

## Report for 2022/23 from the Meopham u3a Chair

After reluctantly taking on the role of your Chair last year, I have surprized myself by actually enjoying it. For that I must thank our brilliant Committee members for their total commitment and helping make our meetings fun. Special thanks to:

Our Secretary Carole Baylis, for keeping us on the straight and narrow and managing to write such succinct and accurate minutes from our, often rambling, committee meetings.

Treasurer Linda Hall, for keeping us solvent and untangling the problems of renewing subscription payments on Beacon.

Speaker Secretary Beryl Connelly, for providing us, once again, with some excellent speakers over the year.

Membership Secretary Andrew Morgan, for his enthusiasm in publicising Meopham u3a and enrolling over 60 new members.

Group Coordinator Sue Bates will be sadly missed on the committee as she will be stepping down at the AGM. She has helped set up 12 new groups this year and has done a brilliant job at keeping group leaders motivated through her Group Leader meetings.

Vice Chair Kevin Divall, for stepping in, so ably, to cover me when I've been away on holiday.

... and last, but not least, to the other Committee members, Linda Doyle and Di Fenton, for adding their expertise and sound advice over the year.

Hopefully they've all enjoyed it as much as I have.

While I run the risk of missing someone out, I would also like to thank others who have ensured things run as smoothly as possible over the last year:

Gus Reid, our webmaster, IT and audio-visual guru, who is always on hand to sort out the myriad of problems we seem to encounter.

Carole Dickenson, for keeping us all informed through the monthly Bulletin. Please keep sending her news of your groups and other articles you think may interest the membership.

Heather Snelling, who ensures we have a team of "Meeters and Greeters" to welcome us to the monthly meetings.

Lynda Bolton, who has ensured we are all fed and watered at the end of our monthly meetings.

Hilary and Richard Blythe (Quiz Master Extraordinaire) along with the others on the new social committee for putting on a very enjoyable Cream Tea Quiz back in March.

And let's not forget your Group Leaders. A wide selection of appealing groups is vital to the success of all u3as, so we all need to give a very big vote of thanks to all our leaders for the sterling work they do for us.

Our membership number has remained solid and currently sits at 416. It would be great to hit the 500 member mark over the coming year, so please take every opportunity to tell your friends and neighbours how much you enjoy Meopham u3a. It's a "Secret too good to Keep", so why not invite someone you might think would enjoy membership along to a future monthly meeting?

I am pleased to report the start-up of no less than 12 new interest groups:  
*Meditation, Genealogy for beginners, Play Reading, Spanish, Archaeology, Art Appreciation 2, Writing, Weekend meetings, Book Group 4, Science, French Chatting, Local History.*  
Congratulations to Sue Bates and all the new group leaders.

This was also a milestone year for the UK u3a movement, having reached its 40th year. We celebrated this with a joint Christmas get together and u3a Birthday Bash at the Church in December.

As we look forward to a new u3a year there are plenty of opportunities to make 2023/24 and even more enjoyable year. However, to do that we need more people to step forward and volunteer. With over 400 members it's easy for us all to sit back safe in the knowledge that someone else will come forward. We must remember that, as strong as u3a is the UK, many clubs have closed though lack of willing volunteers. I appreciate that speaking in front of a crowd is not for everyone but there are many other ways to help. So please make it your mission this year to help out, even in a small way.

To date, we've not had anyone step forward for the following jobs:

Group Coordinator. We need someone, or even a pair to job share, to take over from Sue Bates. She said she will still be on hand to give her full support.

"Meeter and Greeter" team organiser. Once a month job at the monthly meeting, ensuring there is enough greeters to make any new member feel welcome. Heather Snelling will also be happy to advise and support whoever takes over.

Bulletin Editor. Carole Dickenson is looking to take a break from this role but will also be available to help and advise her successor. The job involves collating news items from the groups and putting it in a Word document (or similar) for circulation via email. Some basic Word Processing knowledge would be useful.

Social Committee Convenor. This involves chairing a meeting every couple of months to discuss and plan future social events. Perhaps 4 or 5 a year.

Refreshment Coordinator. This job involves ensuring that the groups looking after the refreshments for the monthly meetings have enough supplies.

Speaker Secretary. While Beryl Connelly is happy to continue in this role she has indicated that this will be her last year. She has suggested that the person taking over from her could shadow her for the next year to see what's involved. Great idea as it provides for a smooth transition.

Please email me on [chairmu3a@gmail.com](mailto:chairmu3a@gmail.com) for more information on any of these roles and I can talk you through it to enable you to decide if its right for you.

Here's looking forward to an even better u3a year over the next 12 months.

Mike Chantry June 2023