

# USK U3A NEWSLETTER, MAY 2019



## The retiring Chairman's Report April 2019

### “We have funding to support new groups”

#### Retiring chair appeals for members to help establish fresh activities

My 3 year tenure as chairman is now up. The time has passed quickly, and while we have seen some membership growth we have not been able to expand our activities.

The Culture Group was replaced by the programme of monthly meetings which have proved very successful. But the French conversation group has now disbanded. My thanks to Sheila for all the effort she made in organising this activity. The other groups continue to flourish.

My thanks must go to all the Committee members, and convenors for their hard work. In particular I would mention Mel our Treasurer for his exemplary accounts, Mary for secretarial prowess and Joan for getting to grips with the GDPR effort to protect data on our members.

We have posted a questionnaire at the AGM which we hope as many of you as possible will contribute to. The aim of this is to expand our activities into other areas. We have good funding and would offer as much assistance as possible to any new group starting up.

Once again I would remind you that the U3A is meant to be a self-help organisation with members using their own abilities to further their interests. The poster for the AGM



*Usk U3A Chair Reg Darge, retiring in April after three years in office, is urging members to complete a questionnaire on ideas for new activity groups.*

listed posts that needed to be filled in order that we can continue to operate successfully and within the U3A's remit. None of the posts are particularly onerous and do not require too much time. Even if you feel unable to take one of the officers post please consider a Committee position that could boost your confidence to take on a more active role in the future.

While I will not be Chairman next year I hope to be able to continue to participate on the committee and participate in the running of our U3A.

**Reg Darge, Chair Usk U3A**

*Questionnaire forms: Contact the Secretary Mary Atkins for a copy of the Usk U3A Questionnaire on suggestions for new activity groups and this Newsletter, or email your ideas to her at [maryatkins2002@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:maryatkins2002@yahoo.co.uk).*

## Gardening Group

### **Gardeners quizzed on vegan compost and poisonous plants**

After a summer of visits in 2018 to some very interesting gardens we began our Autumn program with a planning meeting. A number of suggestions were made for visits in 2019 and subjects members would like covered.

We had a lively talk in October at Morris's Garden Centre about plants that were currently performing well in the garden and our Christmas meeting was making Christmas wreaths and table decorations with foliage from our gardens.

In January we had a quiz with a difference. Everyone was responsible for three multiple choice questions on gardening or garden related subjects. It worked well and we all learnt something on poisonous plants, compost for vegans, origins of some of our popular plants and many more subjects.

#### ***Talks, trips and plant sales make up busy year-round programme***

In February we had a talk on the National Garden Scheme by Cathy Davies the area organiser for Gwent. We learnt about a number of gardens open to the public and we hope to visit some this summer. There are a wide variety of gardens and the money raised helps a number of caring charities with Macmillan Cancer and Marie Curie receiving a large amount.

In March we had a talk on Bonsai by Owain Gibby. Owain has been growing for many years and he brought along over 20 bonsai trees of various sizes from his collection. A memorable meeting which generated lots of interest although the amount of time needed to tend to one plant meant some serious commitment was needed.

There was a plant sale and members brought surplus plants and snowdrops in the green.

#### ***Activities for 2019***

- April will be our practical month and there will be a number of plants for sale.
- May we are off to the RHS Flower Show at Malvern.
- Visits are planned for June to September. Places on a number of the earlier visits are nearly full, but people drop out due to circumstances beyond their control so I do hold a reserve list. Details of these visits will be at the U3A monthly meetings.

**Margaret Hatfield, Convenor, Tel 01291 652972, [margarethatfield@madasafish.com](mailto:margarethatfield@madasafish.com).**

## Bridge Group



*Wednesday members of the friendly Usk U3A Bridge Group at their imposing venue in the historic Library of The Sessions House in Maryport Street. The Wednesday sessions are usually slightly less busy than Mondays – and fewer tables can mean more hands of bridge per table and a little more time to review the play and pick up bidding tips from more experienced players.*

### **Sweeteners for players who go for a slam**

The bridge groups continue to meet every Monday and Wednesday in the Session House from 1.45 until 4.00 pm often with a full house of 7 tables.

