

Chairman's report to the AGM February 2020.

2019 has been a year of a few changes in the way things have been done in our U3A.

The distribution of the monthly newsletter via e mail and Mailchimp has been successfully introduced, notwithstanding some teething difficulties which hopefully have been addressed.

Printed copies are available for those who are not able to access it on line and the "buddy" system has made sure that those needing help have got it.

As you will have read in this months newsletter there are more changes afoot, hopefully for the better. Members will now receive a smart card which will signify their entitlement to all U3A activities and will not need to be replaced each year. Renewals will be able to be effected by cheque or bank transfer. All the details have been laid out by the Treasurer in the newsletter. Hopefully this will relieve at least to some extent, the huge workload of the membership secretary at the start of each U3A year. Postage costs will also go down, leaving our finances in an improved condition so keeping subscriptions at a reasonable level. No doubt there will be further improvements in the way we do things in the future but let's cross one bridge at a time.

This year, sadly Penny Roux will be standing down from the committee having completed her tour of duty. We will miss her smiling face and willingness to go the extra mile and she will be a hard act to follow. With any luck she will be replaced and I will let you know after it has happened.

In the meantime we have a little present for Penny to show the thanks and appreciation of our U3A.

While speaking about the committee, I would like to thank them on your behalf for all the hard work they put in over the year. Much of it goes on unseen by the members but let me tell you that they work tirelessly on your behalf to make sure that your U3A runs efficiently. We mustn't forget the Group Leaders who provide the means for each group to run. Each month they arrange speakers, investigate walks etc , research music, bird walks and a multitude of other activities. Can I ask you all to give them a big round of applause as our U3A would not run without them.

There are of course one or two others who are not on the committee, nor indeed are Group Leaders but nevertheless help our U3A to run. Andy Moir being most important as our Newsletter editor and IT supremo.

The Membership survey that was mentioned has not yet come to fruition for various reasons, however it seems that some of the issues we were going to ask you about may possibly become rather superfluous. As you are no doubt aware Hamptons has been sold to the Chelmsford Islamic society and to date they have said that the facilities will still be available for the community. However at least two of the rooms in the building will be used as prayer rooms with just a small number attending. Obviously this is fine but when there are festivals those numbers will increase hugely, which will make the facilities unavailable for anybody else so it could lead to cancellations of pre booked meetings etc. I am sure they will be trying to minimise any problems for those who use the facilities but the possibility of problems is a real one.

I understand there will be further meeting with the local residents and hopefully I will receive some feedback but to date this U3A has not been approached as to how things may pan out in the future.

Alcohol usage will cease in the building, and whilst it will effect us only marginally the major effect will be on wedding, parties and dances etc.

For the Islamic people of Chelmsford and surrounding to have their own community facilities of course to be welcomed but it may be that we will have to look for an alternative meeting place within the medium term.

Getting back to more pleasant themes, do enjoy all the facilities which your U3A has to offer and why not use this New Year to try something different and if we don' provide a Group for it then form your own.

Maurice Van Mellaerts