

Our AGM

took place at a favourite venue, St John sub Castro, on 8th November.

Quorate

The Committee was delighted when no fewer than 80 people attended, making the meeting easily quorate.

Vice Chair Michael Austin opened the meeting, firstly apologising on behalf of our Chair, Susan Murray, who had to respond to a family emergency and was unable to attend the meeting.

Question from the floor

As Michael progressed through the agenda, there was a question from the floor: how did the committee intend to use the considerable excess of funds sitting in our bank account? The committee agreed that this question would be minuted and discussed at the next Committee Meeting.

Costs

However, when Anne Williams stood up to introduce herself as Accommodation Officer, she did point out that many room hire costs were



rising for the first time in several years, and that would be one factor that would erode our surplus if we did not increase the Group fees, which we had no plans to do.

Two new committee members

Each person on the Committee said a few words about what their role entailed. There followed an introduction to two new committee members, Andrew Edgar and Eleanor Austin, and an opportunity for both Marion and Michael to say a few words as they stood down from the committee.

Eleanor Austin

New committee member Eleanor has volunteered to continue putting together the Group Listings, and with the help of another volunteer (who is not on the committee), to make sure they are sent to those members with no computer access.

Andrew Edgar

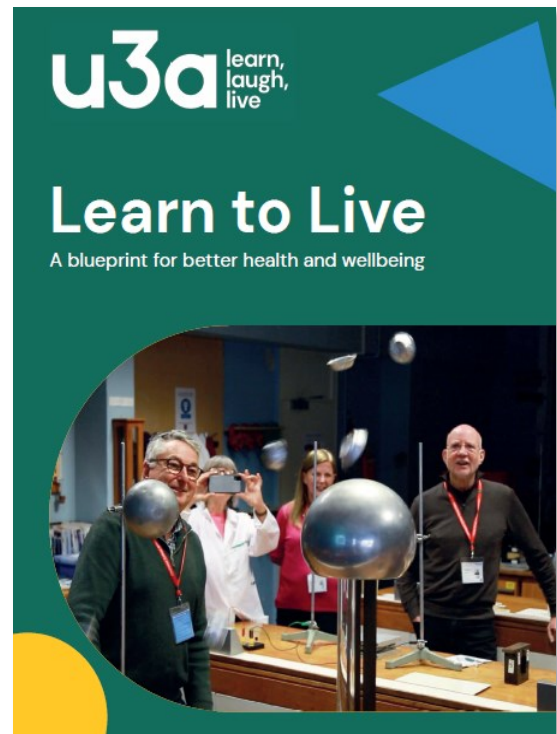
Andrew will take on the roles of New Groups Facilitator, Groups Co-ordinator and Vice Chair. It is likely that the amalgamation of these roles, plus Andrew's fresh input, will evolve into a different job requiring a different job title, which Andrew will consider.

Marion Tyler, our outgoing Group Co-ordinator, addressed the members by pointing out the growth of Lewes u3a from 20 groups and less than 250 members in 2006, with a committee of 12 people, to the current membership of around 1,000, with 60 groups. The committee currently numbers just eight.

Vote of thanks

Michael Austin proposed a vote of thanks in absentia for our Chair, Susan Murray, citing her 'leadership, dedication, perseverance, and ability to stay calm'.

After Michael closed the AGM, member Sonya Baksi gave a well received talk about the NHS, referencing some of her own experience as a GP. She was warmly thanked afterwards by our Vice Chair.



The Third Age Trust is delighted to have launched a new report.

'Learn to Live: A blueprint for better health and wellbeing' – shines a light on the u3a non-formal learning model and the benefits for promoting and maintaining happy, healthy lives.

Non-formal learning is a crucial tool for strengthening community resilience and reducing the impact of social isolation and loneliness, especially in the wake of the pandemic. This report draws attention to the value of a low-cost, non-formal learning model in promoting health and well-being in later life. It calls for greater recognition and targeted resources to enable access for all communities.

To download the report, click on [u3a Learn to Live report 2024 \(6 Byte\)](#)



MEET NEW COMMITTEE MEMBER ANDREW EDGAR

Andrew Edgar has only recently moved to Lewes (in 2022), after having spent some 30 years in Wales, teaching Philosophy at Cardiff University. Before that, for a large part of the 1980s, he studied sociology at Sussex University. Hence his fondness for the town of Lewes and the Downs. The area seemed to be the obvious place to move to on retirement.

Interests

Andrew has a wide range of interests, from sport – he’s written academic books on sport and philosophy! – through literature, music and painting – yes, he paints, especially in acrylics and gouache – and to subjects such as archaeology and dowsing.

Committee

Being on the committee of Lewes U3A is a great opportunity and challenge. He hopes he can make some contribution in encouraging people to continue to learn and explore throughout their lives, and especially to encourage people to come forth and offer their expertise and enthusiasm in new and exciting groups.

CHAMBER MUSIC?

If you enjoy playing chamber music for pleasure, we have a new member who plays the piano and is keen to assemble a casual group of classical players for the occasional session of music.

This will not be a beginners group, but it is practical and informal. If you are interested in finding out more, email Jackie at Bulletin@lewesu3a.uk in the first instance, who will forward your email to Tim Locke, the member considering starting the group.



TO CONTACT OUR NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS, EMAIL:



Eleanor Austin
editorlistings@lewesu3a.uk

Andrew Edgar
groups@lewesu3a.uk

General comments, suggestions
or enquiries to:

bulletin@lewesu3a.uk

A BIG ROUND OF APPLAUSE



As a fellow Committee Member, the Editor adds her own dispassionate observations of both Marion Tyler's and Michael Austin's time on the Lewes u3a Committee.

'Both have served for many years, through four Chairs, and both have been instrumental in the sometimes torturous but necessary transition from Beacon to the Simple Membership database.

Forefront of innovations

Michael has always been at the forefront of any innovations to u3a procedures, bearing the brunt of occasional criticisms of his ideas with fortitude and good humour. He has sourced interesting speakers for the Lewes u3a Public Lectures, and more recently our Seasonal Socials. He also took on the responsibility of Safeguarding, after bringing the Committee's attention to the need for such a policy.

He says, "On this committee I was first the Publicity Officer then Public Lecture Organiser then Group Facilitator. It has been both an amazing experience and a privilege to work with such dedicated colleagues for the good of our u3a. I stand down knowing that Lewes u3a is in good hands"

Michael will continue to be active within Lewes u3a and plans to convene a Group in the New Year.

Marion says of the growth of Lewes u3a since she joined in 2006, "It is quite staggering, when you consider that we started in 1985 that it took 22 years to get to 250 and only another 17 to get to 1,000, even with a pandemic in the middle!!"

Grappling with new processes

Marion has doggedly persisted with the Simple Membership database right from the beta testing prior to inception, grappling with new and sometimes erratic processes, stepping in herself to administer a group when the system defeated some group leaders.

Group Listings

It is typical of Marion that she took on compiling the Group Listings, so that the membership could have a printable alternative to the website Group pages, if this is what they preferred.

We are fortunate that Marion has offered - the offer being swiftly accepted!- to continue helping with the groups on Simple Membership, at least initially, ensuring a smooth transition as Andrew settles into the role'.

The Safeguarding responsibility will be absorbed into the Group co-ordinator role as part of a checklist of guidelines given to new Group Leaders. Public Speaking opportunities will be taken over by the Publicity Officer.