

Chairman's report to the AGM 28th June 2017

Overall it is pleasing to report that our membership has now exceeded one thousand. It currently stands at 1093.

Groups report

The AGM marks the official end to our U3A year and once again there is much to celebrate on the groups front. We continue to maintain a very healthy ratio of groups and courses to membership numbers as new additions have far outweighed the very small number of closures. Significantly, the majority of our new groups have been 'mark two' (or three!) versions of existing groups, building depth across the breadth of our offer and demonstrating the success and reputation of their 'parent' groups. This has also helped us to address the on-going challenge of waiting lists. We have been particularly fortunate in the number of our established groups which have managed to find new leaders on the retirement of their existing ones as this year these have represented a significant proportion of our leaders. Huge thanks go, as always, to all our group leaders for their time, energy and continuing enthusiasm. They remain the secret of our success.

Events

The main event was a Short Break to Holland in April. Feedback on trip was excellent. Many have asked Lesley Titchmarsh where we are going next year already. Forty five members went on the trip.

The Anniversary Lunch in May was well received this year as before but a free drink on arrival was new and very popular with our members. The feedback indicated that all enjoyed the food.

The speaker went down very well. One hundred and sixteen members attended.

Preparations for the Volunteers Lunch next month are now well in hand and we expect eighty people to attend. This event is appreciated by those who do so much work to keep our U3A going.

It is worth noting that the lunch is prepared by a team of members, very much in keeping with our diy ethos

New Member Meetings

Since the last AGM we have held three New Member Meetings, with a total of 120+ new and prospective members attending to find out about U3A in general and about Wetherby & District U3A in particular. We explain how U3As are self-help organisations which can only exist if members volunteer for the many different roles.

Open Meetings

I'm happy to report the continued success of the monthly Open Meetings with numbers attending continuing to reach over 150 on many occasions, similar to last year.

Our Speaker Finder, Ian Wells, has again brought us some very interesting, amusing speakers from a wide range of professions and careers with the visit of Harry Gration earlier in the year perhaps being the highlight. The feedback was very good and so we do hope to try to secure another somewhat higher profile speaker next year and so we may need to look at managing numbers again. Thanks are due to the team of volunteers who provide tea and coffee as well as setting up and taking down the tables and chairs, meet and greet everyone at the door and help to get you all to a seat and look after the audio/visual system.

For the second year we took our December Showcase Celebration to the Engine Shed. Feedback was again good. We do intend that this will be an annual event at this venue.

Communications 2017

The communications team continues to ensure the website is up to date, that Newsletters and Monthly Memos are produced, all of which represent the character of Wetherby & District U3A. Thanks go therefore to Alan Pengilley, Joyce Bale, Kath Tweddle and to Roger Hocking our webmaster.

We send regular articles and photographs to Third Age Matters magazine which reflect some of our interesting activities and milestones.

We continue to hold New Member Meetings 3 times a year, which explain the ethos of U3A and are a source of volunteers and suggestions for new groups.

We have continued to build a presence in the wider Wetherby community helped by our regular feature in the Wetherby News based on Caroline Green's entertaining and insightful reporting of her visits to a cross-section of our activities. Participation in two community 'showcase' events for local organisations in September 2016 and April 2017, one of them focussing specifically on local learning opportunities, has also raised our profile. Finally, as part of the regional U3A community, our folk dancers entertained and our artists and photographers impressed visitors to the very successful 'Summer Showcase' organised last summer by the U3A Yorkshire and the Humber Region and held at Askham Bryan College. This was a perfect opportunity to compare notes with other U3As and generate more ideas for our future programme.

Mike Green

Chairman