

## **Manx Dyslexia Association Chairmans's Report 2024**

Having started the report last year with the shift towards greater use of technology which the MDA has taken, that shift has continued in 2024.

It has been an extremely quiet year as far as events and activities are concerned. I feel that this is attributable not only to increased use of technology but also to the fact that we are a very small committee and an ageing one!

On the technology front, artificial intelligence (AI) is the emerging trend. Digital.im is an executive agency within the IOM Government's Department of Enterprise. They are tasked with fostering sustainable economic growth by positioning the IOM as a global leader in the digital economy. They offer courses to educate a variety of groups on the topic of (AI) - amongst others.

Chrissie Watson approached Digital.im to investigate the possibility of running a course tailored to dyslexic adults in the workplace. There is growing evidence that demonstrates that AI is very useful for dyslexics as it provides tools that enhance communication, organisation and productivity.

Chris Kissack from Acla.im, a training partner of Digital.im, has since contacted the MDA to discuss developing suitable training for interested dyslexic adults in the workplace. This is something we will be progressing in the near future. The training may be offered face to face or as an online, interactive course with support.

We continue to have a steady flow of enquiries via e mail and Messenger, many asking for assessments, particularly at secondary school. The primary school enquiries are a concern as the schools seem unable to do internal assessments when children are struggling. As we work closely with Dr. Helen Newberry we know that all schools have the facility to do the necessary tests.

Led by Julia Bell, a pressure group, the Dyslexia Advocacy Group (DAG), was formed this year with the aim of encouraging national politicians to vote in favour of a petition that was laid before Tynwald in July 2024. This was the second time Julia Bell had petitioned Tynwald, the first being in 2020.

Disappointment at the lack of action as a result of the first petition led to this

year's submission and the formation of the DAG. Tynwald Court voted to establish a Select Committee to investigate the demands of the petition. The MDA has made a written submission to the Select Committee expressing its views and recommendations. This gave us a good opportunity to evaluate what we do and what we have done to increase awareness and understanding of dyslexia and associated issues.

We have made some progress in adding to the committee and Lynne Speller a teacher at Braddan School has been approached.

We have had fewer formal committee meetings but Chrissie Watson, Chris Seaward and myself have met regularly on an informal basis. As always I would like to thank them for all they do to support the MDA.

I am confident that once the findings of the Select Committee are published in April we will have things to address during the coming year. However, we will continue to prioritise support of parents of dyslexic children and to promote a greater awareness of dyslexia and related issues.

Sue Rutter

4<sup>th</sup> February 2025