

Annual Report

While last years report finished with some thoughts on life after the pandemic - “Hopefully the worst is well past and we can continue our happy progress to full normality”, this year I can report on a more normal u3a operation.

We can still see some after effects of the pandemic. A few vulnerable members protect themselves with masks; some are avoiding larger meetings; and we had to take a decision mid-year to strengthen our finances after our room hire rebounded. Nevertheless, my overall message is that Dorchester and District u3a is thriving, with more Groups being enjoyed by more members than ever before.

Groups are the core of every u3a and we have an impressive set both in terms of quantity and variety. This year we added Playing Folk Music, Local History, Mah Jong to BMJA rules, Pickleball, Portraiture, Rummikub and a reawakened Wine Appreciation. In addition, Trips and Outings has been revamped and is thriving with the leadership baton passed from Anna Shapter, after many years as leader, to Libby Wood. Theatre trips is ramping up with Peter Scaife doing an excellent job of selecting shows and gauging member demand.

Of course we lost a few Groups as well, either due to our members’ changing interests or, more usually, the leader moving or retiring. We no longer have Digital Photography, Italian Beginners and Improvers. I will make special mention of Music Appreciation, a very popular Group led by Richard Searle for 16 years. Unfortunately we have not been able to find a new leader.

We now have 63 Groups, all run by members volunteering their time and expertise. I would like to thank the leaders and their helpers, not just for the Groups mentioned, but for all our 63 Groups that make our u3a what it is.

Those of us who have attended our First Monday Meetings (FMM) have enjoyed an amazing range of speakers arranged by Andy Davies. They included authors talking about their writing, a world class expert explaining everything about Spring bulbs, the history of Shire Hall, fascinating insights into multicultural society, a year in the life of our Mayor, the history of glass making and all about Age UK in Dorset. My personal highlight was our member Sir David Haslam interviewed by Andrew Webb on the topic of “What to do about our Healthcare Provision”.

We continued the practice, started as we opened up after Covid Lockdown, of making the FMM available to members via Zoom, and with very few technical glitches. We will discontinue this practice after the AGM and I would like to thank Jane Huff for managing the Zoom sessions from home and Ian Blaby and David Carden for providing support in the Hall.

One of the consequences of our success of Groups getting back to normal meetings was that our costs grew more quickly than expected, bringing the risk of running out of money, not in the current year, but in 2023-2024. At the Special General Meeting in February members supported increasing our annual subscriptions. We also made changes to attendance fees. We had been worried that we would have a considerable number of members forgetting to change their Standing orders for renewals and this did indeed require a lot of chasing. However, our concern that the changes would reduce membership did not come about and we currently have over 880 members. The Group Fayre in January and u3a Day in September were both very successful in attracting new members and we will run both again, although most new members find out about the u3a from current members.

Annual Report 2023

Having now had a full year in the chair, I more fully appreciate and really must express thanks for all the time and effort from my colleagues on the Committee. Mentioning just some of their work, Andy Davies arranges our speakers; Nick Priddle manages all our finances now thankfully with support from Kate Harre for attendance fees and Beryl Shuttleworth for Gift Aid; Peter Scaife initiates and supports all our Groups; Jane Hopwood organises the very popular Christmas lunch, u3a day and keeps attendance records; Jane Huff produces the Members' Updates, website news page and the Newsletter; At a very busy time Chris Langthorne took over processing members joining, renewing and leaving in addition to filling in on the Secretary Role; and Les Mould, after many years as Secretary, is our regional contact and general u3a procedural guru. We also have a very active Honorary President injecting ideas and challenges into our meetings.

I would especially like to thank those who will no longer be on the Committee after the AGM. Janet Kennewell performed a huge role as Membership Secretary for 9 years before stepping down in April. Mike Neely has coordinated our venue bookings for 7 years while Vivienne Allan has, amongst other responsibilities, acted as Welfare officer for an incredible 19 years. All three have made an enormous contribution to our u3a.

I make no apology for also mentioning a few of our stalwarts. Niall Simpson can be seen every FMM managing our car parking. Jean Croot and Wendy Hilton look after the FMM refreshments while Penny Blaby, Beryl Shuttleworth, Libby Wood, and Jean Holmes check members in. Ken Pickering sets out the chairs and Theresa Morton looks after the notice boards. Kelvin Huff has taken an increasing share of website maintenance while Ian Blaby continues to look after our equipment. We have a revolving list of volunteers setting out chairs and doing the Meeting and Greeting. Our volunteers keep our u3a running.

What about prospects for the coming year? I can confidently predict that members will continue to enjoy attending Groups; that they will propose a few new Groups and some will flourish. We have decided to implement the u3a's Membership Management system and, while the transition will take some effort, the result will be to improve our operation and reduce the ongoing work required. Subject to member support, we will welcome our new Committee members taking up their roles. We will also swap around some of the current Committee roles. Finally we will continue to need new volunteers. If you are not already doing so, please consider making your contribution.

Alan Hopwood, Chairman

Dorchester & District u3a

Registered Charity no. 1077305

Income & Expenditure Account for the Year ending 31st March 2023

INCOME	2022/2023	2021/2022
	£	£
Members Subs 22/23	13605.00	11323.80
Members Subs in adv.	3326.50	686.50
Donations	501.90	25.00
Group meeting fees	4586.83	00.00
Monthly meetings	706.02	00.00
HMRC – Gift Aid	814.49	841.80
Riviera Travel	2068.11	65.91
Advertising	400.00	500.00
Misc. Rent & Refunds	250.13	00.00
Sundry Income	966.35	00.00
Third Age Matters	51.10	00.00
Interest on B.B. a/c	10.01	0.50
Subtotal	27436.44	13443.51
TOTAL	27436.44	13443.51

EXPENDITURE	2022/2023	2021/2022
	£	£
Hall /Room Hire+Zoom	16735.49	9222.33
u3a Capitation & News	4873.84	3103.60
Capital Expenditure	868.49	672.02
Group Expenses	105.78	564.38
Facilities & services	474.96	515.57
Newsletters	2609.51	2075.84
Committee Expenses	287.37	310.76
Speaker fees	420.00	402.50
Refreshments (FMM/NM/GL)	50.00	53.89
u3a Network Meetings	00.00	70.00
u3a Day	12.53	380.93
Sundries	33.00	28.00
Subtotal	26621.97	17399.82
Surplus or Deficit for year	+814.47	-3956.31
TOTAL	27436.44	13443.51

Balance Sheet for the Year ending 31st March 2023:

Accumulated Funds	2022/2023	2021/2022
	£	£
Balance as at 1 st April	12749.71	16706.02
Surplus for the year	814.47	
Deficit for the year		3956.31
TOTAL	13564.18	12749.71

Location of Funds	2022/2023	2021/2022
	£	£
Lloyds Bank current a/c	8195.79	7424.12
Lloyds Bank 30 day a/c	5291.33	5281.32
Petty Cash	77.06	44.27
TOTAL	13564.18	12749.71

2022/23 Year-end accounts prepared and submitted by :

N.Priddle
(Hon. Treasurer)
Date 27 April 2023

I have examined the income and receipt vouchers, also the bank statements which support the income and expenditure account for the Year ending 31st March 2023 and am satisfied that they show a true and accurate record of the affairs of the Dorchester & District u3a.

Alison Neil
(Alison Neil, Independent Examiner)
Date 27 April 2023

Dorchester & District u3a

Registered Charity no. 1077305

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Advertising	400.00	500.00
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