

Frodsham u3a

Chairman's report 2023 to 2024

There have been 3 major objectives for this year:

1. Continuing our growth and expansion without sacrificing the care and welcome we extend to new members.
2. Preventing isolation and loss of independence by enabling members to use modern technology confidently by:
 - helping members to access emails;
 - providing ongoing drop-in support for others who want to improve their competence.
3. Providing a range of inclusive and varied social events to suit our different tastes and budgets.

Membership Growth

Frodsham U3A has had another successful year. Our membership continues to grow steadily and we now have 30 more members than we had this time last year, 232 in all. A large proportion of the visitors who come to our monthly meetings decide to join us, often commenting favourably on the help given them by our Welcomers. This is pleasing because it means members are happy with what we are doing as the majority of newcomers have come by word of mouth.

Further Interest Groups

We now have 34 interest groups which are increasingly popular and are attracting larger numbers. For the benefit of those of you who have only just joined us and to remind those of you who haven't looked at the website recently, we have the following:-

Art and Artists, Bridge, Canasta, Church Visiting, two Classical Music Enjoyment groups, Creative Crafts, Cryptic Crosswords, Enjoying your Photography, Family History, Film Appreciation, French Conversation, Friday Lunch, History, Industrial History, Intriguing History, Modern Board Games, three Book Groups, Painting, Pickleball, Pins and Needles, Play Reading, Poetry Reading, Popular Culture, Recorder Playing, Science for Scientists, Scrabble, two Sunday Lunch groups, Technical Help group, Walking and an online Quiz on Thursday evenings anyone can join during the winter months.

I think it's worth reminding ourselves that we are a self-help organisation and we are dependent on the skills and interests we have amongst us. I'm pleased to say that the latest additions have come in response to members wanting to share their own interests with you. The groups we have added this year are Enjoying your Photography, Film Appreciation, Modern Board Games, Popular Culture and a second Sunday Lunch Group. Pickleball is in the development stage. If you have anything you would like add to the list please tell us.

Changing to survive in a modern world!

The changes to the NHS prescription arrangements, land lines being phased out and most of the Utilities going on line make it really important that we can use modern

technology if we want to remain independent - however much we might hate it. The **Technical Help Drop-in** was formed to enable members to be confident online and to provide ongoing drop-in support for sorting out frustrating glitches and helping those who want to improve competence. This was set up as an experiment in conjunction with OPAL, who provide some of their experienced helpers to join us. All of the helpers are our age and deal one-to-one with your specific issue with your own device.

More Social Activities

Gill has done an amazing job this year of putting on a full and divergent programme of thirty-four events which have been enjoyed by all who have shared the experiences. There are too many to list here but all this year's newsletters are archived on the website if you want to see what you've missed! I've always thought that the social activities we share are the glue which binds us all together and it's the opportunity for people who have very different interests to meet up with people that they wouldn't normally come into contact with.

We are now a Charity

This year we have negotiated the transition to Charity Status because we've grown in size. You have probably noticed that we now have **Charity Number 1204978** at the top of our newsletter. The main task the committee has undertaken is the monumental amount of paperwork that has been necessary for us to achieve this. The majority of this has fallen on our Treasurer Janet's shoulders. It brings more stringent safeguards around how we look after your money and protect your privacy.

A new website and a pioneering Web Editor!

You will have noticed that our website has completely changed this year and in the process become more user friendly. This is due to Ann Gardiner. Earlier in the year we presented her with a thank you bouquet in recognition of the long hours, boundless ingenuity and patience that she has put in to achieve this. She has been working as a member of the National Office pilot scheme to develop an improved and trustworthy website for all our u3as across the country. We were the first in the country to have the new website up and running.

All this doesn't happen on its own and **I would like to thank all the committee members** who willingly put their skills to work to make our u3a run as well as it does. They are Gill Matthewson, Valerie Nock, Jayne Appleton, Janet de Haas, Stuart Brewster, Nora Parsley, Barbara Healey and Ann Gardiner. We are also lucky to have wonderful support from our Welcomers: Tony Boyd-Williams, Glenda Boyd-Williams, Barbara Harding, Nora Parsley and Barbara Healey who extend a positive start to visitors and new members. Elaine Prisk makes such an informative and attractive job of the newsletter each month and Ann Gardiner ensures our website is up to date. Mary Graham and Pat Gradwell make sure Thursday afternoon meetings end on a high note by providing tea, coffee and biscuits, and willing volunteers generously help with the washing up.

Plenty of scope to live, learn and laugh.

It's been a privilege to act as chairman again this year. Thank you all for your support, and all my best wishes to next year's committee who will be taking our u3a forward.

Anita Boardman

Chairman