

Chairman's Report for 2019/2020

This the most unusual annual AGM that I have ever been part off. You will have received the documentation, so you know why we have to conduct it this way. Our lives are on hold by the efforts being made to keep the deadly coronavirus at bay. We are all severely restricted and because of our ages, many of our membership are particularly at risk. At the moment I think that it will be a long time before we can resume our groups and meetings but we will keep a close watch on new guidance as it is issued to see if it is safe for any of our groups to start meeting again. We will not take chances, so far we have been very lucky in this are with a very low incidence of infection but this could change overnight with just one of our visitors perhaps not showing any symptoms coming into our homes. I hope and pray that a vaccine or effective treatment arrives soon.

A year ago you appointed 8 of us to take on the crucial tasks needed to run Ringwood U3A. Unfortunately, we needed 9. Nobody came forward to take on Publicity so we stretched the rules to enable Hazel to remain in post for an extra year as she had already served for 3years and should have stood down. Hazel has done a magnificent job or should I say jobs. Not only did she continue as Publicity Officer she also updated the website, wrote, and sent out the newsletter. Hazel was also Vice Chair where not only did she chair committee meetings and stand in for me when I was not able to attend the monthly meetings, she also tactfully reminded me of things that I had not done as well as ensuring that I had all of the information I needed to share with you at the beginning of our monthly meetings. Previously she was also Speaker Secretary. I and the committee members will miss her and send her our sincere thanks for all that she has done for us and Ringwood U3A. I would have asked her to stand up, present her a gift and asked you all to applaud her. So as you hear this Hazel you can thank Coronavirus – 19 for sparing you the embarrassment. We have not lost Hazel completely as she will continue to maintain the website.

We still need a new Publicity Officer, Hazel will give support and information to help them into the post. This is one of the very important posts on the committee, our future may depend on advertising all that we do. Please contact me if you can help.

We also need a person to assist Audrey's post as Groups Coordinator, this is one of the essential posts to enable us to develop new groups, and support the Hosts. Please contact me if you can help. Without somebody coming forward we will be restricted in developing more groups.

At the moment we have a wonderful and effective committee with every member working very hard, and I sincerely thank them all for their commitment and for being such a good group to work with.

Audrey has achieved so much as Groups Co-ordinator, in particular her efforts to get groups running at the St Ives Country House Care Home, to support the Hosts and help set up new groups.

Nigel has provided us with some wonderful speakers.

Janet has managed all aspects of being Membership Secretary extremely competently. Russ has expanded the role of Secretary; Mary continues to Meet and Greet and to send out cards to those members who we know are unwell, Cyril is now able to increase his support to all. Christine continues to look after our money and the Auditor was happy with her accounts.

As good as this committee is they can't do everything please come forward to help do our work even better.

Now for the most important people, those who are the very heart of Ringwood U3A.

The Hosts or Group Leaders. Those who Run our groups. Those who often have to prepare their rooms, collect and return books to the library, organise visits, arrange transport, organise teams, prepare songs and music and so on the list is endless. On behalf of the membership I thank you all. Without you we would not have a Ringwood U3A.

I was extremely disappointed when we came to renew our membership last year as we lost nearly 20% of the membership, we normally lose about 10%. We asked why they left and the most common reason was that the group or groups that they wished to join were full or were not available on the days when they were free.

If you are a member of one of the full groups why don't you start a second one? If you have an interest in anything that you would like to share with others why not start a new group? There is lots of material, help and support available for you, so give Audrey or me a call. I know that we are not operational at the moment but we could spend the time whilst we wait to start again making the planning so that you will be ready to start.

Now it's time to vote please don't put it off as we must have a Quorum, or we will have to do it all again.

Thanks for listening. Keep safe and well.