

## SECRETARY'S ANNUAL REPORT- JUNE 2018

What a hectic year it's been for our Committees. It was the year we appointed our first Honorary Life President, formed new Working Parties to comply with our legal responsibilities, and agreed at our October Management Committee Meeting to offer free tea and coffee at our Thursday Horizons coffee morning. The Trustees will also be putting before the AGM a change to the object clause in the Constitution to bring it up to date and to comply with recent legislation relating to Charities and Companies. Two Trustees attended a Workshop in Birmingham on Legal issues relating to U3As, the fact that they had to be up at 4.30 to catch the first train out of Ormskirk didn't deter their stoicism.

The year started with four new members being elected to the Management Committee and a new Chairman and Vice-Chairman at the helm and it was agreed that this Committee would meet six times during the year. But, alas on a sad note three colleagues on the Trustees and four on the Management Committee will be standing down at the AGM. They have all done a sterling job and they will be very much missed. However knowing the commitment they have all shown to our U3A, I don't think we have seen the last of them.

At the time of writing the number of members stand at 1676 with 317 members not yet renewed. Online renewals has proven popular this year - to date 770 members have renewed online. Credit/debit card payments at Horizon was introduced this year and so far 120 members have joined using this method of payment. At present we have eighteen members over the age of 90, 17 renewals and one new member.

The Horizons team continue to do a great job as usual although more people are needed to help set out the rooms for the coffee mornings. So if you have any free time on a Thursday morning please go up and help the very stretched and hard-working team. I introduced a number of friends to Horizons so they could join up and the members at the Welcoming desk looked after them and made them feel very welcome as did the Membership team who were very thoughtful and efficient. I felt very proud to be a member of such a wonderful organisation.

Our four Sub-Committees have all been working extremely hard. Finance and Resources have put out a number of documents from a Policy on cash reserves

to a mammoth Finance Manual. They also produce comprehensive monthly accounts and this year they have surpassed all expectations by getting the Annual Year End Accounts out in record time, well before the AGM. A great team effort. Congratulations. Less well known is the work they do to manage and maintain all the equipment used by all the members from projectors, photocopying machines to microphones and everything else in between. They also have to consider applications from members to purchase items needed for the smooth running of their groups.

The Learning and Group Support, is another active group, producing a Group Leaders' Handbook, and in the pipeline, a Welcome Pack for all new members. Buying Audio Systems to assist groups in getting the most out of the commentaries of the guides and leaders who conduct the outings and tours around historic sites and on coach tours. Hosting a Group Leaders' social evening and arranging First Aid training, something that will be ongoing; being available to assist group leaders in running or launching new groups and courses. Such a diverse workload.

An organisation is only as good as its communication network and our U3A is extremely fortunate that it has such a diverse choice of options to communicate with one another and a team of dedicated and skilled members who make up the Communications Sub-Committee constantly looking for ways to update the various options in order to enhance our experiences. So whether you want to read about the various activities available or reviews on the latest production you will find it all in the Magazine. You can also use the website or enews to spread the word on current events or try out our Facebook page. The choice is yours.

A Group that always seems to be involved in putting on entertainments and events is the Social Sub-Committee. Their year started in July with country dancing and a hot pot supper at the Summer social, followed by the Christmas Lunch, another successful event which sold out in record time. This got off to a good start with a sherry reception, a superb meal as always and dancing to a duo 'Panache'. An extremely good do!! Can't wait until next year. And, we have the Summer Social on Friday 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2018 at the Aughton Village Hall to look forward to as well as the ongoing Sunday Socials which take place at regular intervals.

This is certainly a year for Working Parties. It was decided to hold an event to celebrate the fifteenth birthday and the tenth Anniversary of the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service of our U3A and a working party was formed early last year to put together a U3A Anniversary Celebration. This was held on the 19<sup>th</sup> May 2018 in the Ministry Centre. It was a very successful occasion and as expected it was a sell-out. Drinks were served on arrival as were a delicious array of canapes throughout the evening. The team worked hard to put the evening together and thanks go to all involved.

The Health and Safety Working Party presented an excellent first Report at our January meeting and they have continued, among other things, to review premises and Group activities, issue individual First Aid Kits and are now looking into creating a webpage. Quite a diverse range of activities – not bad for what was once assumed to be such a 'dry' topic!!

Well after a great deal of talking about it we finally got around to it in July this year. Archiving. A Project Team was set up, objectives identified and we are slowly working our way through fifteen years of documents and data. Who knows one day our grandchildren may be able to read about the pioneering days of the good ol' Aughton & Ormskirk U3A.

In April a new group emerged, GDPR – The General Data Protection Regulation. This effectively updates the Data Protection Act, 1998 and comes into effect on 25<sup>th</sup> May, 2018. GDPR is Law, not a recommendation and applies to large companies and small local groups and to all of us. It is likely to be rigorously enforced. This Working Party is looking into how GDPR affects our U3A, how to keep data secure and the rights of members. The Group are busy putting together a number of documents and these will be put onto the Website once they have been approved by the Management Committee. A significant difference is guidance recommended by National Office that U3As use contract as the main lawful basis for communicating with their membership.

The Speaker team have kept us enthralled this year with a variety of topics, from a juggling mathematician, a retired journalist and former Art Critic on the Liverpool Echo, the superb Concert Pianist Andrew Wilde who entertained us in November to the poignant story of Yvonne as she told us about her mother's wartime experiences. The Speaker Secretary will be retiring this year, it would

be such a shame to lose this well established and well-loved monthly event. Let's hope it won't come to that and someone will step into the breach.

To sum up our wonderful U3A, Teamwork, diversity and such talented members, certainly, an Organisation we can all be proud of.