

## 1. Chair's introduction

I am pleased to present the following report on my second year in post as the Chair of u3a in Kennet.

This has been a year in which the very encouraging growth in our membership numbers has continued to exceed 700 by the year end. Several new Groups were established too thereby widening the range of interests and activities that are available to local people. Our regular monthly meetings have become increasingly well attended and supported by our hard working team of 'Really Useful Group' volunteers and a variety of interesting speakers.

My thanks are due to all members of the Executive Committee and to our Group Leaders whose individual and collective efforts have contributed to the growth and continued development of u3a in Kennet during the year.

## 2. u3a in Kennet – aims

The u3a movement aims to provide 'public benefit' and the charitable purpose of u3a in Kennet is:

*'The advancement of education and, in particular the education of older people and those who are retired from full time work by all means, including associated activities conducive to learning and personal development, in Marlborough and its surrounding locality'*

thereby reflecting the Third Age Principles of membership, self-help learning and mutual aid.

## 3. u3a in Kennet

### 3a) Membership

The membership of the u3a in Kennet grew during the year and by 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024 comprised:

- Ordinary – 693 (661 in July 2023)
- Retired – 1 (1 in July 2023)
- Associate – 14 (10 in July 2023)
- Totals – 708 (672 in July 2023)

### 3b) Groups – numbers / progress

Groups have again flourished this year thanks in particular to the hard work, commitment and dedication of our Group Leaders and to the support and enthusiastic participation of the group members.

There are currently 64 groups available to members, most of which now meet face to face. During the year several new groups have started up successfully. These include: Global History, Science Discussion, a second Poetry Appreciation Group and a Walking Tennis group was initiated and is now in place. Further discussion is ongoing about some other proposed new groups.

We have also welcomed a number of new Group Leaders this year and have given our thanks to some Group Leaders who stepped down after several years successfully leading their groups.

Particular thanks are due to the members of the 'Really Useful Group' (RUG) who support the catering and other arrangements at our meetings and events.

### 3c) Programme of events

The well attended quarterly 'Kennet u3a Talks' continued during the year and we welcomed a range of interesting speakers who addressed the following topics:

26 <sup>th</sup> October 2023	Robin Nelson	Great Musical moments
9 <sup>th</sup> February 2024	Alix Booth	The History of Punch and Judy
10 <sup>th</sup> April 2024	Terry Bracher	Wiltshire archives: 'Should have taken the medicine'
29 <sup>th</sup> July 2024	Sarah Slater	The ghosts of Hampton Court

The monthly 'Coffee Exchange' sessions continued during the year at the Town Hall with a slight change of format to allow more time for members to meet and chat with friends prior to the monthly speaker slot and sharing of news about future events. These sessions became increasingly popular with current and potential members such that growing attendance figures necessitated a move from the Court Room to the larger Assembly Room.

Our speakers covered a variety of topics including:

- Tony Globe, Family history research
- Mike Morison, What pilots do to cross the pond
- Rob Napier, Marlborough Concert Orchestra Quartets
- Sonia Wright, Your garden toda
- Mary Caudell, Poetry Appreciation
- Mike Gardner, More lives than a cat
- Clare Bromell, Wiltshire Air Ambulance
- Mike Morison 'The skill and will to survive'
- Annie Clayton, Alzheimers Support

A lunch was held during the year providing a welcome for new members enabling them to meet with Group Leaders and Executive Committee members and helping them to choose groups to join.

### 3d) Governance: Trustees / Executive Committee membership / meetings

u3a in Kennet is led by an Executive Committee and governed by its Constitution which is based on the national model constitution and was adopted on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2018 and amended on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

The Annual General Meeting was held on 25th October 2023 resulting in the re-election of Annette Weaver as Honorary Secretary. Alastair Sheen was elected as Honorary Treasurer and Hamzah was elected as Committee Member with responsibility for technical support.

David Moakes was co-opted during the year (January 2024) and focussed on supporting the publicity arrangements.

The full Committee is shown below:

<b>Officers:</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Position/s held</b>
Chair	Jill Turner	Also Charity Commission Contact
Vice Chairman	Jeff Hide	Also Event Logistics
Honorary Treasurer	Alastair Sheen	
Honorary Secretary	Annette Weaver	

## Other Trustees:

Committee Member	Mike Morison	Membership Secretary and Beacon System Administrator
Committee Member	Hamzah	Technical support
Committee Member	Jill Chambers	Speaker Secretary
Committee Member	Alison Dewar	Supporting Groups
Committee Member	Georgina Neville	Supporting Groups
Co-opted	David Moakes	Publicity

In addition to the Committee members listed above the Committee acknowledges the support provided by members David Hammond (former Chairman) and Pat Harper in the production of publicity materials and maintenance of our website respectively.

The Executive Committee met on five occasions at two monthly intervals during 2023–24.

