

MELTON MOWBRAY u3a

Chairman's Annual Report 2024/2025

At the 28th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Melton Mowbray u3a (MMu3a) on 21st March 2024, I was re-elected Chairman of the Committee along with Linda Newbery (Vice-chairman), Maureen Carruthers (Treasurer), Janice Palmer (Business Secretary) and Barry Frangleton (Speaker Secretary). Christine Bluett moved to the role of Editor, and we welcomed new Committee members Sharon Baines (Membership Secretary), Dolores Harvey (Groups Co-ordinator) and C.J. Rupp (IT Adviser). The new Committee has been enthusiastic with lots of ideas, and all have worked very hard for the members this year. Thanks to them, Melton Mowbray u3a continues to grow and flourish and I am very grateful to them all for making my role as Chairman easier! This year, four of our committee members are standing down from their roles. Maureen and Barry have both completed at least a three-year term on Committee.

Maureen stayed on the committee for an extra year as Treasurer to continue bedding in the membership management database (Beacon). Once again, Maureen has worked successfully to keep our accounts in order, and we were able to maintain our low membership fee for yet another year.

Christine is stepping down from her role as Editor, having taken it on following the sad loss of our previous Editor, Pete Smith, early in the year. Christine has been a stalwart of the Committee for many years and has held several of the roles on the Committee. Christine is never slow to volunteer new ideas and take them forward.

Our monthly Speaker meetings continue to be very popular and, thanks to Barry, our Speaker Secretary, we have enjoyed many varied, interesting and entertaining speakers at our monthly meetings this year.

I am grateful to all three for their support, advice and hard work and they will be much missed on Committee.

Linda Newbery, our conscientious Vice-chairman, has been a great support to me and looks after many varied tasks behind the scenes, not least ensuring our safety at the monthly meetings. In December, Linda also organised a tree for the annual Christmas Tree Festival at St Mary's which showcased the talents of many of our u3a groups. Linda then brought the tree to our Christmas Social so those members unable to visit the Festival could enjoy seeing the tree also. We are hoping that we will not lose Linda from our Committee entirely and that she will step into another role at the AGM this year.

I must thank our Business Secretary, Janice Palmer who is remaining on the Committee this year. Janice handles many of the administrative tasks behind the scenes which keep our u3a and Committee running smoothly. She also very ably takes the minutes at our Committee meetings whilst keeping us all in line (not always an easy task!)

Our new Committee members settled very well into their roles. CJ, our IT Adviser, has held that role previously and hit the ground running. He has created a new MMu3a website which is more 'user-friendly' and provides lots of up-to-date information about MMu3a. This involved much work and all while solving various IT issues, reviewing Beacon functionality and coming up with good suggestions at Committee.

Sharon Baines, our Membership Secretary, has also worked hard since taking on the role at the last AGM. She has introduced new approaches to the membership application and renewal process, taken on responsibility for our Facebook and WhatsApp groups, improving

communications between members' and advertising the organisation externally so our membership continues to grow. Sharon also looks after our Publicity and PR sub-committee who are looking at more ways to advertise the benefits of joining MMu3a.

Dolores Harvey, our new Groups Co-ordinator is another who has worked hard and achieved much in her first year. Dolores has encouraged and facilitated a number of new interest groups and can be found at our monthly Speaker meetings suggesting yet more new groups and encouraging members to join. She has been a great support in keeping the Group Leaders in touch with each other also, continuing drop-in coffee sessions as well as organising our successful annual Meet the Groups event as well as the Group Leaders meeting

Talking of Groups, my thanks must go to the wonderful Group Leaders of over 70 interest groups. These groups are the lifeblood of MMu3a and there is a wide variety of interests catered for. The Group Leaders all put much effort into running their groups and this is reflected in their popularity. I would like to recognise the members who work hard to ensure the monthly Speaker meetings run smoothly. Our check-in volunteers, organised by Tina Porter; the Meet and Greet team who ensure each visitor and potential member receive a warm welcome; the Refreshments team, looked after by Angela Fielding, who keep us well-watered after the talk while we enjoy the all-important socialising; Alan Barton who organised a highly enjoyable Christmas Social for members this year as well as looking after our jigsaw table; Brian Donovan who looks after the books table and, of course, the Sound Desk Team, Dennis Hopkinson and David Slack, supported by Barry and CJ, without whom there would be a deafening silence! Also working hard behind the scenes to support our u3a, Peter Matthews has continued to look after our equipment, including PAT testing, and Chris Lawman, who has examined our accounts annually for the last few years, but is stepping down this year. My grateful thanks go to them all.

Finally, I must also recognise and thank those outside the u3a who do much to support us. The teams at the Baptist Church and Sandy Lane Methodist Church. Also, Southerington's storage on the Leicester Road, who allow us complementary use of a storeroom for our u3a equipment and other bits and pieces.

Kathlyn Slack
MMu3a Chairman February 2025