

SECRETARY'S ANNUAL REPORT

June, 2016 saw major changes to the U3A Management Structure with the inauguration of a Body of seven Trustees, four of whom were elected at our AGM on 2nd June 2016 and three, drawn from the Management Committee officers:- Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. The Trustees are legally responsible for the activities of the U3A and their primary roles are to carry out the requirements of Charity Law and delegate the day to day management of the U3A to the Management Committee. The first meeting of the new Trustees on 18th July, 2016 saw the election of the first Chairman. The Trustees have met four times since. It has now been agreed that it should meet every quarter.

There were five new members elected onto the Management Committee. At its first meeting on Tuesday 21st June, 2016, a Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Secretary, Minutes Secretary and four sub-committee Chairs were elected. The main Committee continues to meet on the third Tuesday of every month. Further details of all Committee Members and contact details can be found on the Website and in the Magazine.

Membership numbers have been growing steadily during the year and are now at 1992. A new PayPal System has been implemented for renewal of subscriptions which will ease the workload of the Membership Team and make life a little easier for members who cannot always get to Horizons on Thursday mornings. In addition communication between members has been taken to a new level with the introduction and widening usage of emails using the Beacon Membership System.

It has been a very successful year with a range of social functions and events, the majority of which have been well supported and enjoyed by those attending. Early in the year the Groups' Support Sub-Committee organised a New Members' Afternoon Tea and a Group Leaders' Social meeting, both were very well received. It's a testament to their hard work that we now have over a hundred groups and rising! A mention here of the valuable and ceaseless work done by Group Leaders, Co-ordinators and Contacts who work together within their Groups to share their knowledge and experience and are the Lifeblood of our Organisation. They deserve all our support and thanks for making our U3A a place of learning, fun and friendship. Our thanks to you All.

And who can forget the superb Christmas Lunch at the Ministry Centre in December organised by the Social Committee. I overheard a new member at the end of the day say "I didn't expect it to be this good I will certainly come again next year", so be warned, and book early! We have the Summer Social to look forward to on Saturday, 1st July, a hot buffet supper and a Barn & Country Dance. Also watch out for our U3A Diaries, they will be on sale at Horizons later in the year. Here I would like to add a sincere thank you to all the volunteers who help make the weekly meeting at Horizons so successful. They turn up every week and just get on with it. You do a great job and all the work you do is much appreciated, we couldn't function without you.

Good communication plays a big part in the success of our U3A and the Communication Sub-Committee have been very hard at work producing a quarterly magazine, keeping us well informed and up to date on the Website and on the E-newsletter, the latter two, evolving all the time and becoming great assets. Lesser known, perhaps, is a general Facebook page we can access as well as separate ones set up by Groups?

We are very lucky at the moment to have such a strong Speaker-meeting team. It can be a hard job trying to find new speakers and the team do a great job presenting such a variety of topics and entertainment for us to enjoy, including some from our own very talented members! Well done too on introducing guests from local organisations to Horizons. I am sure the information gleaned by those members present will be both enlightening and helpful.

The Finance and Resources Sub-Committee has been breaking new ground with the Beacon Accounting System, the Reports it produces has certainly made a big impact on the members of both Committees. You will be able to judge these results for yourself when you view the Annual Accounts.

This year we are trying a new approach to our AGM by enabling everyone with an email address to access the Agenda and papers through a Website Link. I hope you will take the opportunity to view the information available before the meeting.

Finally, thanks must go to all the members of both Committees for all the hard work they do on your behalf and I would also like to add my own thanks for all the help and support they have given me over the last year.

It struck me quite forcefully whilst writing this Report that the one thing that stands out more than anything else is the amount of Teamwork there is in all areas of our Organisation. With so many people working together how can we fail to continue going from strength to strength and we can all be proud that we are part of such a worthwhile venture that brings so much pleasure, friendship and activities to enhance so many peoples' lives.

Linda Burden, Honorary Secretary