

## **Chairman's Report 2021**

At this point in the proceedings, the Chairman usually presents a resume of all the good things that have happened in our u3a over the last twelve months.

I am now coming to the end of my time as Chairman which unfortunately has been dominated by the dreaded COVID and with no face to face activities taking place for almost eighteen months, this report will be short and sweet.

Although activities had been curtailed, efforts were made to maintain communication with members with group meetings via Zoom and with much greater use of emails, Facebook and the web page.

The communications committee also produced an enews document to replace the normal magazine which was published on the web site with a hard copy being posted to those members without an email address and I would like to thank those concerned for their efforts.

Making arrangements for the future proved to be a very frustrating exercise, for as plans were developed, either the rules were changed or lockdown was reimposed and we had to start again.

Planning became more realistic when the "Boris Roadmap" was announced which set out criteria under which life could slowly return to normal as conditions were met.

This enabled us to formulate a plan that was robust enough to be modified as changes to rules occurred, and it is this plan that has been followed over the past few weeks and has enabled group activities to slowly restart.

The first big test for the plan was the introduction of New Horizons at Aughton Village Hall on July 22<sup>nd</sup>, three days after the final restrictions were lifted. We did not know how members would react to the venue for Horizons or to meeting in large numbers and as to how many would attend was an unknown factor.

On the day, the hall was set up to provide distancing. Doors and windows were opened to provide plenty of ventilation. Members were advised that it was personal choice with regard to mask wearing, and in the end, there was a good, if nervous attendance in excess of seventy members.

As to the future: with the majority of groups opting to restart face to face meetings from September onwards, the hope is that all of our members will return in force. We will also spread the u3a message to the wider community and welcome new members, many of whom may have been made redundant or put onto part time work as a result of COVID and would benefit from the comradery and friendship we offer at the Aughton & Ormskirk u3a.

Regarding the future, Derrick will shortly be giving his treasurer's report. Prior to this AGM, Derrick presented a summary of our financial position to the Management Committee.

That committee agreed Derrick's assertion that we need to change the way in which activities are funded .

He presented various options.

The option of each group setting a charge that ensures participants cover the cost of hiring the room was accepted.

Derrick will expand on this.

Finally, I would like to thank all committee members and trustees who have helped me as Chairman during these uncertain times. It has been very frustrating due to the circumstances we found ourselves in, but also very rewarding especially when people strive together in order to further the future for our great u3a.

I would urge anyone who has an interest in ensuring the longevity and successful progression of our u3a to step forward and volunteer for committee or group leader roles. New ideas and innovations are always required in order for any organisation to flourish and we are no exception.