

A New Year Message from our Chair, Jacqui Wellbrook

I am delighted to take this opportunity to wish all members of Ilkley & District u3a a very Happy New Year. We are really fortunate to belong to such an active and vibrant u3a with so many activities and opportunities to keep us socially engaged whilst pursuing our aim of lifelong learning. Sitting back in an armchair and watching TV is not for us!

It may come as a surprise to learn that whilst our membership has grown to nearly 2,000, our average age continues to creep up and is now 76. Some, therefore, understandably find they are no longer able to take on leadership roles although attending regular group events and meeting up with friends is still a very important part of the weekly routine.

So, we need younger members to join us to ensure the organisation continues to thrive and be relevant to future generations. This is why we continue to promote ourselves as a forward thinking, dynamic organisation that will appeal to those recently retired.

Joining and participating in group activities is crucial to any successful u3a and we know that choice and access to groups is an area that needs to improve. In the past 12 months we have started up more than a dozen new groups but we need more. We now have a policy of actively starting up second or even third groups to satisfy demand when the original group is full. Recent examples include second Motorbike and Film Discussion Groups. The short courses initiative is an attempt to get members to share their passion for a topic over perhaps, a couple of months, because we know that not everyone wishes to commit to running a group on a long-term basis.

So my message to everyone is to keep looking for opportunities to be more involved in our u3a. That is how we can get the most out of being in the 3rd age of our lives and, just as important, secure the future of our organisation for those who will look to benefit in the future.

Best wishes

Jacqui Wellbrook

Chair Ilkley & District u3a

January 2024

PS. If you are interested to know more about how we manage u3a activities, please get in touch. We welcome attendance at one of our monthly meetings as an observer for those interested in becoming more involved. Just write to me at chair@ilkleyu3a.org