We are a very friendly group who all enjoy playing the game while able to meet and talk as friends. There is of course a competitive atmosphere as we play duplicate bridge with all partners playing the same hands to discover who could make the best contracts and gain the most points in competition with the other couples over the same hands.

Naturally we hope that as we continue to practice in this social atmosphere we will get more experience and skilful at playing the hands.

But the competition is made more intense by the North-South and East-West winning pairs getting to choose a chocolate bar each! And briefly in February the incentive was stepped up a notch with chocolate for any pair which could bid and win a slam.

The Bridge Group attracts everyone from skilled and experienced players to people who know their way round a bridge table but are keen to improve their game. New members a welcome and you don't need to arrive with a partner.

The charge is a modest £2 per two-hour session - which pays for the room rent and keeps the group supplied with crisp new playing cards, tables and bridge equipment.

*Jo Acton and Mel Witherden*



## Scrabble Group

### When Scrabblers are glad to get rid of their ex ...

We continue to enjoy sociable games of Scrabble on alternate Wednesday afternoons. There are 17 registered players with an average of 10 each session.

We have welcomed some new members this year, but as is inevitable with advancing years, a few people are no longer able to come. Three men are now playing regularly.

We purchased a couple of "quirky" Scrabble word books recently, and are awaiting the publication of the latest "Words Allowed" dictionary. There were some lively discussions ensue about the legality of some words, but as one member observed, our rules are quite relaxed.

We are continuing the tradition of afternoon tea plus a game of Scrabble at the local garden centre when we celebrate significant birthdays, and look forward to at least one more this coming year.

If you used to play lexicon when you were younger or now challenge the computer with word games, please come along for a few taster games. Just be aware that when someone says "Phew! I'm glad I've got rid of my ex," it has a different connotation in the world of Scrabble speak from normal everyday usage!

*Rosemary Evans, Convenor*

## Painting For Pleasure

### Group can be stepping stone to artist achievement

In October of 2019 the Painting Group will have been up and running for three years. During that time a band of twelve members signed on at the start and are still attending. They form the backbone of the group. Others have come and gone, as is to be expected.

A few, once they have gained in confidence, have left us to join more specialist art groups in oil painting, pastels and botanical illustration. So our U3A group can act as a stepping stone for further artistic development and achievement.

While we are not strictly an instructional group, help, advice and support are always on hand. Members are encouraged to work in a variety of media on a pre-set theme each session.

Currently we have 24 members on the roll with 16-18 being the average attendance.

New members of any ability and none are welcome throughout the year. But each September to December there is a course of lessons in all the basic media: pencil, charcoal, ink pen, pastel, water colour and acrylics. So this is an ideal time of year to join if you are thinking of giving it a go.

The group meets in the warm pleasant surroundings of Llangybi Village Hall fortnightly on Thursdays from 10am to 12.30. Members pay £2 per session to cover the cost of hall hire, coffee and biscuits.

*Sue Morgan, Convenor*

## Monday Gentle Walking Group



### Group offers friendship, scenery, and perhaps some mud

The Monday Gentle Walking group have again enjoyed a variety of walks, taking in the canal, woodland and our beautiful countryside.

Between 4 and 16 walkers have enjoyed friendship and companionship as we walk for 2 to 3 hours, stopping for a short drink and snack.

We walk fortnightly, on a Monday, meeting at 10.00 am in Usk main car park, near the Green Flute Cafe (although when it got very hot last summer, we walked at the earlier time of 9.30 am). We usually return between 1.00 and 1.30 pm.

Suitable boots and clothing are essential, as the fields and lanes can be muddy. A walking stick is very useful. Car sharing gets us to more interesting areas and a small charge is made to subsidise drivers. This is currently £4.00 per annum.



*Above: Members of the Gentle Walking Group take a breather during their recent country walks.*

We are a very friendly group and welcome all newcomers. For further information, contact Myra on [01291 673377](tel:01291673377), or check the Usk U3A web page for the email contact.

*Myra France, Convenor*

#### DATES OF FUTURE WALKS

6<sup>th</sup> May, 20<sup>th</sup> May  
3<sup>rd</sup> June, 17<sup>th</sup> June

## Reading Group 1

### Girls in bright clothes entertain Book Group

Reading Group 1 is a group of 10 ladies, we meet in each other's houses on the third Thursday of the month.

