

Coleshill and District U3A
Chairman's Report 2024-25

I think we can say this has been a successful year for our U3A, with a great programme of speakers, membership rising to 165, thriving Interest groups and attendance at GM's reaching nearly 100!

This seems to have been a particularly good year for speakers, with all of them having merit in their own way. Which were your favourites/ For me I particularly enjoyed the Birmingham history based talks, Andy Smith's musicality and of course Jenny and Shakespeare. I think for some it was the so-called "Blood bikes". My thanks to Lorraine, Lesley and Joan for making it happen so smoothly.

Interest groups have continued to flourish with several new groups forming and 1 old group reforming. The History group now has a membership of 60+! Please continue to support those and please let us know of your ideas for new ones.

As Chair I am involved, sometimes reluctantly, in the wider affairs of the Third Age Trust. Several events of interest have occurred this year. The AGM was held without any revolts, and indeed ratified the establishment of the new Council to work alongside the Board, but aimed at focussing on the activities of the U3A's, whilst the Board concentrates on legal and financial matters affecting the trust itself. A relatively local man, Alan Walmsley, was appointed Chair of the Council, and we were introduced to the new CEO, Ian Cassidy.

We are also affiliated to a local group of U3A's, known as the Solihull Cluster. At the last AGM 3 of us stepped down from the committee, a new Chair was elected, and since then very little seems to have happened. Lesley attended an inaugural meeting in Coventry which proposed starting another cluster group! Really!

As a committee we also took part in another couple of events in order to make ourselves known more widely and encourage new members. In May we attended an Open Day in Water Orton, which was well attended but was not that effective.

Before Xmas, we entered a tree in the Coleshill Tree festival, which was a great success in involving all our groups in making many wonderful decorations. Well done everyone!

Another first for us was the Christmas Lunch at Maxstoke Golf Club, organised wonderfully by Celia, and attended by 75 members. I can say, a good time was had by all. Provisional booking already made for this year, if you want to repeat that experience. A vote will be held!

I must finish by thanking this excellent committee which has worked hard and effectively to ensure this U3A keeps thriving. It would not, and could not, happen without them!

Lesley took over as Secretary and has done splendidly upholding the high standards set by Nanette

John has continued to control our finance superbly and helped Interest groups with payments etc when necessary.

We try to distribute the workload around the committee and everyone has had a role and fulfilled it extremely well.

Rita continues to control and monitor Membership numbers and subs etc.

Andrew stepped up to organise speakers for this year and I think has again found us a very interesting programme.

Gill has helped with inducting new members and making sure they are welcome to the group.

Gert has stepped into the big boots of Amanda as Webmaster so we never saw the join!

Joan has taken over as our Speaker liaison, making sure they all arrive and have what they need in a calm and effective manner

Well done and my thanks to them all.

Which leaves a couple of that committee to be mentioned. Unfortunately both Celia and Sue have decided to step down from the committee after many years of service. Both have been members from the origins of this U3A and have served in many roles on the committee, including between them Chair [both] Treasurer, Interest Group Co-ordinator, Vice Chair, New member induction, and of course, Raffle!! I personally will miss their expertise , experience and advice which has been invaluable since I joined the committee. In fact the first day I arrived at a General Meeting it was Sue I recognised and who made me welcome. Within a few months it was Celia who forced, sorry, persuaded me to become Treasurer. Now I see where I went wrong!!

So we decided we could not let this moment pass without recognising the incredible job they have both done. Can I ask you both to step up here.

{Made the presentation of the Commemorative vases.}

That is the end of my report . I hope this year continues to excel and thrive. Thank you.

Peter Walker

17 feb 2025