**Annual report from the Chair 2016**

.It hardly seems possible that 12 months have elapsed and Peter retired as chairman. He left our U3A in a very strong position with all the policies for the efficient running of it. And I thank him most sincerely for making my life easier from the bureaucratic point of view. I have been able to refer to the policy documents when in doubt.

I am blessed with a very cohesive and hard working committee to whom I am indebted for their help and input. Unfortunately before the year end we lost our Vice Chairman, Mary Perry who has moved down to Wells.

Our aim as a committee, this year has been to improve

* our experiences at the monthly meeting,
* to introduce workshops which may appeal more to people who don’t like the crush of monthly meetings
* and also to offer social events to give members opportunities to meet and mix more freely with other members.

Our trips or outings have increased so that there is a trip somewhere most months. Our Trips committee is to be commended and greatly appreciated for all their efforts. It is not easy arranging coach loads of people to be at the same place at the same time, let alone the time and energy put into researching, planning and booking large numbers of people.

Our current membership is 730 which includes 93 new members & 67 lapsed. There is a gradual slowing of net increase in current members. The 67 who are no longer members includes 10 known to have died although there were several others who resigned because of serious ill health who may have died subsequently. This slowing of numbers means that the dropping of the catchment area has had no detrimental effect, and indeed, may have contributed to the diversity of our members. It also means that we have no need for concern about our numbers becoming too large.

Our interest groups continue to flourish with us now having 82 groups. We are very fortunate to have Group Leaders with so many diverse interests, with subjects as diverse as Rocking and Rollers, Crochet and Philosophy.

Newsline has become much more colourful as our expenditure on printing has dropped owing to the number of people having it emailed to them. I must thank the team who put it together, especially Vivien Scorer who collates the calendar

We need to acknowledge the teams of people who are the vital part of our monthly meeting. Welcomers and refreshment providers are all essential to the smooth running of our monthly meeting. At this point I must also pay tribute to the staff of the Leisure Centre who works so hard to set the hall up and clear it afterwards and their incredible helpfulness to us.

One of the most important teams at our monthly meeting are our “Techies” who put together our PA system every month, hauling large speakers round the hall and ensuring that all is well with whatever ‘gizmo’ our speaker may turn up with.

At the risk of sounding complacent I think our U3A is in very good shape for our new academic year. Thank you.

 **Lesley Elkington**