

Annual Report from the Chair 2017

It hardly seems possible that 12 months have elapsed since John Tedstone retired as chairman. He and the committee left us in a very strong position with the revised Constitution and all the procedures in place for the efficient running of our U3A.

I thank him and his committee most sincerely for making life easier for me and the current committee and for being a sounding board especially in the early stages.

I am fortunate to have a very cohesive and hard working committee to whom I am indebted for their help and input. Alan Snape who is our current sole Vice Chair took the role on the understanding that he would not proceed to Chair. As a consequence we will be seeking approval at this AGM to appoint a 2nd Vice Chair and to appoint our first Honorary President.

We carried out a members' survey in July 2016 seeking views on the monthly meeting, newsletter and interest groups. Based on your feedback our aim as a committee, this year has been to:

- improve experiences at the monthly meeting
- make some slight modifications to the newsletter
- introduce workshops on topics of interest to members
- continue to meet members' needs by introducing new interest groups

We are a U3A with a strong and proactive Social Sub Committee who offer an interesting and diverse range of social activities. These events give members opportunities to meet and mix freely with other members outside the interest group model.

Our group holidays, trips or outings of a cultural nature have increased so that there is a trip somewhere most months.

It is not easy arranging coach loads of people to be at the same place at the same time, let alone the time and energy put into researching, planning and booking large numbers. We thank all those who take on the responsibility for our social and cultural events.

Our current membership is 415 which includes 29 new members. 26 members did not renew and this net increase of 3 exemplifies the gradual slowing of the rate of increase in the overall membership number.

This slowing increase of numbers means that the dropping of the catchment area has had no detrimental effect.

Many of our established members are from outside Hucknall and they make a valuable contribution to the diversity of the membership and it is anticipated any new members from outside Hucknall will only add to that diversity.

It also means that we have no need for concern about our numbers becoming too large. In common with other established U3As our initial exponential membership surge has become a manageable trickle.

Our interest groups continue to flourish and currently we have 48 groups. During the year 6 new ones were started. We are very fortunate to have had the Group Leaders with so many interests, with subjects as diverse as Knitting & Crochet and Bird Watching.

A very pleasing outcome of membership cooperation was the designing and making of the unique Interest Group 'baubles' that were hung from our Cycle Group Christmas Tree that came first in the festival and was featured in the TAT magazine.

The Newsletter has aimed to be more about what is coming up with only brief reports on what has already happened although we have not got the balance quite right yet. I must thank the members who contribute to the Newsletter and especially to Steve Lawrence who puts it all together and emails it out.

The website provides a platform for extended reports of what groups have done or are planning and we encourage you to please post items on the website as Sue Spolton our Webmaster welcomes your contributions and photographs for the Gallery. We also thank Angela Cornish for assisting Sue since December with posting items on the website.

We need to acknowledge the volunteer teams of people who are the vital part of our monthly meeting. The refreshment providers, assisters in the Board room, book stall helpers and Marguerites team of 'signers in' are all essential to the smooth running of our monthly meeting.

At this point I must also pay tribute to the staff of the Leisure Centre for their helpfulness to us and who work so hard to set the hall up and clear it afterwards. In fact I extend those thanks to the staff at all our venues with whom we have good working relationships.

One of the most important teams at our monthly meeting is the 'technical team' who put together and take down our PA system, haul large speakers round the hall, set up the stage, laptop, projector and screen and any other items our speaker may turn up with.

At the risk of sounding complacent I think our U3A is in very good shape as we move into our tenth year.

David Rose Chairman