

AGM 2024 - CHAIR'S REPORT

Firstly, thanks to the Church for letting us use their building, and to Angel and his wife for their help in preparing the Hall for us.

At the end of 2023 we had 140 members, but sadly a few missing, through illness, moving away, or too fragile to now come and join us. We had 16 new members who joined. We hope they have enjoyed being with us.

We have 100 paid up members for this year so far. 5 have been new members since January. Our weekly average since January has been 41 but we hope the numbers will continue to rise.

We really do need some other members to come forward as Group Leaders or on the Committee and help our branch move on into the future. If you feel you can help in any way, please speak to me.

I would like to thank Chris & Diane for their work as Group Co-ordinator, and the Group Leaders for continuing to lead our Study Groups. A new Gardening Group is scheduled to start in March. The Updated Study Group Booklet has been sent to you all. If anyone is interested in joining, starting, or suggesting a possible group please speak to Diane and we will help you as much as possible.

A big thank you to Peter Norman who has continued the task of writing and publishing the Newsletter editions. Hopefully, the group leaders will send him their reports. The Spring copy will be out soon. Thanks Peter.

Thanks to Anne for organising a Quiz for us and to Mavis who organised an Auction. Thanks to Kay and again to Anne for organising the Raffle at our Christmas Lunch which earned us £63!

Thank you to those groups who have organised a Display Board for our meetings, Art Appreciation 1, Art Appreciation 2, Wine tasting 2, Photography, Knit and Natter and Discussion, Arts and Crafts. Hopefully, some of the other groups will offer to do one soon. Also, any groups who are able to do a presentation for future meetings please speak to Barbara Cohen.

Thank you, **Terri and Barbara** for organising our meeting speakers. It is becoming harder and harder to find speakers we can afford given the lower weekly attendance numbers and I know that our Programme Co-ordinators have put in an immense amount of effort phoning and emailing possible Speakers only to find that we cannot afford the £140+ that many of them

would cost us including Travel Expenses. However, we certainly have had some very interesting and varied programme over 2023.

Our Open Day on October 17th 2023 on the theme of “Nature” was a great success attracting 6 new member enquiries of which 4 eventually joined. The October 2024 theme is “**Sea and Seaside**” – so please get your thinking caps on!

Thanks to Betty for organising our Summer and Christmas Lunches at Affinity in Chalkwell Park. The 41 members who attended at Christmas seemed to enjoy themselves.

To the Committee I have to say an enormous thank you for their support and time. Also, to our Officers –

To our Membership Secretary Mike Lamb who puts in a lot of conscientious work behind the scenes updating the slides for each weekly meeting, keeping our website up-to-date, managing our membership lists, sending out emails to those members who are listed with emails and printing labels for our Postal Register – keeps you out of trouble, anyway eh, Mike?

To our Treasurer Anne Sorrell who manages the weekly pay-ins at Metro Bank, tracks income and expenditure throughout the year (*where is that blinking receipt!??*) and draws up the necessary Financial Accounts that allow us to continue operating as a *bona fide* Charity;

To Lois for standing in for me as Vice Chair when I am off “gallivanting” and for helping at the Welcome Desk pretty much every week;

Thanks to Kay for ensuring we have refreshments at the meetings and helping out at the Welcome Desk pretty much every week.

Thanks also to those who are always willing to help out in any way when needed, especially those of you who uncomplainingly accept the Fire Marshall jobs each week and with the tea making and washing up - Thank you.

Without your input we simply could not continue to operate. You help make this branch work!

Last but not least, thank you to all our members for their support, interest and enthusiasm that makes being the Chair of Southend U3A such an enjoyable task. A happy friendly group. All the best to us all in 2024 and the future.

Alan Stevenson, Chair