

Rosie Allen

Arnold u3a – East Midlands

The u3a means a great deal to me as I feel it is overwhelmingly a good thing. I retired in 2009 after 37 years of teaching and, having heard about the u3a from my older sister, immediately looked around for a u3a to join. I was lucky enough to live close to a u3a which was just opening. I am, therefore, one of the founding members of Arnold u3a, in a suburb of Nottingham. I immediately joined the Committee and over the years have taken on positions of membership secretary, vice chair and chair.

I have always believed in the benefit of sharing good practice and talking together about issues and so have been a keen proponent of the Nottinghamshire Network of u3as. I am currently Support Officer having previously served my terms as Vice Chair and Chair. We are proud of the Network which we feel serves our members very well and fully supports the Principles of the u3a movement.

I have also been involved in the wider u3a acting as a Trust Volunteer and in that capacity have facilitated and mentored members in the startups of five new u3as. My other roles as Trust Volunteer involve being a trainer for National Workshops such as Running your u3a and working to support the Region as a member of the East Midlands Development Team.

This is a significant time to be joining the u3a Council as, one year into its formation, the bedding in process has taken place and the real work can now begin. The Council's role is to ensure that the voice of the u3a is heard. It is, therefore, incumbent on Council Representatives to use every mechanism they can to find out the views of u3a members and committees. I believe I am well placed to do this because I know what it feels like as a Committee member to experience that disconnect with "us and them". As u3as we are very lucky to be part of that wider movement of the u3a Third Age Trust with all the support that gives us. Let us make sure that we use that wisely.

I feel I have the attributes that will enable me to act successfully as a Council representative: I work well with others and so the Council Rep partnership will function effectively. My experience as a Trainer and listening to participants concerns and problems means that I understand the commonality of issues that u3as face and through listening to members I can pass on the appropriate messages to the Council. I am very aware that the Council Reps do not stand alone; they have the support of teams of volunteers who know their areas and

counties well. A successful Council Rep is one who works in partnership with others for the benefit of all. I would be honoured to stand as the Council Representative for the East Midlands Region and to help progress the development of the u3a Council in the years ahead.