

Groups Co-ordinator report to AGM – September 2020

With all the Covid19 and lockdown issues, it has indeed been a strange year. Not surprisingly this has meant little has been happening over the last 6 months sadly that period has led to a couple of group leader deciding they no longer wish to continue running their groups and we will need to either find new leaders/co-ordinators or see their demise.

May I say on behalf of all our members a huge thank you to those few that take on the task of organising and running the many individual groups that we have. We currently have over 70 active groups, making us one of the largest U3A groups in the area.

On a more positive note the lockdown has seen one new member deciding to return from their foreign abode and come back to their roots here in Southend. He is a keen petanque player and as the existing two groups are full he has kindly started a third **PETANQUE** group meeting on a Monday.

Prior to lockdown we saw the start of a new and third **TABLE TENNIS** group also taking place on a Monday. They held their inaugural session in March before being hit with lockdown but hopefully once clearance given to restart they will quickly get into full swing again. Another group that started but never quite got underway due to lockdown was the **BEEWALK** group which was being set up after a very interesting monthly meeting talk back in January on Bumblebees.

I can also report that this year saw the setting up of a **PORTRAIT PAINTING** group. A group that existed a few years back but folded due to lack of interest and pleasing to see that restart.

Other new groups also starting this year include **SOMETHING ON A SUNDAY** and a second Sunday lunch group calling themselves **DESERT FIRST LUNCH**. A third fashion group **FABULOUS FASHIONS** also started up giving opportunities for members in what is clearly a popular sector; and if you have a love of watching films then you would have been pleased to see the **CINEMA FILMS** group kick off.

It has been interesting to see how some groups have managed to stay in touch during lockdown. I hear there have been many Zoom meetings taking place (even ukulele playing via zoom!), quizzes exchanged via email, online bridge playing and the local history group has amazingly managed to keep a weekly newsletter going – well done to Jim for that – and if you want to read the newsletters then they have all been uploaded onto the website as too have all the SMILE NEWS created by Lorna for all members and again a mammoth weekly task.

May I conclude by again thanking all the group leaders and if any group wishes to share any information then the website can be used for that purpose; just email details to the webmaster (or any committee member) whose contact details are on the website.

David White