

TRUSTEES' REPORT 2021-2022

As my time as Chair of Meopham u3a comes to a close, I have to say that our u3a has, over the last year, proved itself to be a very valuable organisation as it has continued to provide opportunities for the membership to find support and intellectual stimulus during the pandemic situation. During all of 2021 and for some of 2022 we continued to socialise via Zoom and WhatsApp and to live up to our mantra: "Laugh, Learn and Live". With the easing of restrictions it has been possible to restart our monthly meetings in the Church, albeit without refreshments in the hall after, however, this has recently been reinstated.

Meopham u3a is now in its 7th Year and I want to report on behalf of my fellow trustees.

Since our last AGM our general monthly meetings continued thanks to Zoom and to the planning of our Speaker Coordinator, Beryl Connelly, who arranged a host of exciting and interesting speakers on a wide variety of topics. While many have been glad of these monthly diversions, many have also enjoyed virtual meetings with their individual groups, thereby maintaining the link with the other members and continue to do so. This meant that members did not feel completely cut-off and provided a social and friendly contact for many.

Our website has been firmly established for some time and had been maintained by Gus and Lesley Reid to make it easy to access, interesting and informative in as many ways as possible. It has allowed for the recruitment of new members and linking us all to any news and updates from National u3a. The National u3a website is also accessible to all members and offers wide ranging news and items of interest such as training, video demonstrations and information about courses available from the whole of the UK's u3as. It is well worth having a look, a cup of tea and biscuits may be essential!

Our monthly 'Bulletin' was published throughout lockdown. With thanks to Carole Dickenson and her scores of contributors, we have had news, stories, pictures and quizzes to keep us entertained.

Remember, any one of our members can contribute to the 'Bulletin': Group Coordinators or members who have something to say that will be of interest to others.

So, what of the year ahead?

Getting together again in St John's Church is something we were looking forward to very much and now it is a reality. We are celebrating our 7th year and our u3a's survival during these difficult months. With over 60 groups currently running, offering a very varied range of activities, there is something for everyone and if there is something that you would like to do and no group currently doing it, then why not start one! Sue Bates (Groups Coordinator) will guide you through the basics.

Our membership has stayed steady which proves that the Meopham u3a is providing a worthwhile contribution to the community. I would like to thank all of the Committee members for their support during these difficult times and a special mention must go to Ann MacEwan, our retiring Secretary, Diane Fenton, (Membership Secretary, retiring) Lynda Bolton (Deputy Chair, retiring) Lesley Reid (Data and website coordinator, retiring) who have, in their respective roles, kept things up and running: Not forgetting, a special thanks to Beryl Connelly (Speaker Secretary), Linda Hall (Treasurer), Sue Bates (Groups Coordinator) for volunteering to take over other roles. They have set an example of how the membership all need to help in keeping our u3a going by joining the Committee, any member can and should take part in the steering of our u3a.

Meopham u3a is in good shape, special thanks to those who have supported us and renewed their membership, not forgetting a big 'Thank You' to the new members who have joined during the last 2+ years, so we can be looking forward to a good year ahead.

It has been a pleasure to be a member and also the Chair of this great u3a and I hope that you as a member get as much enjoyment as I do from it.

This concludes my report to you.

As our constitution states, this coming year will be my last as your Chair person, the Deputy Chair also, so please give some thought dear reader to volunteering to take on a role. Voting takes place at the AGM in July.

Lionel Patterson

Chair.