

# SHEPTON MALLET U3A

AGM 5TH OCTOBER 2023

## CHAIR REPORT

Since last October, Shepton Mallet u3a has continued to grow steadily and we now have nearly 170 members – not yet back to pre-Covid strength but getting there. We have 20 active interest groups including the new Play-reading and Writing for Pleasure, as well as our regular coffee mornings and speaker meetings.

We have run successful and enjoyable outings to Cribbs Causeway, Sherborne, the Earth Science Centre at Stoke St Michael and the pumping station and Dundas Aqueduct at Claverton, near Bath. Last month a small group went to the new Avalon Archaeology centre near Glastonbury for a fascinating guided tour, and this month we have another visit to the Earth Science Centre, plus one to Westonbirt Arboretum.

Our Christmas Lunch at Mendip Golf Club was so good that we are returning this year. The bring - and- share Coronation Lunch at the bowling club in June was very successful, with delicious contributions from all, and entertainment from Barry Holmes. Jane Morrison has organised several Skittles Lunches which have been great fun and well attended; many thanks to her! I am also grateful to Jane for organising an excellent programme of Speaker Meetings and quizzes. Attendance at these is steady, but we would like a few more participants. I particularly remember the mountains of greenery at the Christmas table decoration session, and the fun we had making something!

We finally managed to plant an ornamental pear tree in Collett Park, on a beautiful frosty day in November, to commemorate the founding of u3a 40 years ago. It has survived a long winter followed by a heatwave in June, thanks to several of us watering it, and now appears to be doing well. Last month we were able to use the post office window in the Market Place for a display about the history of u3a, and this group in particular, to mark National u3a Week. We hope this has resulted in some new members, as did our gazebo show at Collett Park Day.

Shepton Mallet u3a continues to be part of the North Somerset network. We fielded two teams at the quiz at Wells Museum last October, and we will be taking part again this month, in Burnham. We also helped organise a Network Conference at Wells Town Hall in March – a very interesting event with several speakers and a super lunch. Another conference is being arranged for next March.

We continue to produce a monthly newsletter, now edited by Kevin Hoole. We would really appreciate more contributions from members – short articles, interesting photos, puzzles, jokes etc. If you like it, others probably will too!

I am grateful to the other members of the Committee for their help and support over the year. We were very pleased to welcome Sue Dickerson as a new member and Vice-Chair, as Jeannette Marsh became Groups Coordinator. We have recognised the long service put in by Janet Murray and we are grateful to Maggie Hardy for returning as temporary Secretary for a few months. However, we still need some new committee members, in particular a Publicity Officer, so please consider volunteering if you have a little spare time. We also need more people to help with refreshments at our monthly Speaker Meetings, as Liz Nash and Maggie Hardy have been doing this for a very long time. The more active members we have, the better our u3a will be!

Janet Sherwin