We have enjoyed a varied list of books during 2018, a couple of classics, one non fiction and a delightful selection of fiction. These included two items of clothing with *The Girl in the Red Coat* by Kate Hamer and *The Girl in the Polka Dot Dress* by Beryl Bainbridge.

There was also a new book from Nikolai Houn, *The Gradual Disappearance of Jane Ashland* and an old book, *To Kill a Mocking Bird* by Harper Lee.

Reading group 1 started in 2005, so we have had many adventures over the years delving into so much reading matter, long may it continue. We have a vacancy for 2 more people. Please contact me if you are interested.

*Hilary Burgess, Convenor, allathome@icloud.com.*

## Reading Group 2

### Readers travel in space and time

Our book group is 7 years old this coming summer and we can hardly believe we have discussed so many different books over this time.

This past year we have visited a wide range of places in our imaginations, ranging from northern newly industrialised Victorian England, to generations of 20th century American family life and a 19th century rural Irish village ruled by folklore and superstition.

Our discussions of the books continue to be sometimes controversial because of the wide range of opinions expressed concerning the content and style of each book. However, we do all agree, that we are reading books we might not otherwise have chosen to read for ourselves.

We continued with this theme in January when, rather than reading a book from our list, we each described one (or more) book of our own choice which we had enjoyed or had made a great and lasting impression. This was a huge success and gave us all suggestions for further books to read outside of the book group.

We hope that as many people as possible will join us on 28th June at Llangybi Village Hall to hear Abergavenny local author Cath Barton who is posing the question in a talk entitled "Everyone Has a Novel in Them - True or False?"

*Rosemary Cochrane, Convenor*

## Membership

Usk U3A membership at the date of the AGM stands at 170 members although there are still a few outstanding payments which could reduce this figure.

We continued to recruit new members last year, and 22 new members in total joined the Usk U3A. In 2019 we already have 11 new members and two members who have rejoined, so the membership is looking very positive.

*Roma Meek, Membership Secretary*



## Usk U3A EVENTS PROGRAMME

### Volunteers needed to make 2020 bigger and better

Our programme of monthly talks and events is growing in popularity. But we want your help to make them even more successful next year.

The Committee is prepared to spend more money to bring in popular speakers to widen the range of topics and generate interest in the U3A in the local community. But this needs volunteers to help us occasionally - with ideas for guest speakers, possible contacts, setting up the venue, welcoming speakers, managing the door receipts and refreshments etc.

The groups have each been organising one meeting a year, which is hardly too much work. This means that each group has the opportunity to choose a topic which interests them (and hopefully many other members) and the programme becomes very varied. Assistance in organising a meeting is available from a small team so no one should feel it is too difficult for them.

Please contact Dianne Dawkins at [r.dawkins724@btinternet.com](mailto:r.dawkins724@btinternet.com).

### Usk U3A Events Programme for the rest of 2019

31 <sup>ST</sup> MAY	“EVERY WOMAN REMEMBERED - DAUGHTERS OF NEWPORT IN THE GREAT WAR” - speaker Sylvia Mason MA: Accounts of the Newport Women who died in service in WW1 and others who did so much for the war effort in the town. Their work changed the lives of the women who came after them.
28 <sup>TH</sup> JUNE	“EVERYONE HAS A NOVEL IN THEM: TRUE OR FALSE?” - speaker writer Cath Barton
27 <sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER	“SUPPLYING THE ROMAN ARMY” - speaker Mike Thomas: How the Roman Army was supplied with food, weapons and clothing to keep it nourished and equipped on its marches across the Empire.
25 <sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER	“CLOCKS” - speaker Malcolm Hatfield
29 <sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER	U3A QUIZ
DECEMBER	U3A Christmas lunch - date and venue to be announced

**Location:** All meetings are at Llangybi Village Hall

**Start time:** 2pm

### U3A Events will be free for trial period

The U3A Committee decided at its May meeting that for a trial period the monthly events will be entirely free, including the refreshments. The normal charge is £1 for members to cover the cost of refreshments and £2 for non members.

