learning, but it has helped to streamline our admin and in the future could lead to paperless membership renewal.

Facebook Prudhoe u3a Group page and Website have enabled us to reach out to more potential members and keep current members informed. Thanks to all those who have contributed to get these populated with interesting write ups and

photos. It's not for all our members, I know, but definitely puts us more in the public eye. Special mention to new committee member, Kathleen Harrison, who has volunteered to help with the website. Two heads are definitely better than one.

Coffee Plus Plus has grown in popularity following the brilliant idea of Janice Scott (business Secretary) to offer friendly IT help during the monthly coffee mornings in the Spetchells. That and the book swap have meant numbers each month have increased beyond expectations. Last year, the committee had considered cancelling it due to poor numbers. So glad we didn't! It offers a good opportunity for potential and new members to come along and find out more about what's going on in a friendly environment.

Growing number of interest groups (our unique selling point) During the year, new groups have been created (some becoming full very quickly) offering members a wide range of opportunities to learn, laugh and connect with fellow members. A look at the website will provide the most updated list and it's great that more members are getting involved.

Monday meetings have become much better attended and much of this is down to the inspiring speakers that have been booked this year. A special thanks to Pat Stott, who, with Denise Durham, made the bookings. We have continued using Zoom to provide hybrid meetings for those members unable to attend in person. This has been no easy task and a big "thanks" must go to Kathy Clegg and the IT team who work hard to make this happen. Technical hitches are part and parcel of this technology, but Kathy and team cope well. We will continue with Zoom for this year.

Committee updates:

I am fortunate to have chaired a committee of such competent and committed trustees who work hard to make our u3a a success.

Leaving the committee:

I must thank Margaret Williams for all her support over the years who had to sadly step down last autumn due to poor health. I also need to thank Denise Durham who is stepping down for a year at this AGM (inline with the rules of the Constitution). However, I'm delighted that she has agreed to continue as our Social Secretary & Speaker Programme organiser as a non-committee member.

Joining the committee, I'm delighted to welcome 2 co-opted members (to be voted on today), namely Kathleen Harrison and Leslie Mitchell.

Changes in role: with the resignation of Margaret Williams, Janice Scott stepped up to Business Secretary, assisted by Kathy Clegg. Also, Jean Thomas took over Groups' Coordinator from Kathy Clegg earlier this year.

Special mention to Kathy Clegg who took the PowerPoint rolling notices up to the much bigger publication of the Newsletter. This became monthly during Covid as she recognised the importance of keeping members in touch. With more members meeting up again we have returned to the Notices at our Monday meetings. Kathy does much behind the scenes including emailing them out to members and a paper copy posted to those without email! Many thanks, Kathy.

Looking at the year ahead we have much to look forward to....just have a look at the programme card (or website). Don't forget that as members we have free access to the programme of Zoom talks and courses provided by the national u3a office.

There are also Regional events. Look out for details as they are sent out to you or mentioned at our meetings. We also have a Summer Garden Party in August, another trip in the autumn and then the Christmas party and Christmas lunch.

Finally, my thanks go to all of the members of P & D u3a.
Thanks for your support.

Felicity Pullen
Chair
Prudhoe & District u3a

Sent from my iPad