

CHAIR'S REPORT 2024/25

I am absolutely delighted to report to you that Croydon u3a is going from strength to strength. Our membership is increasing steadily, this 'new blood' being vital for our sustainability. The local publicity delivered by social media and articles in neighbourhood magazines and your word-of-mouth promotions have all contributed. The New Member Coffee Mornings and the Welcome Group at Monthly Meetings ensure that we are inclusive and friendly. A recent speaker at a Monthly Meeting specifically commented that we are the friendliest and most diverse u3a he has been to. And he added that he had been to a lot! I must thank Sally, our Speaker Secretary, who puts together our varied and interesting programme for the Monthly Meetings.

The new website has developed since December 2024 when the old platform was closed down. We have a great team of members who have established the new site and are keeping it fresh and engaging. The two main functions of the website are – a reference point for members and a marketing tool. It is our 'shop window' for anyone interested to find out who we are and what we do and therefore has to look good!

The number of new Interest Groups and short courses has continued to develop, broadening the scope of social non-formal learning with low costs. The Committee always welcomes ideas and suggestions for new groups and for creating parallel groups when some are full. I am very grateful to the Interest Group team.

The Travel Team leaders, Linda and David, deserve a special mention. The outings and short breaks that are arranged for us are brilliant. They manage to put together such an interesting and varied programme, with such enthusiasm and attention to detail, assisted by the rest of the team.

The policy of sending Bulletins, Croydon Magazine and news by occasional emails was agreed with the aim of keeping costs down but also actioning our environmental commitment. If you didn't know about this please visit our statement of Commitment to Environmental Concerns which I am proud to tell you has been adopted by other u3as and was used as the basis for the national u3a policy.

https://croydonu3a.org.uk/imgs/croydon_u3a_commitment_to_the_environment_statement83138.pdf We also have a separate website dedicated to climate concerns which is well worth a look - <https://u3acroydon.weebly.com/>

My role as Council Representative for the London Region continues to develop and it is my continuing privilege to visit other u3as, learn from them and share our good practice.

I would like to register my grateful thanks to our Committee Members and Volunteers who are the essential 'ingredients' of our success.

Very best wishes for another successful year

Jenny (Jenny Wilson)