

## **CHAIR'S REPORT FOR THE AGM ON 27<sup>th</sup> November, 2023**

2023 has been a more stable year for the Committee, with the planned changes to the Constitution being formalised in March. The result of which saw the Forum Membership expand to include SCN with two representatives and a second Surrey representative. All were welcomed, and I look forward to the continuing input from these new Committee members.

Approaches have been made to ES&BN and WSN who wish to join, but are still seeking representatives. Current changes in the ES&BN will require a fresh look at the Sussex Network scene as far as the Forum is concerned. NE Hants & SE Surrey are represented by virtue of the second Surrey representative being the Chair of that Network. SW Hants Network have been invited to join the Forum, but have not done so as yet.

The main task for the Forum this year has been the 2023 Summer School (SS). 2023 was a vital period as the new SS team were formed at the end of 2022, and had to pick up the complex booking arrangements and Tutor requirements from the previous team.

I am delighted to report that the 2023 SS was a very successful and enjoyable experience for all the 154 course attendees and the 11 Tutors. We saw many of our long-standing members from all over the country, and many members attending for the first time. There were some last-minute course changes necessitated by incapacity of a tutor, on the day before the SS commenced, which presented the team with quite a challenge. More details will be found in the SS report. The whole team deserve hearty congratulations for maintaining a respected and much enjoyed facility for u3a members. My abiding memory (having attended as a student) was watching the clear enjoyment of the u3a members as they chatted over meals, coffee etc. I feel that the very essence of "learn, laugh and live" was there for all to see. The tutors are essential to the success of the SS, and I am in awe at the amount of preparation that they undertake to ensure their subject is informative, enjoyable and presented in a style to suit the varied knowledge of those attending. They are stalwarts of the SS and I extend sincere thanks for all their hard work. As always, there are things which can be improved, and the team held a face-to-face review last month, where in an open and honest meeting, they were able to identify points for change for 2024 SS.

The Committee were pleased to note that the SS team covered all costs for the 2023 SS, with a very small surplus going into our reserves. The Treasurers report will explain these matters further, and I want to again assure you that the Forum Trustees will manage our reserves within u3a guidelines and with care and consideration as we move forward, recognising that these monies are derived from SS u3a members.

I wish to thank the Committee and the Regional Trustee, Susie Berry, for their input and support during the year and look forward to working with them as we move into 2024. A special thank you for Richard Teare, our Treasurer, who oversaw the planning and management with the new SS 23 team.

David Ashton, Chair

9<sup>th</sup> November, 2023