



TOWCESTER u3a Registered Charity Number 1155428 Annual Report for period from AGM May 2022 to AGM May 2023

At our AGM at the end of May 2022, a new committee was elected. The previous committee did a brilliant job in ensuring that Towcester u3a continued to thrive during the very difficult period of the pandemic. All deserve appreciation and in particular huge thanks should go to Carol Lucas, who juggled multiple roles and kept everyone motivated. She deserves a well-earned 'retirement'.

As Covid restrictions were being relaxed, in May 2022 our AGM was a mixture of digital and face to face meeting. Reports, voting papers, minutes of the 2021 AGM, and committee nominations were all distributed and the voting completed on line or by post prior to the face-to-face meeting. The voting results were announced at the face-to-face meeting on May 25th, and published in the May 2022 bulletin.

Trustee Committee Members

The Trustee Committee Members responsible for managing Towcester u3a during the above period were:

Stephen Porter (Chairman, elected May 2022)
David Parker (Vice-Chairman, elected May 2022 stood down January 2023)
Terry Goldfinch (Treasurer re-elected May 2022)
Stephen Warden (Membership secretary elected May 2022 stood down December 2022)
Deborah Heaphy (Business secretary elected May 2022)
Alison Foxton (Publicity secretary elected May 2022)
Anne Parkes (Speaker Seeker re-elected May 2022)
Jill Stewart (Interest Groups Liaison officer elected May 2022)
Alison Burnley (Membership secretary co-opted December 2022)
Jenny Rigby (Co-opted April 2023)
Tricia Burningham (Minute secretary co-opted April 2023)

Since last year's AGM there have been changes to the committee. Stephen Warden and David Parker stood down, and 3 new members were co-opted: Alison Burnley, Jenny Rigby, and Tricia Burningham. We are extremely grateful to the new members for their willingness to become part of the team.

The committee meet regularly on the first Monday of each month, except for January. All members of the committee are standing for re-election at the 2023 AGM.

Charitable Purpose, Structure and Governance

The u3as in the UK are autonomous, self-help organisations run by the voluntary efforts of their members. All u3as are members of the Third Age Trust (TAT), a registered charity, which is the national support and advisory body. Each u3a is operationally independent but as members of the Third Age Trust each agrees to follow the principles of the u3a movement. Being a self-help learning co-operative is what makes u3a unique.

Towcester u3a was formed in 2010 with the stated charitable purpose of the advancement of education of those who are retired from full time work, by activities conducive to learning and personal development, in Towcester and its surrounding area. Towcester u3a is a registered charity governed by our constitution which was amended in 2018, and then again in 2019, and again in 2021 to allow for virtual meetings. Our committee members are charity trustees and are elected by the membership at the AGM although new trustees may be co-opted in between AGMs and then stand for election at the next AGM.

Groups

As we emerged from the Covid epidemic and its associated restrictions, most of our groups have re-started their regular meetings and several new ones have been formed. We now have 51 groups, ranging from “Alternative Poetry” to “Understanding the Stock Market”. This includes two “Art Appreciation” groups, two “Boys Toys” groups, three “Genealogy” groups, two “London Explorer” groups, and four walking groups (one “Nordic Walking”, two “Ramblers”, and one “Striders”). A full list of the current groups is available on our website. Please contact the relevant group coordinator if you are interested in joining one of the groups.

Monthly Meetings

Monthly meetings at Towcesterians started again in April 2022 as we emerged from the Covid pandemic. The number attending has gradually increased as the Covid restrictions have eased, and we have all slowly regained our confidence.

We now have speakers scheduled for every month, except December, until February 2024, with a wide range of subjects including “The Art of Punch and Judy” and “The History of British Piers”.

Membership

Following a drop in membership during the Covid pandemic, our membership numbers have now recovered to approximately 600.

We have held two successful New Members Meetings at the Sawpits Centre at which new (and old) members had the opportunity to find out what interest groups are available and to meet some of the group coordinators.

Publicity

Our main publicity vehicle is our website, at <https://www.towcesteru3a.co.uk/>, and we also publish regular items in the Towcester Town Crier and the Towcester Focus magazine.

For our members we issue a monthly Bulletin and we have a Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/TowcesterU3A> which members can join and post news items and photos.

u3a 40th Anniversary

To mark the u3a movement's 40th anniversary in 2022 the Third Age Trust created a u3a anniversary woodland situated in the Brecon Beacons. Towcester u3a contributed to this by purchasing 10 trees. We have also plant three trees in Saxon Fields to mark our 10th anniversary.

Finance

Towcester u3a financial statement for the year ended 28th February 2023, as examined by Essendon Accounts & Tax Ltd., is the subject of a separate document. In summary, our income over the year was £10,260, almost exactly balanced by an expenditure of £10,269. Next year we are expecting the expenditure to increase to about £12,265. This will be matched by an increase in income to approximately £12,620 thanks to the agreed increase in the membership fee to £20.

Chairman's Remarks

As chairman, I would like to express my thanks to all the members of the committee who have done an excellent job of working together to make all these things happen. I hope to see this continue for another year.

Thank you all.

Stephen Porter,

Chair.