### Web site volunteer urgently needed

Our web site is regarded as one of the best U3A sites in Wales, but David Lee, the member who designed it and has kept it going for a number of years, is hoping to hand over to someone else.

The most urgent task is the simple job of helping the Committee to keep it up-to-date. But someone with the expertise to develop the site as our needs change would be a tremendous boon. If you can help us - or if you know a local business which provides web site development services - please contact the Chair Mike Cowburn on 01291 672832, email [m.cowburn23@btinternet.com](mailto:m.cowburn23@btinternet.com).

## Two new Committee members appointed

Two new Committee members, Maggie Corke and April Johnson, were appointed at our well-attended AGM on 9th April. Eight other members were reappointed.

Contact details for our officers and Committee members are as follows:

**Chairman:** Mike Cowburn, m.cowburn23@btinternet.com, tel 672832

**Business Secretary:** Mary Atkins, maryatkins2002@yahoo.co.uk, tel 01291 673539

**Membership Secretary:** Roma Meek, romameek@btinternet.com, tel 01633 450377

**Treasurer:** Mel Witherden, treasurer@UskU3A.org, tel 01495 769000

**Network Secretary:** Jo Acton, for Newsletter contributions, 2joact1@gmail.com

**Data Protection Co-ordinator:** Joan Bennett, gdpr@uskU3A.org.uk

**Committee members:** Maggie Corke, maggiacorke@btinternet.com, tel 01633 430237

**Reg Darge,** rtd@darge7.plus.com; **Dianne Dawkins,** 01291 672380; **April Johnson,**

Lanjohnson@btinternet.com, 01291 672857

**Our postal address:** Usk U3A c/o The Sessions House, 43 Maryport St, Usk NP15 1AD.

**Web site:** www.usku3a.org.uk.

**Usk U3A group convenors:** BRIDGE: Kath Collis; GARDENING: Margaret Hatfield; PAINTING FOR PLEASURE: Sue Morgan; SCRABBLE: Rosemary Evans; WALKING: Myra France; READING GROUP 1: Hilary Burgess; READING GROUP 2: Rosemary Cochrane. *Contact details for the Convenors are available from the Secretary, Mary Atkins, Tel 01291 673539, email maryatkins2002@yahoo.co.uk*

## South Wales U3A Network

Meetings of the U3A South Wales Network are held three to four times a year and hosted by individual U3A groups throughout the area. This year they have been in St Arvans, Chepstow, Cowbridge, and Torfaen. They are always very well attended by representatives from all the U3A's in the area.

I have been to all the meetings which are useful at formal and informal levels. I am getting to know the hierarchy, and hard workers in the upper levels of the U3A organisation, who give short reports on important aspects of running a U3A group locally. Then the second part of each meeting is usually devoted to contributions from the group representatives who ask about dealing with problems that have arisen within their U3As. So far Usk has had few major problems, but I have benefitted from learning how to deal with them should they arise!

Any Usk member is welcome to come with me to network meetings should they be interested. Contact me by email at 2joact1@gmail.com.

**Jo Acton, Network Co-ordinator**



***Our new Chair Mike Cowburn who took over at our Annual General Meeting on 9th April.***



## Membership and data protection

### Careful steps to safeguarding members' data

This newsletter is an opportunity to tell you what we have been doing to safeguard members' data and how we should deal with problems when they arise.

First we had to work out a formal policy in detail to comply with the new regulations. This went through several iterations and now it is agreed and available on the website.

Then we had to plan how we could make this work in practice and train all the people who have access to members' data on behalf of the U3A in how to look after it securely and how to deal with problems when they happen. We are now a long way through the training process and expect to complete this by mid-May.

Lastly, we need to let members know what we are doing and what they need to do if they think there's a problem. So please read on!

### Dealing with data protection and privacy problems

If members think they have found any problem, there are two things they can do.

1. If it is a simple case of discovering an error about themselves or they wish to update the information we keep about them, they should complete the **GDPR REPORTING FORM** and send it in. (GDPR stands for General Data Protection Regulation.)

2. If it is anything else, members should contact us by emailing [gdpr@uskU3a.org.uk](mailto:gdpr@uskU3a.org.uk) or by writing to the Secretary of Usk U3A with enough information for us to understand the problem and try to deal with it.

