

### *My Final Year as Trustee for Scotland*

It hardly seems five minutes since Pam Jones, the then Chairman of the Trust, rang me to welcome me as the new Trustee for Scotland. I thought '*crivens! be careful what you wish for.*' That was nearly three years ago and now my time as Trustee draws to an end. It has been a fascinating and challenging time, but also a privilege to represent Scotland on the Board of the Third Age Trust.



Much of the work of the Trust happens in Sub Committees and Working Groups. As a Trustee I have been a member of the Governance and Finance Sub Committees and the Strategic Development Working Group. I chaired the ICT Sub Committee with strategic responsibility for Beacon, the Trust supported membership system. Now with the commitment to upgrade Beacon that work has been taken on by a Beacon Working Group. As part of the strategic development of the Trust I am chairing the Raising the Profile Working Group. We are an organisation of approaching half a million retired people in the UK and we are still practically unknown outside of our own circles. The U3A is a pathway into a healthy active retirement and we want to share this with the wider population.

The U3A movement has grown steadily over the years. Membership has grown by an average of 5.8% in the UK over the past six years. Somewhat faster in Scotland at an average of 10% per annum in the same period. But we are still a tiny percentage of the overall UK membership and of the population of over 65 year olds in Scotland. So still work to be done to share with others what we have discovered in the U3A.

But my time finishes at the Conference and AGM in Nottingham in August.



So the process of electing a new Trustee begins again in April. All U3As in Scotland will receive nomination papers by the end of April. Nominations must be returned by the end of May and then ballot papers will be sent during June. Under the new Articles I am permitted to stand for election for a further two yearly periods. But I have decided it is too much of a good thing!

The field is open for a new Trustee for Scotland. The candidate must be a member of a U3A in Scotland. They must also be nominated or seconded by a U3A to which they are a member. Every U3A in Scotland will have an opportunity to vote if there is more than one candidate. Each candidate is asked to produce a statement which is circulated with the voting papers. The number of votes are proportional to the number of members as laid out in the Articles of Association. Up to 200 = 1 vote, 2001 to 500 = 2 votes, 501 to 1000 = 3 votes, 1001 to 2000 = 4 votes, from 2001 to 3000 = 5 votes, over 3001 = 6 votes. Only one U3A in the whole of the UK has more than 3000 members, Sheffield. How do they manage?

I can only encourage people to put their names forward. Trustees are expected to serve on the Board for three years, with the possibility of standing again for a further two successive years. I am more than happy to explain what is involved to anyone considering standing. I can only wish the candidates well and thank you all in Scotland for the support you have shown me.

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Finally a warm welcome to our three new U3As, Kinross-shire U3A, Duns and District U3A and Dingwall and District U3A. This is a great movement, we wish you every success.

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## Raising the Profile in the Scottish Parliament



The last week in January saw the U3A setting up a stall in The Scottish Parliament for a three day exhibition. This was all part of the strategic campaign being organised by The Third Age Trust to raise the profile of the U3A movement. The U3A movement makes a massive contribution to the well-being and active retirement of tens of thousands of people. Yet we constantly hear the refrain 'U3A what's that?'

It was essential that we presented a uniquely Scottish perspective. So all the materials used were prepared specially for the stand. Scottish members were depicted undertaking U3A activities in Scotland with quotes from Scottish members.

Before the exhibition many U3As wrote to their MSPs inviting them to attend the stall. And they came in much greater numbers than we could have hoped for. 53 MSPs visited the stand.. Including Ministers and their staff. We even got a mention in the Chamber from Christina McKelvie, The Minister for Older People and Equalities. Tweeting was the order of the day with Social Media awash with MSPs tweeting their support for the U3A.

Helping out on the stand were Ann Keating, Vice Chair of Edinburgh U3A. Kath Payne, Chair of The U3A in Scotland, Pam Jones, recently retired Chair of the Trust, Andrew Wilson from Four Border Abbeys U3A and Allana Dymock from Paisley and District U3A.



MSPs were encouraged to take the short quiz about the U3A. All the answers were given somewhere on the stand but many MSPs needed prompting. Pictured here taking the quiz are Roseanna Cunningham MSP, our sponsor and Shona Robison MSP under the invigilating eye of your truly.

A few had heard of us but many had not and all were very impressed with what we do. There are many follow up actions now, particularly with those MSPs who said they could help with getting a U3A started in their part of the world.

