

February 2023

+ Dates for Your Diaries:

Following on from the success of the January meeting and the help we are receiving to run the meetings, we are planning two more social events with speakers - both Wednesdays and both at 2pm in URC Hall, High Street:

March 22nd, Pete Johnson will give a talk entitled "A life in (& on) the Wireless" – 36 years in Commercial Radio and the BBC.

May 24th, speaker to be confirmed. This will also include our AGM – so, to repeat Lesley's comment below, "*Lesley is stepping down as Chair after 4 years in the role and the branch urgently needs a replacement. Use Contact Details below to show interest!!*" It would be a shame if Church Stretton u3a failed at this point due to lack of a Chair.

+ Report on the Social Event, Wednesday 25th January:

The meeting went extremely well with 44 members and 2 guests attending. Tea and cakes were served from the outset giving time for chat at the tables plus the activities of Church Stretton u3a were projected onto the wall.

Lesley Dench (Chair) welcomed all present and thanked the members who had stepped up to help run this meeting. She spoke about the current state of our branch – over 230 members and 20 groups. While the membership is slightly down on the pre-pandemic number of 245, we have noticed plenty of new members coming into the area in the subsequent years. So the good news is the increase in the number of groups from 13. But, as usual, the downside is the committee. Lesley is stepping down as Chair after 4 years in the role and the branch urgently needs a replacement. Use *Contact Details* below to show interest!!

Sally Serpell then coordinated updates from the groups. Present were:

- Dave Lyons, talking about the New Experiences group experiences for 2022 and the upcoming programme for 2023.
- Lynn Harvey, speaking in French for the Rusty French Conversation group about how the members have progressed.
- Margaret Ramage, telling us about the pleasure her small group get from the poetry they read.
- Alison Bradley, saying that new members are welcome to join Scottish Country Dancing. The group is very friendly.

- Eric Brown, explaining that the Bridge Group are hoping to set up a new section for beginners.
and
- Lesley Dench and Jenny O'Shea, comparing the two Writers' groups – how to write and what to write.

See *Contact Details* below to find out more about any group.

Sheila Davies, Deputy Mayor of Church Stretton, followed on with her very interesting talk about the workings of the Town Council. The Town Council website <https://www.churchstretton-tc.gov.uk/> is the first place to go for information on what is done and who does it. The 11 councillors are all volunteers with a small salaried team for support & continuity, and a very small budget!!! It was interesting to discover that the structure of the council with its committees and working groups is decided by the current councillors. They are free to invite more experience from the community to help inform a topic under discussion when required. All very informative.

✚ Groups:

Many of our 20 groups would welcome new members including Bridge, Classical Music, Cryptic Crosswords, Mahjong, Scottish Country Dancing, Singing for Pleasure and Writers' Group 1. New Experiences always has room for more. One of our members has offered to organise a new Recorder playing group. It will be aimed at the lower end of expertise.

If you are interested in any of the above, use *Contact Details* below to find out more.

✚ Contact Details:

Find the latest group news or contact a group

- through our website <https://u3asites.org.uk/churchstretton/contact>
- by email [strettonu3a at yahoo.com](mailto:strettonu3a@yahoo.com)
- by phone 01694 724330

✚ Coffee Hour:

Want to have a chat? Next Coffee Hour will be Monday 13th March from 10am to 11am at the Health and Wellbeing Centre, Easthope Road.