

## THE BALSALLCOMMON u3a CHAIRMAN 2020/21

### MATTHEW STEPHENS



As your new Chairman I thought it would be helpful if I provided you with a little background to myself.

Four years ago, I retired after a 48-year career in Financial Services. Although I had tried to plan it, retirement still came to me as something of a shock - as it does for many of us! Following a short holiday, I suddenly had a diary to fill! After a momentary panic, I recalled that I had friends in nearby u3a's (not Balsall Common but apparently other u3a's are available!) and I started

to research locally.

Within 6 weeks and having paid my Membership Fee to John Peat I had joined the Social & Political History and Ramblers groups quickly followed by Walking Football and Table Tennis and later, Beer & Cider Appreciation.

In 2018, following retirement and an illness, my wife, Angela joined our u3a and has since gained much pleasure from the Photography, Social History and Rambling groups – we did after all, originally meet in a Walking Group!

However, this has been much more than just filling time! I have to say that u3a has introduced me to some of the most friendly and welcoming groups of people that I have ever come across. As someone relatively new to Balsall Common, it introduced me to an entirely new group of friends who I quickly realised have so much to offer in helping each of us to **learn, laugh and live** through our “third age”. At first hand within the groups, I have seen, for example, both a great sporting camaraderie and an impressive depth of knowledge.

**In short, I would strongly recommend u3a to anyone not in full time work and wishing to expand their interests and social networks.**

This all really led to my decision to join the Committee of Trustees last year.

In accepting my new role *this* year, I realise that I have an incredibly hard act to follow in Jim Melville, who accomplished so much in his tenure of over 6 years.

I very much look forward to the challenges ahead and, working with the new Committee, hopefully, being able to assist in the re-opening of groups that have had to face the necessary restrictions during the pandemic.

I also look forward to meeting as many of you as possible at future meetings, groups, and events in general.

Best wishes,

Matthew Stephens,

Chairman