

CHAIR'S REPORT FOR AGM 16TH OCTOBER, 2024

In a previous life, when I worked (I know *'wash your mouth out Mr Chairman'*) my public speaking usually started the same way. You know how it goes *'I swear my almighty God that the evidence I shall give shall be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth'*, and in a way I am still giving evidence. This time of our U3a's last year.

Last year when I took over as Chair I mentioned two things in particular.

1. For us to be inclusive, not exclusive
2. To show enthusiasm for life in retirement

and here is how we have tried to do it over the last twelve months.

We have increased our membership to over 1,000 again and groups now include –

1. Local Explorers – who use their own transport.
2. Economy Travel – who use their bus passes.
3. I.T. Group did a limited run.
4. History Group which has just started last year and has gone from strength to strength.
5. Boules – as a summer group.
6. Canasta is a work in progress.
7. Drama Workshop also a work in progress.
8. We even explored a Motor Cycle Group but insurance made it not possible.

Members have been involved in a number of fund raising events for charity, including some of us flying with Terry our microlight flying pilot who raises money for the North West Air Ambulance.

Yet again a number of holidays have taken place and we must thank our members who organise them. I am well aware there is a lot of work involved.

The point is we continue to try new things, many of which cost very little, which is important. Can I report we now have a member on the U3a North West Region Committee. Christine, our last Chair, has been elected.

It is important to point out that all our groups are run by members and to thank them for their efforts. Without our group leaders we would fail. Can I also thank the Committee for

their efforts and make particular mention of Roger, our Treasurer, for his painstaking work in looking after our money, and Stephen Doyle who has done a great deal of work this last year in updating our website.

I started today mentioning '*evidence*'. Can I finish by telling you a little known fact. A police officer can only give evidence as an '*expert witness*' in one thing – '*drunkenness*'.

Thank you.

Stuart Kirkman (Chair)