

CHAIR'S REPORT FOR THE AGM ON 25th November 2024

2024 has been a stable year for the Committee. We welcomed three new Trustees to the Forum, which has added some new thinking, to our deliberations. This is vital, as it is for all u3as and Networks, to keep us moving forward whilst holding on to our values. One change to the Constitution was formalised in August, which eases the tenure of office limit on the two Officers. This change allows the Forum to gain valuable time to find replacement candidates for the positions of Chair and Treasurer, whilst maintaining the overall tenure maximum of 9 years.

Approaches have been made to East South East Sussex Network and S.W. Hants Networks regarding them becoming members of the Forum. Discussions with ESES are ongoing and SWH could not find any one to represent them. (This will be followed up again shortly).

Once again, the main task for the Forum this year has been the Summer School (SS). The 2024 SS team saw a couple of changes from the 2023 SS.

I am pleased to report that the SS24 was very successful. There were 137 members attending courses (15 non-residential), plus 12 Tutors and 2 SS team members (who were not on courses). There were four new courses, two of which were craft courses. The full details are contained in the SS24 report. The new Philosophy Course attracted 16 attendees. The feedback forms were securely collected and analysed, with a remarkable course subject result of 5 Excellent, 6 Very Good and 1 Good. The evening entertainments comprising of, quiz, theatre, film and a speaker were also enjoyed by the attendees.

It seems inadequate to just say thank you to the SS team, but what else can I say? To see and feel the "buzz" does make all the effort worthwhile. The liaison with the University of Chichester had been improved further, and on their part, they were most helpful and patient with everything from technical matters, catering and accommodation. The diligence of Linda Hugo-Vieten, in acquiring 12 tutors, some new to the SS, and the detailed liaison with the University played a major part in the smooth running of SS24. We were delighted to welcome the Forum Trustees, the Regional Trustee, Susie Berry, and the u3a Chair elect, Allan Walmsley as visitors to the SS, giving them a chance to see and talk to many u3a members, tutors and the SS team. The financial position as you will see in the Report and Financial Statement, turned out positive, with many thanks to the Treasurer who spent a considerable time working out a break-even cost plan.

The Committee are pleased to note that the Forum financial position is just slightly improved on 2023. Thus, we have not increased reserves by a large amount. The Treasurer's report will explain these matters further, and I want to again assure you that the Forum Trustees will manage the reserves within u3a guidelines and with care and consideration as we move forward, recognising that these monies are derived from SS u3a members.

I wish to thank the Committee, for their input and support during the year and look forward to working with them as we move into 2025. A special thank you for Richard Teare, our Treasurer, who oversaw the planning and management of the SS 24 team.

Finally, I wish to express our condolences to the family of our Regional Trustee, Susie Berry, who died suddenly a few weeks ago. Many messages of remembrance have and are being recorded by the u3a office. However, my association with the Forum and the changes that we worked through post Covid, was made so much easier by having the support and guidance of Susie. She will be very much missed in many areas of the u3a movement.

David Ashton, Chair

1st November 2024