There is a copy of the **GDPR Reporting Form** with this newsletter. You can also get one from your convener or from the Usk U3A Secretary.

**The address for contacting Usk U3A by post is:** The Secretary, Usk U3A, c/o The Sessions House, Maryport Street, Usk NP15 1AD

### Members rights and responsibilities

We can't look after your data properly if we don't have the basic information which we ask for on the annual Membership Renewal Form. Please complete this form and let us know of any changes. There is no need to give us other information.

You may occasionally be asked as a member of your group to pose for a photograph for U3A publicity - such as this Newsletter or the web site. If you don't want to appear in a photograph which might be published please tell the photographer and stand aside while the picture is being taken.

### What Next?

We have to finish this year's training and plan training for any new committee members or group conveners throughout the year. We aim to produce a small information booklet with our data protection policy to detail the process for the future.

*Joan Bennett, Committee member*

## USK U3A INFORMATION REPORTING FORM

**REPORT TYPE** (delete as applicable)

I am reporting an error in my membership information (GDPR1)

or

I am updating my membership information (GDPR2)

**CORRECT PERSONAL INFORMATION:**

Title .....

First Name .....

Surname .....

Address .....

Postcode .....

Phone Number .....

Mobile Phone Number .....

Email Address .....

**GROUPS:**

Please indicate the groups you are interested in by circling them:

- |               |           |                       |
|---------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| Bridge French | Gardening | Painting for Pleasure |
| Reading       | Scrabble  | Walking               |

**DATA SHARING:**

U3A uses a specialist company to distribute magazines and has to give them some of your contact information so that they can do this. Please say NO if you do NOT want to receive the magazines:

'Third Age Matters' and 'Sources' YES/NO "

We will disclose your information whenever required by Government to do so.

Usk U3A Full Data Protection and Privacy Policies are available on the website or from the Usk U3A Secretary. The relationship between Usk U3A and its members is a contractual one.

Return Completed Form to:

**Mrs Roma Meek, Membership Secretary, 5 St Cybi Avenue, Llangybi, Usk NP15 1TT.**

# Finances

## USK U3A 2018 ANNUAL ACCOUNTS AND TREASURER'S REPORT

1. **Preparation and review of the accounts:** The Annual Accounts for 2018 have been prepared on the same basis as in previous years. They have been examined and approved on a voluntary basis by Usk resident Mr Barry Morse MA FCA FCCA FHEA. Mr Morse's expertise was recommended by members at the 2018 AGM, and the Committee is extremely grateful for his help.
2. **Presentation of the accounts:** The accounts are presented exactly as last year to allow comparisons to be made. The attached summary includes details of income and expenditure for core U3A activities and for the U3A groups where spending is involved, and a mini Balance Sheet.
3. **Income and expenditure totals:** In 2018 the total income was £8,508 and expenditure was £8,116. Both figures are higher than the corresponding 2017 totals of £7,974 and 7,180.
4. **The bottom line:** Total balances at 31.12.18 (after allowing for early payments of membership subscriptions and outstanding payments) were £3,375 - a rise of £206 on 2017. This continues the pattern of increases in our funds over several years.
5. **Activities:**
  - The accounts reflect only minor fluctuations in the income and expenditure of most U3A groups compared with 2017. But higher figures for the Gardening Group, which was only established two years ago, reflect the growth of its activities.
  - The successful series of 9 monthly events and talks by visiting speakers which was introduced in 2018 was run at a modest net cost of only £58. Unused funds from the former Culture Group have recently been transferred to this Events Programme to help its activities to grow.
6. **Groups' resources:** The table below shows the money held for groups in the U3A account and the group's own petty cash. The overall financial resources of U3A groups fell by £195 in the year. Petty cash records are examined at least once during the financial year.

