

SHEPTON MALLET U3A AGM 2ND OCTOBER 2025

CHAIR'S REPORT October 2024 – September 2025

This has been a very successful year for Shepton Mallet u3a. We now have a membership of nearly 200, drawn from surrounding villages as well as the town itself, and 22 interest groups. Our committee consists of a Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, Secretary and 6 other members. Our Groups Coordinator, Jeannette Marsh, moved to Devon and has been replaced by a co-opted committee member, Barbie Bradbury. Keith Taylor and Janet Murray had to stand down, having reached the maximum service time of 9 years allowed by our constitution. Paul Roberts was co-opted to the committee and became Health and Safety officer, and Josh Hartley was also co-opted to take over as Membership Secretary.

We regretfully increased the annual membership fee to £14 in January, to keep up with inflation, and for the same reason increased the admission fee at Speaker Meetings to £3 for members. These increases have proved to be necessary and have kept the finances in good health – see Treasurer's Report. The committee decided to withdraw from the North Somerset Association of u3a Groups, of which we had been part for many years, as it was not providing value for money and there was almost no interest among our members.

Our newsletter moved from monthly to bi-monthly editions, sent to members by email with some printed for distribution around the town for publicity purposes, and a few for sale. We bought a printer to produce this. Keith Taylor kindly continues to maintain our website and the Beacon database.

A few members have taken advantage of the talks and lectures offered by the Third Age Trust on their website, and we encourage members to visit the site and try one or two of these excellent "learning opportunities".

Our monthly Speaker Meetings have been most enjoyable and well attended. Coffee mornings continue to attract a steady attendance and are a convenient entry point for new members. Monthly skittles lunches and fish-and-chip lunches have also proved popular. Christmas lunch at the Mendip Inn was excellent, attended by over 30. We had an outing to Seaton with Forde Abbey, for which we were joined by several members of Wells u3a.

We also held an Autumn Tea Party, a Winter Celebration and a Summer Salon at various locations to honour the seasons. We participated in the annual Shepton Snowdrop Festival, with members of the new Creations Group making a pennant to hang in St Peter and Paul's church with those of other local groups. We had a gazebo at Collett Park day in June and were visited by many attendees.

Our new Groups Coordinator, Barbie Bradbury, has facilitated the birth of several new interest groups – Creations, Embroidery, Family History and Railways. More are in the pipeline!

I would like to thank members of the committee, group leaders, refreshment servers and all who help with the running of our u3a. We depend entirely on you, the members, giving a little of your time for the benefit of others. It can also be fun!

Janet Sherwin