A short rolling picture show with quotes was produced for the stand in mp4 format. A copy can be downloaded from the following URL.

[https://www.dropbox.com/preview/Public/Isupport-U3A%20\(24-1-2019\)%20\(1\).mp4?role=personal](https://www.dropbox.com/preview/Public/Isupport-U3A%20(24-1-2019)%20(1).mp4?role=personal)

Copy and paste into your browser and it will open up the slide show which can be downloaded for local use.

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## Other News

### *Get Creative*

This huge BBC backed national celebration of creativity aims to give everyone the chance to get actively involved in a creative event in their local area.

From **Saturday 11th – Sunday 19th May 2019** hundreds of organisations and community groups will be putting on events to help people to get creative. This is an excellent platform for U3As in all parts of Scotland to promote what they do and take part in this National Festival.



You can find more about the Festival by visiting their website <https://getcreativeuk.com/> and download the planning toolkit. Every U3A event needs to be locally organised and registered with Get Creative.

But we also want to promote the U3A involvement with the Festival as part of the programme of Raising the Profile of the U3A. So, if you are thinking about staging a local event please register your interest with the National Office by visiting [www.u3a.org.uk/contact](http://www.u3a.org.uk/contact) and clicking on the Get Creative link. We will share ideas and news of activities across the movement as we make progress towards a national showing of or U3A creative activities. So please consider staging an event. Just ask your creative groups.

This year Get Creative is collaborating with Luminate: Scotland's creative ageing organisation celebrating creativity as we age. <https://www.luminatescotland.org/>

### *Edinburgh University Language Project*



The call for volunteers to the Edinburgh University Language project was a great success. 115 U3A members registered interest. Edinburgh University researchers were delighted. They held two meetings in Edinburgh with interested members. The first course is now running in Edinburgh. A Spanish language course has started running for two hour periods, three days a

week for four weeks. Further courses are being considered but will need sufficiently many U3A members to make them viable. The courses are being run by the partner organisation Lingo Flamingo, who specialise in teaching language skills to older people.

### *Trading Standards Shared Learning Project*

Unfortunately the Trading Standards Energy Scam SLP has had to be postponed, perhaps indefinitely. The TS Scotland project officer involved has had to take long term

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leave of absence to care for her seriously ill parents. No replacement is available to take her place.

## Red Squirrel Watch

The Trust was recently contacted by Neil O'Donnell, Administrator for Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels with an appeal for help from our members. This is a project organised by The Scottish Wildlife Trust

Neil is appealing for help from U3A members in the campaign to save the native red squirrels from the invasive grey squirrels. The project areas are Aberdeenshire, the Central Lowlands, Tayside, the Scottish Borders, and Dumfries and Galloway. Neil suggests several ways that members could help.



There's a few things you could help –

- Asking your U3As to report their squirrel sightings via our hub.
- Promoting our volunteering opportunities.
- Joint events.
- We can provide speakers to the U3As in our project areas (see map <https://scottishsquirrels.org.uk/network-directory/> ).
- We have a few volunteer squirrel networks popping up in the South of Scotland (D&G/Borders) that people can get involved with and are looking to set up more in our project areas. Current networks can be found here - <https://scottishsquirrels.org.uk/network-directory/> .

There is an opportunity here for individual member participation or for a new interest group, if you haven't already got one.

## Institute of Civil Engineers



If you are looking for speakers for your open meetings why not contact the ICE. The Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) is reaching out to the wider community to explain how civil engineers transform lives for the better and safeguard the future through the Café 200 initiative. This is a programme of engineering talks to groups to widen the exposure to the public - and society as a whole. The ICE want to explain why civil engineers are important and how they are doing their bit to make the modern world work.

The ICE have members all over Scotland willing to give talks if any U3A would like to host a talk, please contact the ICE at [scotland@ice.org.uk](mailto:scotland@ice.org.uk).

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## *Finally*

Don't forget to keep checking out The U3A in Scotland Website for news and notification of events. <https://u3asites.org.uk/scotland/home>

Particularly the next Assembly in Livingston on March 25<sup>th</sup> and the Summer School next year in Stirling.

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Thank you for your time. I can be contacted on any of the above, or any other Trust or U3A matter on:-

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Phone 01577 864183 or 07504 898090

Or via the National Website or U3A in Scotland Website

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Ed Link,

Trustee for Scotland



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