

I am very pleased to present this report highlighting some of the activities that we have enjoyed over the last year.

I want to begin by saying that being Chair again for the past year has been both a privilege and, as Brian said a year ago, – mostly! – a pleasure. Very occasionally things can become a bit hectic and even slightly stressful but I do believe that is good for us and helps to keep body and brain active. I am enormously grateful to those who have served on the Committee with me, for all their work and support. We have had a full complement of 12 members for most of the year with a healthy mix of experience and newer members. I feel very confident that I am leaving the u3a in very good hands.

Current Committee:

Jean Hogg Chair

Jane Zdanowski Vice-Chair

Nadina Lincoln Secretary

Jan Clarke-Humphries Treasurer

Brian Platts Groups Coordinator

Judy Fessey Assistant Groups Coordinator

Richard Peacock Website

Tony Mellor Publicity

Annabel Kingsbury Welfare

Michele Bennett Beacon manager

Frank Sheehan Committee member

Martin Stott Committee member

Our Interest groups are at the heart of everything we do. In Southwell u3a we have a wonderful range of relatively academic groups through to much lighter, and from physically active to those that mostly involve discussions. At the last count we had 73 groups and I also want to thank all those members, not just the named leader, who help to organise them. There are many more than 73 people involved, so impossible to acknowledge them all by name! Over the last year it has been fantastic to have fairly new members coming forward with suggestions for groups they would like to start:

Ten new groups were started, on topics from A cappella and Art & design since 1850, to Pickleball and Psychology, and more. In addition, there has been another programme of short courses and workshops, including an Introduction to the Solar System, a tour of Roman Britain, Archery and fire protection.

Two meetings have been held for Group leaders including a thank you lunch and a chance to chat to others and hear updates, and a new initiative started with a newsletter specifically for Group Leaders. Thank you to Brian and Judy for all the support they have given to groups this year.

There are many other volunteers who help to keep our u3a as successful and vibrant as it is. I am aware that it is not possible to mention everyone who contributes but that does not mean that your help is not appreciated. We can do nothing without sound finances and Jan will be giving you a detailed report shortly. We are in a very secure position which is why we are proposing to reduce the membership subscription for the coming year. Jan is ably supported by Sue Baines, who manages the Social account and John Langley who manages the group finances. Behind the scenes, Nadina does a quietly efficient job as secretary, keeping us all on the straight and narrow, as well as fully informed. The membership team, led by Richmond Kingsbury, do a vital and time-consuming job, especially at renewal time. Newslines appear every month with information about many of our activities, edited by Anne Greenaway, helped by Rik Ludlow (who also helps with the Website and Beacon!). Printed copies need to be collected and hand delivered, by other volunteers.

At our regular monthly meetings we have welcomers, members serving refreshments, our Speaker finder, John Cook, and technical whizz Andrew Hills, and also John Mason, who has taken on the job of ensuring that everything is in place at the Leisure Centre. Not always an easy task! I want to thank them too for all they continue to do. Our monthly meetings continue to be popular with an eclectic and fascinating range of speakers.

Other groups of volunteers include our Membership and Marketing, and the Social and Trips Committees. Publicity will always be important as new members are needed to bring new energy and enthusiasm, and we also need to retain our existing members by remaining relevant and interesting. It is amazing how many people, even here in Southwell, still have not heard of us in spite of articles in the Bramley and other local newssheets, every month. But knowledge and awareness continue to grow, helped by occasions when we have distributed leaflets on the market and outside the Co-op. We now have an outward facing Facebook page, that is becoming increasingly popular and which enables us to reach a younger audience. These activities will be repeated next year, and in September we will once more have a display of photographs in the library.

The website is also a vital part of our publicity as well as being useful for members. It is a long established, fundamental element of Southwell u3a, attracting new members as well as providing information about our existing groups and planned activities. A decision was made by the Committee earlier this year to move to a new platform. Siteworks has been developed specifically for u3as and that will be helpful whenever there is a change of webmaster, as support will be available. We are enormously grateful to Steve Dickman for the hours of work he has put into creating a fantastic new website.

The Trips and Social committee have organised a number of successful events over the past year. Miriam Tate who chaired the Committee for the first few months handed over to Madeline Oliver and Rosemary Milton., and the group has continued to work hard to enhance what our u3a offers. Visits further afield have been to Castle Howard and Wentworth Woodhouse, and more locally, a quiz and a Murder Mystery evening were held, and a visit to the races and afternoon tea in Rolleston successfully organised. In addition, Roger Bennett has continued, single-handedly, to organise tickets and a coach to the classical concerts in Nottingham

In summary, I am pleased to report another very active and successful year for Southwell u3a. It is our 20th and we shall celebrate our 20th anniversary next February. We should all be proud of the difference the u3a has made to hundreds of lives in Southwell and the surrounding area.