

CHAIR'S REPORT TO ANDOVER U3A POSTPONED FROM 15TH MAY 2020

Good afternoon and welcome to all of you who have joined us on this Zoom AGM. It is a little impersonal but it does enable the Committee to fulfil the remit of holding an annual AGM albeit with a 6 month delay. Unfortunately it does not provide the tea and biscuits to go with it.

Bearing in mind this is a meeting set as at May this year some things have naturally moved on. I will not dwell on the national situation but towards the end I will just highlight what we are doing to continue our activities where we can.

As ever our membership remains strong. We hit 550 members in March this year and we continue with 45 separate groups. I have always emphasised that the strength of our U3A is at the group level and we continue to expand. We now have a 'Climate Change Matters' group led by Marie Dyke. And the Theatre Group has been revived only to be severely affected by Covid 19.

The really good news to fall out from the previous AGM, where David Rae announced his retirement from the treasurer's post, is that we now have a new financial team. We waited long enough for a new treasurer and then two came along at once. It is thoroughly good news and we are now in the more than capable hands of Jeanette and Michael Potts. Returning to David. He has been our treasurer for 7 years and has seen through some major changes dictated to us mainly by the Charity Commission. He has sorted out the Gift Aid process and last year we received £705 back from the tax man. He also had to bring in the process of accounting for all group money through the central Andover U3A account. This was a legal requirement as all funds are the responsibility of all committee members who are trustees and guardians of your money. These were two detailed pieces of work and I cannot thank David enough for the hours of work he put in to bring it to fruition. David, enjoy your retirement away from the committee and continue to enjoy your leisure time with the groups you belong to.

At this point I would also like to thank David Benwell, our Auditor, for all his sterling work on our behalf

We have also lost Eleanor Wright from the Committee. Having mentioned earlier that we now have a Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer, our constitution only allows 10 committee members. To ensure that this happened Eleanor kindly agreed to step down from her post a year early. Can I thank her here for the brilliant work she did on running our Christmas events, in conjunction with Caroline, and helping them to run so smoothly. No matter how simple an event may seem there is always someone there doing some hard work, so Eleanor thank you for that and the routine work you undertook as a committee member.

I have to give thanks as always to the team that kept the monthly meetings on the road. David Gollings who organises the speakers, Rita Hanna who has kept the teas going for many years now and Dorothy Connor who has continued her task of meeting new members and making them feel comfortable as quickly as possible. Thank you to you all.

Just to keep you in the picture, Ron, who works for the village hall and had been putting out the chairs for us at the meetings unfortunately suffered from a stroke last year and has been unable to do the task for us. Can I therefore also thank those of you who helped in dealing with the tables and chairs for the past few months. That covers up to May.

Looking now to the future. Well to be perfectly honest with you I can't predict what is going to happen. We wait to see what 2nd December brings but I do not expect there to be any great changes back to normality until the effects of the vaccine work their way through the population. We are all in the hands of Covid 19, and the way we live is to follow the Government advice, which is now law, on how best to defeat the virus. The Third Age Trust (TAT) has developed the Government's advice and this has been made available to all group leaders and all members on the TAT website. There is no point in the Committee putting out any other advice as we have nothing to add.

What does it mean to us in November 2020? The situation changes monthly, we are now in lock down 2, when this finishes we have to wait and see what restrictions will remain until the virus has been fully contained.

The monthly meetings and the Theatre Group have suffered the greatest upheaval. The Theatre Group which, because of the nature of their activities,

also saw some financial issues. The theatres were initially reluctant to release the money that had been paid to them but we are now in a clearer situation. Paul Manning had organised 3 theatre trips for this year and their popularity was shown in the uptake of tickets. Following some initial refund issues we are now in a position to refund all tickets for the first two shows but the money for Pretty Woman will not be with us until the end of the year. The Treasurer will cover the mechanics of the refunds in his speech. Sadly Paul has decided to step down from his role as Group Leader after 3 years of hard work. On your behalf and especially for all of you who have attended one of the events he has organised can I thank him for such sterling service. Thank you Paul.

We have managed to keep some group activities going. The use of zoom has been a major boost and the monthly meetings, thanks to David Gollings, restarted in September. Jan Ward has done an immense amount of work on our website and there can be no excuse for not knowing what is going on. Thank you Jan. Chris Ward has been running a virtual news information service on the Grapevine and has continued to publish the Newsletter on time and packed with news and articles. Thank you Chris. The quiz group is continuing with thanks going to Nigel Knott at the helm and the language groups continue to discuss matters over zoom. And of course there was the great Gardening competition. Congratulations to all the winners, the results are in the Newsletter.

The Committee will follow all Government advice and we will be aware, as much as you are, how this affects next year's activities. The next Committee meeting is scheduled for January 2021 and we should have a clearer idea by then of what we may have to face in the coming year. Let us therefore continue on a positive note and assume that life will return to as close to normal as it can be as soon as possible

Finally, in the Autumn we became members of the International Association of Universities of the Third Age (AIUTA). Our representative is Marie-Elisabeth Deroche-Miles. Thank you.

I now turn to Michael Potts, the Treasurer, who has the difficult juggling act of taking you through the finances as at 31st March this year and doing the financial planning for the next 12 months. Michael, over to you.