

## **Trustees Report 2018-2019**

### **Trustees:**

Tony Natt, Chairman; Rachel Ward, Vice Chairman; Alex Nisbet, Treasurer; Andrew Williams, Business Secretary; Ian Harvey, Membership Secretary, and Jan Kidman, Groups' Co-ordinator. For this coming year Jan Kidman will step down as Groups Co-ordinator after serving the maximum 6 years on the committee.

### **Committee:**

The committee currently comprises the 6 trustees listed above. During the year, they held meetings on 7 occasions and all discussions and decisions have been minuted. Individual trustees represented our U3A at the two Cotswold Link meetings in Gloucester in October 2018 and Bromyard in March 2019. We have also held the first 2 of a series of strategy sessions during which we are looking at all angles of our U3A to determine the best way forward for 2019/20. Our finances are in very good order thanks to the excellent work of our Treasurer, Alex Nisbet, who will shortly be reporting on this in detail. Two further trustees attended a "Keeping it Legal" workshop to help us keep abreast of new social legislation and this has resulted in the introduction of new policies in the areas of Safeguarding, and Data Protection and Privacy; these new policies are all accessible on our website. Policies on Accessibility, Equality and Diversity are all work in progress and will be introduced during this coming membership year.

### **Non-committee roles:**

We must not forget the wide range of other roles undertaken by members, and the trustees would like to sincerely thank each and every one of them for the essential behind-the-scenes work which they carry out on behalf of all of us. These people include...

Judy Lloyd, Programme Secretary; Margot Wallis and Maureen Folliard, Newsletter Editors; Richard Green, Beacon Administrator; Peter Landless, Webmaster; Pauline Phillips, Publicity.

### **Membership**

As of the end of March 2019, Cirencester U3A had 789 members which is 4.5% net rise on the same time last year, well in line with the rise of National membership. Bear in mind that this is the net gain in membership; there were actually 127 new members (16.8%), the balance being people having left for various reasons. Ian Harvey, as the new Membership Secretary, has diligently kept our Beacon database up to date, and the system is now also used by more and more GLs to help run their group. Ian also organised 2 new members meetings in September and March at which the attending newcomers learnt something of the workings of the U3A as a whole plus an insight into the various groups in Cirencester U3A. It is hoped this biannual meeting helps new members think of joining groups and activities they may not have previously considered, as well as encouraging them to volunteer within our U3A.

## **Groups**

The trustees and all members must express their gratitude to the 47 different Group Leaders who organise all the week by week Groups and Events that we all enjoy attending. So far, approx 10 of these GLs have also attended the "Keeping it Legal" workshop to help improve our understanding of current social legislation at Group level. During the year, Jan Kidman, our Groups Co-ordinator, held two Group Leaders meetings for them to share information and ideas, and some GLs also attended one of the two training sessions on Beacon.

We now have 53 groups covering 41 different areas of activity. Just one group closed during the year, Pub Lunches, but four new groups were started, ie. Astronomy, Board Games, Short Cycle Rides, and Birdwatching.

All the other groups continue their great work whether it be co-operative language learning, creative work, musical endeavours, activities like walking and Tai-chi, or scientific and other knowledge studies.

## **Other Events**

**Internet Café:** Liz Dancer and Alex Nisbet continue to run the excellent and unique Internet Café every Monday afternoon at the Parish Centre. The new approach of having a different format set for each of the Mondays of the month has worked extremely well over the last 12 months, and of course, IT assistance is still on hand every week.

**Theatre:** after 13 years organising the Theatre trips, including 3 in 2019, Penny Wreford decided to take a well-earned rest and retire from the role. With huge thanks to Penny and after quite some search and discussion, a replacement, Cacilda Warriner, has agreed to take over to continue the long tradition of Cirencester U3A Theatre trips.

**Outings:** Jane Davis has organised many excellent outings for members over the past 8 years, with Highclere Castle, Westonbirt House, and Salisbury Cathedral featuring in 2018/9, plus the Annual Lunch at the Crown of Crucis in January this year. However, Jane has now decided to retire from this role and we must sincerely thank her for the many lovely days out she has given our members. Two members have joined forces to organise the next Annual Lunch, but we still need an Outings organiser if such Outings are to continue.

**Cirencester U3A Radio:** a monthly hour-long show continues to be delivered via Corinium Radio on the Internet. The programme can be accessed either live, or at any time using a link button on the Home Page of the Cirencester U3A web page.

**Walking holiday:** the Walking group organised a very successful long weekend walking over the Shropshire Hills in mid-May.

**Summer School:** many members again volunteered to help make the Summer School at the RAU Cirencester a big success, with all attendees efficiently transferred from the station and enrolled on the correct course. This earned the praise and thanks of National Office.

## **General Meetings**

These have continued on the third Tuesday of every month and are always well attended, averaging over 90 members per meeting. Judy Lloyd, our Programme Secretary, books an excellent and diverse range of speakers to keep us entertained throughout the year. At the December meeting, we turned to internal talent from five of our groups – Singing for Fun, Ukulele, Poetry Reading, Play Reading and Writing for Fun – and they all gave us an excellent and most enjoyable performance. Each month the General Meetings run smoothly because of the numerous people who generously and regularly help set up and run them, and serve tea and biscuits afterwards; may thanks to all involved, but we would always be happy to welcome other volunteers to spread the load.

## **Newsletter**

The Newsletter continues to be offered to all members 10 times a year, and this is superbly edited by Maureen Folliard and Margo Wallis. The Newsletter is our main form of communication with all of our members but it does rely on you all reading it! It is also very reliant on contributions from Group Leaders and committee members, so a more diverse contribution from all members would be very much appreciated. Increasingly Members tend to receive their Newsletter by e-mail, but a big thank you must go to those who voluntarily deliver many of the paper copies by hand to save on significant postage costs.

## **The Future**

Firstly, I am delighted to say that we have received a nomination to take over from Jan Kidman as Groups Co-ordinator, and therefore there is a quorum committee of 6 trustees nominated for this coming year. Each trustee can only spend a maximum of 3 years in any role and 6 years maximum on the committee, so there is a requirement to regularly change Trustees; we would really welcome members onto the committee to gain prior experience before taking on a role, especially as at least two roles will come up for election next year. I have mentioned the strategy sessions which have taken place and these have identified some weaknesses that we need to address and some opportunities for us to consider. The committee are committed to finalising thoughts and priorities about the next 1 to 2 years as soon as possible and the final output will be available and communicated as soon as it has been completed. Areas being considered are...Roll-out of our current Policy programme to ensure we meet all charity commission guidelines; Review potential risks involved in any of the activities we undertake; Ensure we have the best internal and external communication channels including Beacon, our newsletter, and our web-site; Ensure we have back-up for any specialist technical functions; Ensure we have a development and training programme for Group Leaders where and if necessary; Improve the retention and integration of new members into our U3A; Set up shared learning projects where members are interested. None of this will be done in a revolutionary way but with gradual evolution to ensure that, going forward, we can remain an organisation of which we can all be justifiably proud.