

## Musings from Chris Firth (DG) August 2020



### August is Membership Month

What a month: it's just flown by and the heatwave has now been overtaken by summer rain.

Firstly, thanks to all of you for your comments on the July Musings. I hope you found it both interesting and informative.

**Membership** is the Rotary theme this month for two very contrasting reasons.

The aim of "Pushing the Boundaries of Rotary" at the District Forum at the end of July was to show how Rotary is adapting to reflect changing needs and times. Thanks to all the speakers who made it so successful and thought provoking. We do have copies of the slide banks and a recording on YouTube if you missed it.

If you are thinking about creating a Satellite club, Community Corps, Rotaract or any other new style Rotary activity, could you talk first to your Assistant Governor who will help you through the process. More detailed support will come from District Membership Lead Joan Goldsmith and District Rotaract Lead Michael Ziedins.

What was evident from the Forum was the creativity from Cirencester, and the energy from our speakers who all had these things in common:

- making Rotary accessible to a new generation
- retaining the underlying Rotary ethos
- getting involved in projects and activities
- reflecting this year's theme of "Rotary opens Opportunities"

In other words: Recover, Reset and Reinvigorate.

I've been invited to a number of clubs virtually and am encouraged by the energy, enthusiasm and attendance at Zoom meetings. Some clubs are recruiting while operating virtually. There's a lot going on with some clubs looking forward to the day when they can meet face to face once again. As I said last month it is possible to meet face to face but ensure that you follow the guidance from RGB&I that Stewart Ross has sent out recently. Remember to undertake a risk assessment yourselves.

You may not be able to go back to the previous meeting format or venue and this is where the examples we heard at the District Forum show how we can still be effective and enjoy our meetings. We're not likely to go back to the "old normal" and the mixture of face to face and virtual activity seems to be a positive model.

A hybrid form of Rotary will enable you to invite speakers from all over the world, share with others and benefit from the international focus of Rotary. Think about using Zoom for club administration meetings. This will come in handy in the dark days of winter.

Not everything has gone so well. I was at **Cheltenham Sunrise** earlier this month to hear that the club is planning to close down at the end of the calendar year. The club has a distinguished history of service in Cheltenham over its 27 year life, but has been unsuccessful in attracting a new generation of

members. A number of current members will be transferring to other clubs both in the district and outside, so will not be lost. We hope to use some of Sunrise's ideas and events in other clubs.

## Beirut

The disaster in Beirut is the other aspect of membership that has happened this month. Many thousands of people have been affected by the explosion and the impact will last for years to come. Beirut is located in a region that has suffered massive destruction over the recent past and historically, and the life of those affected can only be imagined.

Rotary is a worldwide family of over 1.2million people, all with a common purpose. When a disaster happens, we rally to support those who have suffered regardless of creed, gender or colour. I am reminded of the way in which we in D1100 gave so much support when the tsunami impacted on Southern Asia.

Thanks to the immediate reaction of PDG Ian Beattie of Bristol, we have established links with the Beirut Cedars Club. Thank you to all the clubs and members who are supporting JustGiving and through other support links. Districts throughout RGB&I are also responding to the disaster with similar donations and help.

A number of you have asked if the District can work together to help in a specific need and Ian and I are pursuing this to find out what for example £1000, £2000 or up to £10,000 would buy in terms of food, medicines or medical equipment for example to get a fix on the best area to support and also the best mechanism to deliver aid. Currently you can contribute through the Just Giving Appeal, or direct donations to the Beirut Cedars Rotary Club, and to other organisations involved in Beirut and the Lebanon. We will get back to you quickly.

Thank you everyone for supporting this appeal. Rotary at its best.

## Looking forward and Dates for your Diary

### 7.00pm 4 September: An introduction to Crowdfunding: tri-district workshop

This is timely because a number of clubs have asked about this as an alternative way of raising funds. Dave Powell is the District Crowdfunding Support and will follow up any inquiries as a result of this event.



This is the link.

<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJMudOuorzotGt3umzZlp18fIFm1QzgoOefK>

### 7.00pm 2 October: Making the best of Social Media: tri-district workshop

Sam Cross of the Rotary Club of Saltram Plympton will introduce us to a number of social media tools. Dave King in July stressed the need for clubs to use these as modern communications tools and Sam will open the box for us. We aim to follow this up with more practical workshops.



## Future District Forums

We're planning two more.

The first looks at "**Growing more Diverse Clubs**" with both local and international speakers and is scheduled for late September.

The second is "**Creating Rotaract in D1100**" led by Michael Ziedins (District Rotaract Lead) with speakers from around RGB&I. As part of the preparation for this, Michael will be contacting clubs in the near future to gauge interest and opportunities. This will happen in mid-November.

## Conference 2021

I have been asked by clubs if we are planning to hold one and we are. It will be on 19-21 March 2021 at Torquay.

The Conference Team, led by Peter Barefoot (Swindon), has been conscious of the need to remain safe and to follow all the guidance from Government, RGB&I and others if we are to hold a District Conference next year. This has meant long negotiations with the Venue, Band Hotel and other contractors to ensure that all these requirements are met in the case of a continuing COVID outbreak.

The booking forms are being sent out now to Club Presidents, with a link on the Website coming soon. We have a growing line-up of speakers to entertain and inform you, a gala dinner with a 60s band and plenty of opportunity to meet old and new friends in a celebration of Rotary District 1100. We will update you regularly as speakers are confirmed.

I hope you will come and can I remind you that if you registered for Conference 2020 then you have already paid this for 2021.

## Recruiting for the District Team

Graham Ogden DGE and I are still actively looking to strengthen and build the District team. The workload is not onerous and it's an opportunity for you to share your expertise with clubs and members so that we can make Rotary even more attractive and a major volunteering force in the District, increasing our impact as People of Action.

We will be writing to all members separately but if there's any way you think you can help than let either of us know.

## Finally: Virtual Club Visits

It would be good to visit more clubs in lockdown and I look forward to your invitations. There's always something to learn about what is going on locally, and for me particularly to find out and share outside. After all what is normal to you is novel and extraordinary to other clubs and sharing is the best form of learning.

With very best wishes and a successful Rotary time ahead.

**Chris Firth**

21 August 2020