

TAM Summer 2016

Chairman's column

### UNDERSTANDING THE SELF HELP ETHOS OF U3A

As from 15 August, Samantha Mauger, presently chief executive officer of Age UK London, will be joining us as our new CEO (as reported on page 4).

She is very excited at the prospect (and the challenge) and will be attending the annual conference/AGM from 23 to 25 August, so those present will have the opportunity to meet her there. I know that you will offer her your support and patience while she settles in.

Much of Lin Jonas's time has been taken up in troubleshooting, involving matters such as how to find committee members, constitutions, and finance.

Lin has put together a leaflet for new members joining existing U3As. We felt that if new members understand the self help ethos of U3A from the outset, they will better appreciate their part in it.

If new members join believing that a service is being provided for them and they are there purely to receive, they will never feel the need to contribute.

I hope that some members have been to one of the workshops run by the training and development team. The team will be offering "on request" workshops.

Contact national office if you feel one would be beneficial in your area. There will be several presentations by the team at the conference.

Also at the conference, new trustees will be elected, as four are retiring this year. I would like to encourage anyone considering putting themselves forward in the North West, Scotland, the North East or the East of England to speak to their trustee, myself or Lin Jonas to find out what being a trustee entails. Also take a look at Hilary Jones' article in the last issue of TAM.

Thank you to members who have contributed to the "Going Forward" debate in the last issue.

One common strand which has emerged is the value of co-operation between U3As, whether it be in neighbourhood clusters, in an exchange of interest groups, in networks or in regions.

Over and over again, networks are seen as the way forward as they are usually smaller than regional gatherings, so that members have a better chance of meeting each other. They provide a forum for an exchange of views on problems and for a sharing of best practice.

Emails I have received will all be considered by the governance committee at its next meeting where it will collate the views in preparation for the plenary session after the AGM. I intend to acknowledge all emails, so if I have not yet done so, I hope to rectify that shortly. Please keep your views coming.

Do you like the new look Sources, sent with this issue of TAM? It has a new editor and will be broadening its scope in the future as it is our educational journal. If you don't usually read it, give it a try.

It is always a joy for me to visit U3As and to witness the enthusiasm and hard work which members put into their U3A. Thanks to everyone and very special thanks to committees, group convenors and all the really useful people who contribute to the success of this movement and make people want to join in this amazing experience, which is U3A.