

CHAIR'S REPORT FOR THE U3A AGM JUNE 27TH 2023

Firstly, I would like to thank you all for your continued support and enthusiasm throughout this 10th year of our Shipston and Area u3a. Ten years is a milestone worth celebrating indeed, especially taking into account the effects of Lockdowns and the resulting restrictions of Covid.

During this year our Membership has continued to increase steadily and currently stands at 376. Many of our Members took the opportunity on Renewals and Open Day in March to renew their membership in person, and importantly 23 New members joined. There are plans to increase publicity during the coming year and hopefully we may reach close to our pre-covid membership of 400 plus. Ideas for this initiative would be very welcome.

The numbers attending the Monthly Meetings on a Tuesday afternoon continues to grow and averages around 50 to 60, even reaching 100 on one occasion! The number of visitors to the meetings averages around 17 to 20 each month. I would like to thank Jean Olsson for her work organising the Speakers' Programme. We have enjoyed hearing about a wide variety of subjects over the year. The Edge Hill Light Railway, Shackleton's Journey to the North Pole and The Transportation to Australia of Moses Dixon (a local boy from Cherington) to name but a few. If you haven't yet experienced a Monthly Meeting I recommend you come along to the Townsend Hall on the 4th Tuesday of the month and enjoy the opportunity not only to hear a good Speaker but to meet friends, make new ones and chat over a cup of tea and biscuits!

On 6th December last year it was our Christmas Party. Around 100 members attended and everyone had a really good time. For the first time we used outside Caterers to provide a delicious variety of Party Food which was much appreciated. Entertainment was provided by Anne Hume and Peter Le Breuilly. They read a selection of humorous Christmas readings which were greatly enjoyed. Geoff Olsson provided an array of quizzes and puzzles to keep each Table busy throughout the afternoon. The Party ended with the reading of the Quiz answersmost important, and the draw of the ever popular Raffle. Many thanks to all those who contributed in any way to the success of the afternoon.

Our annual u3a Membership Renewals and Open Day was held on 28th March and despite the weather over 120 people attended. There was a happy, friendly buzz throughout the day as Members and Visitors chatted over coffee or tea and enjoyed walking round the Hall discovering what the 29 Groups represented had to offer. The displays were wonderful, giving not only information but adding colour and interest to attract new Members to the Groups. The diversity of our Groups was evident not only in the displays but in the active participation of Members in activities ranging from Table Tennis to Bridge to Scrabble and the ever-popular wine-tasting. My thanks to Jenny Shepperd, our Interest Groups' Co-ordinator and to all Group Leaders and members who worked so hard and so enthusiastically to make the day such a success.

A full list of our Groups is available on our Website. If you don't already belong to a Group have a go, join oneafter all you now have 37 to choose from! Two new Groups have been formed since our last AGM; Photography and a second Book Club, 'the u3a Borrowers'

My thanks to Jenny also for her ongoing work throughout the year to enable existing Groups to function and to facilitate the formation of New Groups. Enormous thanks to our existing Group Leaders for all the work they do throughout the year to keep our Groups thriving. If you have any ideas for new Groups or would like to volunteer as leader of a Group I'm sure Jenny would be very pleased to hear from you. Finding new Group Leaders or replacing those who move away is always a

challenge but they are vital if our Groups are to flourish and increase, they are the 'life-blood' of our u3a...**no Leaders, no u3a**

I am very grateful to John Keayes who took over as Secretary in September 2022 following the resignation Robin Furneaux. I would like to pay tribute to Robin for his loyalty and for the great contribution he made during his years as Secretary particularly through Lockdowns and beyond. I would like our thanks to Robin to be recorded in the Minutes of this Meeting.

A very special 'thank you' to Therese Woodward, Jackie Finlay and Helen Pendery as they step down from the Committee this year. They have each made a tremendous contribution to our Shipston u3a over the years and will be greatly missed; their loyalty, dedication and skills are evident in so many ways and very much appreciated.

It is always a challenge to recruit new members to our Committee. As with Group Leaders they are **vital to the continuation of our u3a in Shipston**. If you are interested in joining the Committee as a co-opted Member we would be very happy to hear from you.

I would like to end this Report by personally thanking my fellow Committee Members for their hard work, support, patience and encouragement throughout this year. I wish the new Committee every success as it moves forward into 2024 with new vision and new energy.

Jean Le Breuilly (Chair SOSAu3a)