

Higham and Rushden U3A Chairman's Report 2018

Last year I opened my 2017 report by noting that the Chinese name their years after animals but said that I couldn't think of an appropriate animal and ended up calling it our Year of Technology. I'm not sure what I would call this past year but I think we have had another good year and perhaps thankfully a fairly quiet one. Membership stands at 629 and reflects a slow but steady growth, month on month.

Once again we have enjoyed an interesting set of monthly meetings. Thank you to Pat and Joanna, who together took on the role of Speaker Secretary and ensured we continued to have a varied programme that appeals to as many members as possible. Our groups continue to flourish and whilst some fall by the wayside, new ones form. Group Leaders come and go, with new people stepping up to replace those that are looking to stand down. A big, big thank you to all Group Leaders without whom HandR would not be the lively, successful and vibrant organisation that it is. And last, but by no means least I want to say a big thanks you to our "unsung heroes":

- The Signing-in Team
- Delia and Meg on the Visitors/New Members table
- The Meet and Greet team

Your jobs are important to the smooth running of the monthly meeting. Your help is appreciated.

I am stepping down since my term of office is over and other retirements this year are Mike Mimms who is also standing since his term of office has run its course and Joanna Read-Thurner who has resigned for personal reasons. And a big thank you to Lynn, our Groups Coordinator who has done sterling work in the job but decided to stand down for what I am sure is a welcome and well-deserved break. I also want to make a special mention of Peter Turner... Peter has turned his hand to many things over the years he was on the Committee. He was Membership Secretary but most notably Newsletter Editor for more years than I can recall. Thank you Peter. I would like to welcome two new members who were recently co-opted onto the Committee, Mike Wood and Alan Devenish. Mike is joining with his future already mapped out - he will be shadowing Jean Mole, our Treasurer, with a view to taking over when Jean's term of office finishes next year. We're searching for a job for Alan – that shouldn't be difficult!

I have said this before but it is worth repeating. If there is anything that you would like to do, an activity you would like to enjoy, a skill you would like to master then speak out, let us know. Higham and Rushden U3A is **your** organisation. It is run by you for your benefit and enjoyment. The Committee is here to help and guide the running of the U3A but the ideas are best coming from you. And this year I will repeat my comment that it is you, the members, who ensure the continued success of HandR.

Perhaps the biggest matter that we have faced this year is the possible loss of these fantastic premises. The Pemberton Centre has been our home from Day One. It has served us well and I think I speak for all when I say that we would love to remain here. But that is not to be! We are still waiting to hear when the work will commence and Angela will give you an update in a moment.

All that remains is for me to say thank you to the Committee for all your help and support and a big thank you to you, the members. And as a new Chairman takes over I know I am passing you into a safe pair of hands.