<b>Summary of funds of U3A groups at 31st December 2018</b>							
	<i>Bridge</i>	<i>Events</i>	<i>French</i>	<i>Painting</i>	<i>Gardening</i>	<i>Walking</i>	<i>Totals</i>
Cash held by groups	£134.58	£30.00	£0.00	-£26.09	£53.20	£0.00	<b>£191.69</b>
Held in U3A account	£67.33	£584.68	£287.26	£30.55	£36.00	£14.50	<b>£1,020.32</b>
less payments due	-£24.00		-£210.00				-£234.00
<b>Groups' total resources</b>	<b>£177.91</b>	<b>£614.68</b>	<b>£77.26</b>	<b>£4.46</b>	<b>£89.20</b>	<b>£14.50</b>	<b>£978.01</b>
<i>Resources at 31.12.17</i>	<i>£302.14</i>	<i>£614.68</i>	<i>£60.66</i>	<i>£102.48</i>	<i>£93.85</i>	<i>£0.00</i>	<i>£1,173.81</i>
<i>Change since 2017</i>	<i>-£124.23</i>	<i>£0.00</i>	<i>£16.60</i>	<i>-£98.02</i>	<i>-£4.65</i>	<i>£14.50</i>	<i>-£195.80</i>

7. **Core U3A reserves:** The Committee is continuing to monitor the growth of core U3A funds (ie money not identified with individual groups) to assess the best way to use our resources in future. These reached £3,243 at the end of the year.
8. **Assets:** Our Assets Register shows physical assets with a replacement value of £3,179.
9. **Summary of Accounts:** There is a summary of the inspected accounts below.



*Mel Witherden, Treasurer, [mel@sunlea.org.uk](mailto:mel@sunlea.org.uk)*

## Usk U3A Annual Accounts for the year ending 31st December 2018

Income	2018	2017	Variance
Membership subscriptions	£1,971.00	£2,196.00	-£225.00
less advance payments for the next year	-£846.00	-£660.00	-£186.00
Bridge Group (table fees)	£2,630.50	£2,756.50	£53.17
Monthly events/formerly Culture Group	£216.29	£913.00	-£696.71
Christmas lunch	£986.00	£816.00	£170.00
French	£271.60	£234.00	£37.60
Painting	£672.35	£812.84	-£140.49
Gardening	£1,200.42	£246.35	£954.07
Walking	£560.00	£0.00	£560.00
	<b>£7,662.16</b>	<b>£7,314.69</b>	<b>£347.47</b>
Expenditure	2018	2017	Variance
U3A national capitation	£553.00	£639.27	-£86.27
U3A Newsletter Distribution	£321.34	£358.65	-£37.31
Web Site	£149.23	£35.70	£113.53
AGM Costs	£175.00	£216.93	-£41.93
Christmas lunch	£1,023.00	£874.49	£148.51
Conference/networking	£0.00	£20.00	-£20.00
Walking	£525.50	£0.00	£525.50
Bridge (Room hire, prizes, consumables)	£2,809.67	£2,775.19	£34.48
Monthly events/formerly Culture Group	£274.00	£958.96	-£684.96
French room hire	£255.00	£285.00	-£30.00
Gardening (Room hire, consumables)	£1,205.07	£206.00	£999.07
Painting	£800.37	£810.36	-£9.99
Gifts/Donations	£25.00	£0.00	£25.00
	<b>£8,116.18</b>	<b>£7,180.55</b>	<b>£935.63</b>
BALANCES	2018	2017	Variance
Surplus/deficit (income less expenditure)	<b>-£454.02</b>	<b>£134.14</b>	-£588.16
Cash brought forward from previous year	<b>£3,829.87</b>	<b>£3,035.73</b>	£794.14
Funds at 31.12	<b>£3,375.85</b>	<b>£3,169.87</b>	£205.98

BALANCE SHEET at 31.12		2018	2017	Variance
<b>Current assets</b>	Cash at bank - U3A funds	£3,263.84	£2,601.12	
	Cash at bank - group funds	£1,020.32	£792.75	
	<b>Reconciled bank total</b>	<b>£4,284.16</b>	<b>£3,393.87</b>	
	p/cash held by groups	£191.69	£436.00	
	<b>Total cash</b>	<b>£4,475.85</b>	<b>£3,829.87</b>	
<b>Liabilities</b>	Payments not cleared at 31.12	-£254.00	£0.00	
	Advance membership payments	-£846.00	-£660.00	
<b>Total funds</b>	<b>£3,375.85</b>	<b>£3,169.87</b>	<b>£205.98</b>	

Prepared by Mel Witherden, Treasurer, 15th January 2019

Inspected and approved by  4.02.2019