

Annual Report for Torridge U3A AGM, June 2019.

The membership stands as 400 full members, 27 affiliate members making a total of 427.

This report covers a part calendar year as the U3A is changing its membership and financial year for administrative reasons. This also entails changing the date for the election of Trustees to conform to the new financial year and membership years.

The Trustees wish to thank the group leaders in particular for their continued work at the heart of the U3A. There have been some new groups established over the last three months, a scrabble group, a bird watching group, 2 beginners short tennis groups and a beginners badminton group. The establishment of the tennis and badminton groups has been made possible by the generous offers from the Atlantic Racquet Centre, Bideford. The Trustees also wish to thank Alison Tamplin for arranging the monthly speakers at the lunch.

A special congratulations to the Petanque groups two teams, Torridge Ho! who beat Torridge Tigers in the final of the most recent national U3A petanque weekend.

The website is being progressively updated and we are investigating being able to make applications for membership directly from the website.

Unfortunately Alan Gibbons was unable to continue as Chair, we wish to thank Alan for being prepared to stand as Chair and regret he was not able to carry on with the role. Geoff Williams was co-opted as Chair up to the June AGM as a temporary measure. He is however unable to continue in the role and it is therefore necessary to secure a new Chair of Trustees.

Other committee members are in need of help to fulfill their roles particularly at the busy times. Graham would benefit from some back up with the newsletter as it is difficult to always be available at the same time each month. Anne will step down as membership secretary in March 2020 unless she is able to have some help during March, April and May. If any member would wish to join the committee as any particular role then there is room for movement on the committee with people either sharing or changing roles. The current committee roles are: Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Groups Secretary, Website Editor, Newsletter Editor, Lunch Secretary, Upper Room Booking Secretary.

There is currently a particular need for a group secretary.

It is worth noting that the committee are expecting significant changes coming from the National Office over the next year. This includes a new constitution that will probably be a requirement. There are times when changes have to take place when new regulations, changes in law and reactions to events alter the position or climate within which we all operate. These may not always be welcome by the general membership but not responding to them places the Trustees in a difficult position.

At a time of potential change within the U3A movement I think it is worth emphasizing three founding principles that will remain unchanged and all U3As adopt

at their foundation. For this I will quote the Chair's column in the latest edition of Third Age Matters. As he says these are not always communicated to the wider membership of local U3As.

1 The third age principle.

Membership of a U3A is open to all in their third age – defined as when full-time employment has ceased; members promote the values of lifelong learning and the positive attributes of belonging to a U3A and ensure that people who wish to join a U3A can do so.

2 The self-help learning principle.

Members form interest groups, covering as wide a range of topics and activities as they desire – by the membership for the membership; no qualifications are sought or offered; learning is for its own sake, with enjoyment being the prime motive, not qualifications or awards; there is no distinction between the learners and the teachers – they are all members of a U3A.

3 The mutual aid principle

Each U3A is a mutual aid organization, operationally independent but a member of the Third Age Trust, which requires adherence to the guiding principles of the U3A movement; no payments are made to individual members for services rendered to any U3A; each U3A is self-funded with membership subscriptions and costs kept as low as possible; external funding is not sought.