**AGM Chair’s Report: Wednesday 19th May, 2021**

My report covers the period from our last AGM, belatedly held in November, until now. This AGM is the beginning of our efforts to get back to our normal timetable for this time of year.

Those who attended the Open Forum immediately following the last AGM, raised a number of points, which the committee has since addressed. A letter was sent to the u3a Trust in London expressing our concern about the large cost involved in running the London Office and the fact that they were increasing our subscription despite significant reduction in income in u3a, due to covid. The reply indicated they were taking note of all comments and were delaying the increase in fees by several months. However, there has recently been a number of redundancies as part of their cost cutting review. We listened to your feedback on the online groups on offer and changed the days for Chit Chat, added a monthly quiz night and two very successful murder mystery afternoons

The virtual Christmas party was a great success full of variety and fun & much enjoyed by those in attendance. We followed this with a virtual Scottish celebration, which although plagued by technical problems at the beginning, turned out to be a good afternoon of entertainment with some guests participating live and others pre-recorded.

At present our membership stands at 155 which is down around 100 from just before the pandemic. Interestingly, our local network u3as in Biggar, Hamilton & EK lost very few members, so we can’t help wondering why

despite our best efforts, so many of our members dropped out. We are really hoping many will return next session. Please encourage your neighbours and friends to look at our website and come along with you to find out more about us.

We are indebted to Robin Lee who set up our excellent, existing website and has looked after it for the last 8 years. However, understandably, Robin now wishes to step back from this responsibility and on behalf of us all I’d like to express our sincere thanks to Robin for the amount of time and effort he has put in to updating the site and keeping it running smoothly. As websites should be refreshed every so often, one of our members, Tom Gallagher, has offered to build an exciting new website for us. It is currently progressing well and should be ready for launch by September.

Christmas lunch has been booked for Thursday, 16th December, in the New Lanark Mill Hotel. Let’s hope we manage to attend this year!

As mentioned in November, Lanark & District celebrate their 10 year anniversary in September but to allow folk time to comfortably return to physical meetings, we are delaying our celebration, Covid permitting, until February 2022. We hope to hold a lovely celebration with afternoon tea & various guest speakers so put Wednesday 16th February in your diary.

Finally, I need to raise an issue mentioned in November. We are looking at a looming crisis in the committee. Firstly, our treasurer, George, will be

standing down this Christmas. A committee just cannot function without a treasurer so if you think you have the basic skills to undertake this role, please come forward and tell us. Secondly, come next May, another 3 committee members, including myself, will have completed service. This

leaves 4 committee members, not enough to efficiently run Lanark & District without overload. Some existing committee members have served tirelessly for 7, 8, 9 years. New blood must step forward to ensure continuity. Please, can I appeal to you to offer your service or Lanark & District u3a may not be able to continue beyond May 2022.

We are greatly indebted to the group leaders who were willing to experiment & adapt to Zoom groups, their willingness to do so has been greatly appreciated by their group members. My thanks to Jim, Irene & Jan for all the hard work put into the regular newsletters. A special thanks to Jim for arranging our AGM paperwork, for setting up the zoom meetings and for the hundreds of emails he has had to send out in the course of the year. He has had a mammoth job. My thanks to Loraine for continuing to oversee the groups & lead several of them herself.

On a personal note, I would like to thank the committee for all their support, wise counsel and hard work .I have appreciated it immensely. Lastly, I’d like to thank all our members who have loyally supported us throughout this difficult year, by sticking with us. We are planning, covid permitting, to return to the Memorial Hall in September.

It just remains for me to wish everyone a very happy, safe summer as we are able to enjoy our regained freedom and I look forward to seeing many of you in September.

This completes my report for Session ’20 –‘21

Margaret A Dunlop