

16 September 2008

## NEWS FROM CHILTERN U3A

- New U3A Group off to a great start.
- Drake Hall over-flowing as launch meeting gets unprecedented support.
- Steering Group formed to take the venture forward.
- Inaugural meeting set for 8<sup>th</sup> October at Chesham Town Hall.

Chiltern U3A announces its launch of a new local U3A group has been a great success. Over 200 people attended the launch meeting at the Drake Hall, Amersham on 11<sup>th</sup> September, with a further 70 keen to join but unable to attend. U3A National Education & Development Officer, Mike Long, said this was the largest launch meeting it had been his privilege to visit.

"The response exceeded our best expectations" was the comment of Chiltern U3A's Chairman, Bob Meredith. "The Drake Hall could not cope with all the potential new members and, unfortunately, some of those keen to join were unable to attend through lack of space. I hope that will not put them off joining one of the UK's fastest growing leisure and learning organisations."

The initiative has been supported by Chiltern District Council. In responding to Bob's acknowledgement of the grant of £300, matching the £ for £ that Chiltern U3A had set aside towards launching the new U3A, Councillor Noel Brown welcomed the formation of the new U3A in the Chilterns. "The audience here today is testament to the value that the University of the Third Age brings to communities like ours" he added.

By a show of hands, there was a clear majority in favour of basing the new U3A in Chesham. The meeting also identified 9 volunteers to assist Tony Biddle in planning the next steps forward. To ensure the momentum is maintained, an inaugural meeting has been arranged for 2 p.m. on Wednesday, 8<sup>th</sup> October at Chesham Town Hall. It is planned that, as well as other matters, the new U3A will be formally constituted on that day.

In addition to Tony Biddle whom Bob Meredith was pleased to announce had offered to lead the Steering Group through the next development stage, John Atkinson, Leonard Hadler, Stuart Mann, Heather Mintern, Jim Rodda, Christine Standring, Janet Steel, Mary Spicer and Peter Westby have offered their time to the Steering Group. "They will need the support of new members to ensure the rapid development and viability of this new U3A" was Bob's comment. "So if you intend to be an active participant and are free on that day, you should try and attend" he added. In the meantime, enquiries should be addressed to:

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