

Secretary's Report to the AGM

At the last Annual General Meeting in 2022 the post of Secretary was left unfilled. In the absence of any other volunteer, I decided to offer to undertake this role. At its first Committee meeting after the A.G.M. I was co-opted as the new Secretary. And so, I have only been in post for less than a year.

The Executive Committee's main purposes are to manage the affairs of the Swanland u3a, to ensure that we comply with the various rules of the Charity Commission (The Third Age Trust of which we are a part is deemed in law to be an official charity and therefore subject to the overall direction of the Charity Commission) and to support and encourage all our members in the various Interest Groups and to liaise with other local u3as as well as the Regional Area of Yorkshire and Humberside, and The Third Age Trust (this being the national headquarters of the u3a.)

To this end your Executive Committee has met six times during the course of the year at roughly two-monthly intervals. With the responsibilities already referred to, we are never short of agenda items!

The Chair, in his report, referred to the recovery taking place in our membership total after the awful period of the pandemic, and the fact that attendance at Thursday meetings has also been increasing. It may be worth emphasising that this Swanland u3a is very unusual in organising fortnightly meetings and talks on Thursday afternoons. We have been doing this since our inception. You will find that the vast majority of u3as around the country only organise such meetings on a monthly basis.

As mentioned earlier Swanland u3a is represented at meetings of The Accord Group (which involves the collaboration of several local u3as in our area) - these meetings do offer opportunities to share ideas and to work co-operatively, though, from a personal point of view, there is a lot more we can do in this respect. We are also represented at Regional Level – Hazel Ward is the current Secretary and keeps us well-informed over recent developments. A brief mention of our national body The Third Age Trust: because local u3as are quite autonomous, we do not have a great deal of contact with headquarters. We benefit from the magazine that is sent to our homes, and there is a constant flow of information and news received by the Committee. Headquarters is there should we need (rarely) to seek legal advice and guidance at any given time. However, along with dozens of other u3as, we did succeed in voting down an ill-thought out and incompetent proposal from headquarters to increase our financial contribution - we believe that headquarters learned a clear lesson here in that it is important to consult more effectively with its constituent members. We will see.

So, in conclusion, your Committee has worked hard on your behalf during the course of the year. We hope to continue the work of recovery and renewal over the next year. But I do also want to encourage as many members as possible to contribute and support us so that we can provide an excellent platform for all of us.

John Peck. Hon. Secretary.