

MaD u3a Report from the Chair 2023-24

I have been pleased to serve you as the Chair for this past year. My first in this post, taking over the reins from Geraldine Chaffe who I'm delighted to say, remained as my vice chair and whose advice and ability to step into my shoes when I was on one of my several holidays, has been invaluable. Thank you Geraldine.

We have had a good year. Since the covid years, we have continued to grow. In this last year, since 1st October, we have had 83 new members and our membership now stands at 344. Thanks to Linda for so enthusiastically & professionally taking on the role of membership secretary. I was not yet retired when MaD u3a first formed some 9 years ago, as a break off from Arnold and Carlton & Gedling u3a's which had become too large. I understand that the intention had been to grow Mapperley to 250 members. That of course has been done and well exceeded, and we generally have between 3 and 6 visitors at each general meeting, most of whom join.

One of the effects of the increasing membership has been the need for us to register our u3a with the Charities Commission as an independent charity. We had previously been small enough to be covered by the charitable status of the Third Age Trust. Andrew Harper, our retiring business secretary took that on, and in what seemed to us, record time, got it completed. Andrew has the sincere and grateful thanks of all of us on the committee. He has been a very conscientious secretary and he will be missed, but he has come to the end of his 3 year tenure.

We have also been fortunate in getting several new groups up and running. Carolyn & Alison have worked very hard to do that, so that we currently run almost 50 different interest groups which meet monthly, twice monthly or weekly, ranging from those that are creative, involve eating and drinking, energetic and active, music, literature, history, languages, theatre and cinema going and other miscellaneous topics. In addition we have summer outdoor activities organized by Eileen giving us taster sessions for croquet, pétanque, archery & bowls and Local & Live group also run by Eileen which ventures out to a variety of local pubs, clubs and music venues to experience a range of live music. In July the MaD Amdram group performed their second play written by Linda Stevenson and we have also linked up with neighbouring u3as for walking football, indoor bowls & short lawn bowls. If we can find something that someone is interested in, we will try to find others to join in and someone to run the group. This is your u3a and we need to keep it fresh and interesting.

Our trips and visits team deserve a special mention. They have worked incredibly hard to put together a programme of different trips and visits throughout the year and many of our members have taken part in some of these. Organising trips is often a thankless task. They spend hours researching venues, events, costs and feasibility and if there is insufficient interest the work is for nothing, but the programme that has been put together and run has been varied, popular and enjoyed by those who have participated so again my thanks to the whole team for your hard work.

We have been exceptionally fortunate to have Richard Hill as our webmaster and to sort out the IT for our meetings. He has enabled us to continue to offer our less mobile members the option of joining the meetings by Zoom. To have had Sue Cullen continuing to prepare and issue the newsletter which is always an interesting read, and although I could be biased, better than any other u3a's newsletter. To have had Joan Davies step up part way through the year as acting treasurer, and to be prepared to continue in that role. Thank you to you all.

I have not mentioned everybody individually who has contributed to our success this year, but that doesn't mean that you aren't important or appreciated. Every single person that welcomes a guest, sets out chairs, makes teas or coffees, leads walks, contributes and without everyone's efforts we could not continue to be the MaD, friendly u3a that we are.

Here 's to another successful year where we can "Live, Learn & Laugh" together in friendship.

Valerie Wilkinson (Chair)