The Chair joined the regular meetings of the national u3a Chairs and the Chair and several Committee members attended meetings of the Bath and Wiltshire u3a Network during the year with a specific focus on aspects such as overall governance, finance, groups, publicity and sourcing speakers.

### **3e) u3a in Kennet – local publicity and profile,**

Our growing membership indicates that u3a in Kennet is becoming increasingly well known in the local area. We believe this is a consequence of our positive publicity initiatives including our flyers and website, regular meetings and events, local media notably 'Marlborough News' and significantly through members sharing information with friends and relations. 'Word of mouth' is an important means of communication about the benefits of u3a membership.

During the year u3a in Kennet was invited to attend a meeting of the local branch of 'Business Network International' to share information about membership with local people who may be looking ahead to retirement. In addition we attended the Marlborough Health and Wellbeing Day in July as an exhibitor which focussed on the varied health benefits of membership.

Local organisations have sought to make connections with us including 'Marlborough Tennis' which offered taster sessions for walking tennis, the Marlborough Lit Fest and the Marlborough Festival organisers who offered discounted tickets for our members at the event.

### **3f) Open Day – 13<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

Following an introduction by the Town Crier the Mayor opened the annual event which aimed to increase the u3a profile in Marlborough and the surrounding area. u3a in Kennet was showcased with a poster exhibition in the Town Hall along with art work, photographs, music from the Recorder Group and a live demonstration of table tennis. Committee members and Group Leaders welcomed around 200 visitors to the exhibition and recruited 24 new members on the day.

## **4. Communications: Newsletters, website and social media**

Regular and effective communication with members was maintained with the monthly newsletters and the annual yearbook. The website was updated regularly with new events and information about group activities.

A new 'Welcome leaflet' was produced identifying the meeting arrangements for all of the groups on a one page document along with a new publicity flyer local leaflet for wider publicity.

In addition u3a in Kennet has two Facebook pages: one for members and a public facing version.

Further helpful local publicity was secured with a link to u3a news in 'Marlborough News'.

## 5. Financial matters

### 5a) Treasurer's Report and Accounts for the financial Year 1<sup>st</sup> August 2023 – 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024

u3a in Kennet is a voluntary self-help organisation that seeks to advance the education and social interaction of older people and those who are retired from full time work in Marlborough and its surrounding locality.

The u3a operates through a Committee of trustees elected at its Annual General Meeting. It mainly carries out its activities through groups led by Group Leaders.

The main source of income is member subscriptions. The accompanying accounts show that subscription income increased by 4.25% to £8,671 compared to 2022-23 (£8,318).

The total general income for the year was £10,421 (£10,548 in 2022-23).

Total general expenditure for the year was £10,285 (£11,906 in 2022-23). This resulted in a modest surplus of income over expenditure for the year of £136 (£1,359 shortfall 2022-23).

The main areas of expenditure were:

£4,849	Third Age Trust (National u3a)	47%
£1,495	u3a in Kennet Coffee Exchanges & Kennet Talks	14.5%
£1,423	u3a in Kennet Yearbook	14%
£1,180	u3a in Kennet Administration	11.5%
£628	u3a in Kennet New Member Lunches	6%
£538	u3a in Kennet Grants to Groups	5%

The National Capitation, Beacon management fees and the Third Age Matters Magazine postage were 12% higher this year because of the increase in the number of members.

Venue hire for u3a wide events was a little higher than in 2022-23, There were no expenses incurred attending any national or regional u3a meetings.

Our monthly Coffee Exchanges and quarterly Kennet Talks regularly attract 80-100 members and continue to be very popular. A New Members' Lunch was held in Kennet Valley Hall in November 2023.

Reserves of £16,420 (£16,472 2022-23) were held at the end of the year.

Groups income totalled £15,363 (£12,321). Groups expenditure totalled £13,998 (£13,176). This resulted in a surplus of £1,365, which includes advance payments for trips taking place in September & October.

Group funds carried over in the bank totalled £4,836 (£3,533.86) at the year end. A total of £252 was also carried over as cash.

Total funds held at the year-end (including Groups cash) were £25,078 (£25,023)

The Accounts for 2023-2024 have been examined and agreed by *Mr David Hargrave*, an independent accountant who is not a u3a member.

***Alastair Sheen, Treasurer, September 2024.***

#### 5b) Asset register

The u3a in Kennet asset register was checked and updated during the year. The total value of the

assets remains within the limits of the standard u3a Trust insurance policy.

## **6. Summary**

Following the challenges imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic, u3a in Kennet continued to grow and developed its range of support for members during the year from August 2023– July 2024.

The Executive Committee thanks all Group Leaders for their active and committed support for u3a in Kennet and all members for their interest and involvement.

Report prepared on behalf of u3a in Kennet by **Jill Turner, Chair and Contact for the Charity Commission.**

[chair@u3ainkennet.org.uk](mailto:chair@u3ainkennet.org.uk) September 2024.