



Annual Report 2015– 2016

This is a report from the Trustees about our work in the year 2015–2016 to provide the members with information about many different aspects of our work as trustees.

As Chair I am pleased to report that Malvern U3A has continued to develop in size, as membership gradually increases, and also in its range of activities and groups. For example this last year groups started in Botany, Play Reading, and Driving Skills as well as other subjects. Existing groups continue to thrive, though some do run their course and finish. We organised three First Aid courses led by the Red Cross, at the request of members, paid for from our central funds.

The committee this year has been concerned with a number of matters: our relationship with the Cube, for example, as it develops from being a Youth Centre to being a community resource. It is very well used by Malvern U3A and we have particular financial arrangements with them so that we get rooms at advantageous rates and provide them with a steady source of funds through our room hire.

The Trustees set up three short-term working groups this year, as our Secretary Sue Dalley explains in her report, to look at the ways in which Malvern U3A works; one group looked at updating all the information on our webpage; one looked at the “job descriptions” of the Trustees and considered succession planning, and one looked at the information and support we provide to group leaders and created both a new written handbook and a dedicated section on the webpage.

This was a lot of work for the committee which as well as making sure that Malvern U3A fulfils its legal obligations as a charity. We have to ensure we meet the legal requirements of the Charity Commission, that monies are managed efficiently and on a day to day level, that things run smoothly, that equipment is available in good condition; that rooms are booked, that bills are paid, that there are speakers for meetings, that information is shared and so on. All of this happens because there are thankfully some members of the U3A who feel they want to provide support for the U3A as well as being part of their own interest groups.

Sometimes other members can be unaware of how much goes on behind the scenes but if the U3A is to thrive we need members who will step forward when needed. I'd like to thank all those members who have served on the committee this last year who have retired during the year for various reasons: Norma Braddock who organised room bookings, replaced by Brian Chesney, and Val Holland who was groups organiser and has been replaced by Annette Maxted. I do thank all those Trustees who continue with their varied responsibilities. Anyone who is interested in how we work, or feels they themselves have something to contribute to the work of the U3A, is always welcome to stand as a Trustee or offer to do a particular job.

Reports from specific Trustees about their responsibilities:

Sue Dalley

Secretary

The year started well from my point of view, with a full cohort of trustees– I believe that my role as secretary is to assist the committee in ensuring that the branch runs smoothly, and delivers the aims of the U3A and our local membership. This has been made possible this year because of the enthusiastic involvement of all twelve trustees in undertaking lots of work outside the regular committee meetings. We have made sure that our minutes are available to members, so that all can see what activities trustees have undertaken, and how we have reached our decisions. It became apparent that the branch's policies and procedures haven't always been clear to members, were sometimes inconsistent with one another and in short required a radical review and update. It's been a real pleasure this year to see how hard my fellow trustees have worked, to weed out some of the unnecessary information and bring our guidance to members up to date and available on our website. We have also wanted to clarify for ourselves what our respective roles and functions within the committee have been; we hope that this enables members to understand how the committee works, and maybe become interested in joining by standing for election as a trustee! This work should assist new trustees in knowing what they are taking on when they join committee–it certainly would have helped me as secretary when I started three years ago! So I'm really proud of the developments that this year has seen, and that we have made sure that all of these initiatives are available to everyone in the branch. Policies and procedures may seem dry as dust, but my goodness they help when something seems to be going wrong and a decision has to be made.

Sue Lamberton

Speakers' organiser

The numbers coming to the monthly meeting have been steadily rising and we hope they will continue to do so, as members have the opportunity to socialise after the talk, enjoying the free biscuits and coffee which give members a chance to talk to the speaker, (and to have a good chat).

We have been very fortunate in having a wide variety of guest speakers on the last Tuesday of each month, each providing interesting information, usually, but not invariably illustrated with a powerpoint presentation.

Malvern U3A members are a catholic group with a huge range of interests and with this in mind I try to invite speakers to cover as wide a spectrum of specialist subjects as possible. From Suffragettes to Medieval Woman, visiting en route; Theatre Production, The Lusitania, Mary Queen of Scots, the Sea Route to India, The Air Ambulance Service and an intriguing insight into Cracking the Code at Bletchley Park.

Any suggestions from the floor for speakers in the coming year will be gratefully received.

Annette Maxted
Groups Coordinator

There are now over one hundred groups in Malvern U3A, most of which were showcased at the annual Groups Fair in September. The event went extremely smoothly; with the wide range of interest groups available ensuring that there was something for everyone. There are activity-based groups like cycling and bowls, languages, board and card games, as well as science, history, literature, music, art and handicrafts groups.

Many groups meet in members' homes and have fewer than ten members, while other groups have upwards of a hundred members on their registers.

New groups this year included Drama, Knitting and Crochet and the Study of Fairytales – all of which recruited really well. In the weeks since the Groups Fair three new Italian language groups have been set up with, and groups for Mah-Jong players and a walking group for dog-owning members are currently in the process of starting up.

As the Malvern U3A group as a whole continues to grow and thrive, some groups now have waiting lists, and Trustees are currently looking into ways of trying to ensure that all members are able to pursue their chosen activities, interests and hobbies. This was a major agenda item for discussion at the Group Leaders' Meeting held in November.

During the last year a Group Leaders' Handbook was developed and distributed to all our Group Leaders. It is also available to download from our website, as well as a Step-by-Step guide for those considering starting up a new group.

Brian Chesney
Venues Coordinator

Since taking over the role in August I have been busy inspecting venues for hire in Malvern - of which there are rather a lot! - to see what facilities they provide. Once I have completed this the information will be placed on the U3a website, which should make it much easier for Group Leaders to find out the kind of venue which will suit them. Meanwhile I stand ready to assist any Group Leader who is having problems.

The Treasurer and membership secretary will report separately as part of the agenda of the AGM.

The committee of Trustees offer you this report and hope that Malvern U3A will thrive and develop over the coming year.

Pam Stanier
Chair