

U3A Vall del Pop President's Annual Message 2013-2014

What another fantastic year we have had! I can't believe that we are nearly 1000 members. Firstly, you may ask why I write my report each year. Well, this is my formal way, on your behalf, of thanking and recognising the hard work of all the members.

During the year we have tried hard to respond to the requests of our members and have adopted some new initiatives, such as the membership renewal system, which I know members very much appreciate.

Our U3A has gone from strength to strength, and it is all down to the hard work of you all. We have over 50 groups, ably led by group leaders giving of their time and effort. We could not exist without them. We need to acknowledge and thank Harry Roskoss and Jean Watson, our Group Coordinators for monitoring and liaising with groups. Both are now stepping down and we will be sad to lose their expertise.

Our secretary Graham Quirk, has done a sterling job in keeping us informed and keeping all our administration up to date. This is not the easiest of roles, but Graham has a flair for written communications and accurate minutes taking. Meetings would not be the same without him. Many thanks

Our finances have been looked after by Jim Lockhart whose down to earth 'Yorkshire' approach has given us confidence in his financial guardianship. Thank you, Jim.

The much-awaited newsletter, published each month by Jazz Waspe and her editorial team, Lorraine Barker and Alan Balwin, always produces an entertaining and informative read. There is always something for everyone. Jazz is now handing over the reins to her team. We wish her well.

Publicity is certainly providing the U3A with a higher profile in the community and as far afield as Madeira. Our thanks go to Carol Lockhart for her initiative and conscientious approach. Just look in the local newspapers every week to see what I am talking about.

Our webmaster, Heidi Morgan, has been proactive in her approach, making the website more attractive and user-friendly. Heidi, although stepping down, tells me that she will be around to help us out. Thanks heavens for that!

I keep referring to our growth in membership, which appears to increase steadily every month. This year, Maureen Barrett, Membership Secretary, and her team have been the instigators of a new system that has certainly helped to reduce queues and congestion at the renewal stage. Many thanks for all your hard work. The TCET, formerly the TCP, have worked tirelessly throughout the year to bring us a range of trips, events, theatre visits, cruises, holidays and quizzes. They have been very busy introducing the booking procedure and recently the 'Travel, Culture and Entertainment Bulletin'. Being published for only a few months, it appears to be a very popular initiative. Thank you to Sandra Welham and her team.

We are fortunate in these difficult times that we are still able to obtain venues for meetings and group sessions, with little or minimal costs. We must thank Peter Ryan for his efforts in liaising with the town halls in securing these venues. Our thanks to the Ayuntamientos for their continual support.

This time last year we introduced onto the committee a new role of 'vocal'. Vocals represent the membership but without having a specific committee role. Thanks to Derek Martyr for his input.

Paul and Mary Whitfield, along with Sue Harvey, our Almoners, have made sure that we do not forget those members who have been unwell during the year. Good wishes from you, helps members to remember that we are thinking of them.

To make new members feel welcome we have introduced the 'Meet and Greet' team, led by Margaret Carney, who on meeting days point our new members in the right direction. I know how difficult it might be for new members and the help given is very much appreciated.

Also, have you thought about who provides and serves your coffee after the meetings? Thank you to the hospitality team. I'm always ready for my cuppa and biscuit. This is a very enjoyable ending to our meetings.

Finally, I would like to say how very proud I am of the way in which over the last few years our U3A has matured and evolved - I look forward to being your President for my fourth and final year. For continuity we do need a Vice-President. Would 'you' consider this position and work alongside me? We need you for the future!

Best wishes
Bob Welham