

Chairman's Report 2015 -2016

Our past year has certainly been one of mixed fortunes. We have had some successes but also some setbacks as well. On the plus side we increased our membership to 78 and the number of groups to 10. We have very recently been awarded a £250 grant from Dawlish Town Council for the specific purpose of developing our website. This will help us to increase our profile and hopefully help to bring in new members.

Over the year we have had a variety of guest speakers and the feedback from members has generally been very positive. One or two presentations were less well received, however if one has not heard the speaker before it is always going to be a bit of a risk. If you have heard a good, entertaining and interesting speaker then please let Angela Morgan know. A personal recommendation is always helpful.

On the down side, groups have sometimes struggled to achieve sufficient numbers. I believe the groups are the life blood of a U3A. We need therefore to increase numbers of groups and numbers of group members if we are to develop as a U3A. I know of one group in Devon that has 620 members and 90 groups.

The most difficult problem has been the struggle to form a new committee after 6 of our current committee members stated that they would be standing down. Dawlish U3A came close to folding. Fortunately we have now managed to fill most of the committee roles which includes the Group Co-ordinator role which will now be carried out by Elisabeth Thomson as an extension of her Membership Secretary role (with IT support from Ian Thomson). We do need, however, a Minutes Secretary urgently. I had intended to stand down from the committee this year due to other commitments; however I felt it was important that the new committee received some support so I have agreed to stay on as Vice Chair.

I believe we can continue to grow if we have sufficient support from members. More members will provide us with more income and develop our activities. We do have some challenges, however we have a new committee that will have new ideas and I hope we can move forward in 2016-2017. The committee can only achieve results however if we have support from our members. The term "university" in U3A is used in its original sense – a group of people coming together to share their love of learning.

We can all contribute in different ways. Comments, suggestions, ideas and constructive criticism are always welcome. There are other ways of involvement, perhaps helping with reception at meetings, meeting and greeting new members or providing help with teas.

Finally I would like to thank all of the committee members who have worked hard and donated their time this year. Also to the group leaders for giving their time as well and to those members who have worked on reception and helped with teas. I am sure you will welcome George Lipscomb as the new Chair and all the committee members for 2016-2017. I wish them every success.

Steve Thomson: Chair