

Chairman's Report May 2021

It's wonderful to see so many of you attending Tenterden u3a's second Zoom AGM, thank you!

What a year! Little did I think, that when I became Chair, two years ago, that most of the meetings would be on Zoom – what was Zoom? – it was unheard of to most of us then.

However, the fact that we are thriving and have so many successful groups is down to you, the members, for participating and encouraging each other in so many different ways.

We have been fortunate to have had many engaging speakers at our Monthly Meetings. Andy Robertson made the making of the *War Horse* film sound so much fun; whilst we were riveted by Diane Davies' talk about the Mayans, which were hitherto unknown to many of us. Dr James Taylor kept us laughing looking at his postcards, and we were made aware of the amazing job that Roger Eltringham has done worldwide to promote safe anaesthesia. Grateful thanks are due to Pam Wait for helping me to select speakers.

What a pleasure it was to host Lindsay Hammond and Jeanette Kennett and learn about their Desert Island Discs. They stood in at the last minute and entertained us with their choice of music, their positive attitude during covid and their care and concern for the whole community.

I was one of the members of Tenterden who spoke on St Mildred's Community Advent Calendar about how Tenterden u3a was surviving in lockdown. Dressing up in a Christmas hat and sparkling earrings was great fun! Hopefully it gave a positive glimpse of our u3a to those who were unaware of us!

Study morning – Ready to Go to Sea; who would have thought we'd have presented this on Zoom??

Imogen Corrigan told us about *The Siren Sea*, and Dr Sheila Sweetinburgh *The Cinque Ports in the Middle Ages*. They were entertaining and informative; we learnt about piracy, food, extraordinary journeys that were made and the importance of the Kentish ports – wonderful that we could still go ahead with this on Zoom. Thanks to Lindy and Tom in particular who put in so much hard work to ensure it took place. This year's Study Morning is already being planned – watch out for details.

Sadly, we obviously haven't been able to enjoy outings or theatre trips, but fingers crossed for the future – whenever that will be!

We hope to have a Group Leader's lunch in the summer, as massive thanks are due to them. We have several new groups, all of which are proving extremely successful. Every time I log onto Culinary Challenges, there are new faces and the

recipes we sample are delicious! There is now a photography group; the Dabblers- enthusiastic painters; classic theatre; and street names. The wine group has proved so successful that we are now able to hold two viable groups. So there are some advantages to Zoom – one being that numbers are far more flexible. So grateful thanks are due to all those who have offered to lead new groups, and of course, to those who are keeping existing groups going in challenging times. Thank you very much to all those who host zoom meetings to enable our groups to continue and prosper. Thanks are due too, to all those kind members who have joined small groups to help the committee with publicity – particularly for u3a day; publication – regarding the covid diary and to Zoom or not to Zoom. We all very much appreciate your help and support.

Of course, none of this would have been possible without your most amazing committee. Suzanne has suggested several online theatre and musical events, as we haven't physically been able to attend such activities. Rosalind has dealt very efficiently with all matters financial in a challenging year and Anna has not only been an extremely conscientious Secretary but has also offered help in many extra activities. Barbara has tackled the onerous task of membership secretary with energy and dedication, ably supported by Ian. We've never had the membership list complete so quickly!

Tom has continued to offer help on Zoom and has had extra meetings with me and the monthly speaker to ensure all will run smoothly. He managed the change of Logo, guided us through the latest change in constitution and has continued to produce the Update to his usual high standard. 'Postboy' thank you, we are indebted to you.

Lindy's enthusiasm as groups co-ordinator is phenomenal and it is in no small way due to her that there are so many flourishing groups. Meanwhile, as Vice-Chair, she has continually been there to support, guide, advise and be a shoulder to cry on when times were tough.

The AGM is always a time to say 'goodbye' and for personal reasons this year Maureen and Richard are leaving the committee. Maureen initiated the Covid Journal, managed the tea rota, was in charge of accessibility and helped with membership. Richard has organised some very enjoyable outings, a First Aid course, sorted out changes to the constitution and led us through necessary policies. They have both been very supportive and we wish them well. We hope you enjoy your small tokens of our appreciation.

We welcome Gina Robertson onto our committee who has already been helping with Facebook, the u3a Day poster and other technical matters.

A plea now to all members – Tenterden u3a will not be able to continue to operate unless we have new, and dare I say – younger members come onto the committee. Last week Weald u3a were forced to close down because they had

no new officers. We shall continue to find ways to help spread the load – please do become involved, especially as we have the capacity for two more committee members.

It appears that Tenterden U3A runs effortlessly as a successful charity. However, lockdown has produced many difficulties, challenges and we've had to deal with situations hitherto unknown to us. In the past, we have always been there for all our members in person, to have a coffee, drinks, a cheery chat – no way has that been able to happen for most of the last year. So the unwavering support of the committee and you, the members, is very much appreciated. We look forward to seeing you all in person very soon.

Jenny Stevens, 20 May 2020.