

Musings from Chris Firth (DG) October 2020



A picture of two bears (Pudsey and Blush) on their way to new homes reflects these times. Because of COVID we have had to find new ways of engaging with our communities and thank you to all of you for being so creative. Both bears have gone to new homes in the Worcester area and thank you to the two clubs who suggested them and to Neil Albinson for donating them to me. I could have given out many more but a like everything else Children in Need this year is restricted in what it can do. So, the theme of this month is adapting to the new world.

Thank you to all clubs for all you have done this year to promote End Polio Now by illuminating buildings, planting crocuses and raising awareness with local people. This is a display by Chipping Sodbury that combines Purple for Polio with more general information about Rotary. Imaginative and with great impact.



I've visited a good number of clubs this month and found the atmosphere positive and hopeful if a little Zoom weary. Your welcomes have been so positive and thank you for that. Some fantastic speakers: the Shetland Bus, healing power of trees, tales from a Police Commissioner. One advantage of being locked down is being able to hear good speakers. So why not share within your area or even the whole district.

The next 4 weeks lockdown won't help but I am confident that as a district we will emerge stronger and more effective for the New Year. Member numbers are holding steady although we are slightly down on where we were on July 1 but we do have new members in the pipeline: a good sign.

Coming up in November

The Fourth Tri-District Workshop 12 November

On Thursday evening Amanda Watkin General Secretary of RGB&I will be talking about RGB&I and a new membership initiative. This is your opportunity to listen and talk to Amanda about the workings of RGB&I. I will circulate details of the Rotary Global Hub separately.

These events have been very popular and are the first of their type in RGB&I. If you want to see all the three previous events go to;

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTvMRDe8tKMImeGXRROs50A>

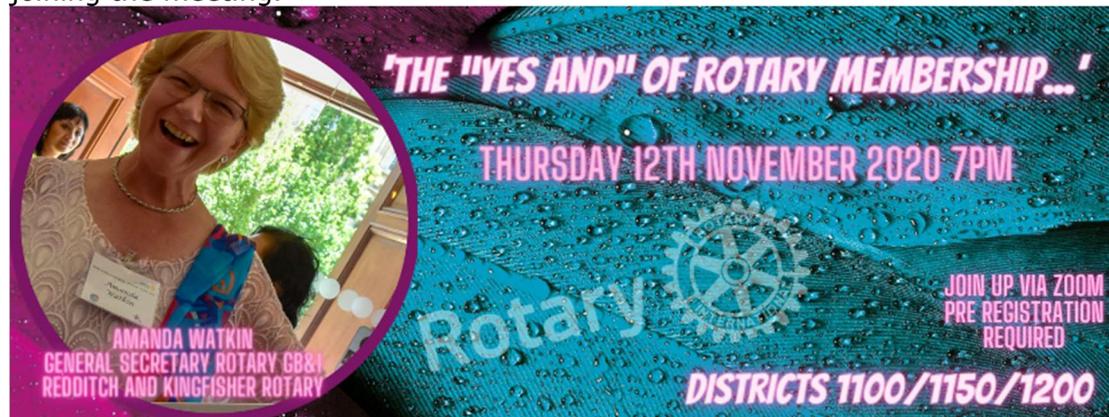
You are invited to a Zoom meeting.

When: Nov 12, 2020 07:00 PM London

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYkc-qgrjgsHtZLpK-WrNhf08u2L5VczsKU>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.



District Forum 19 November

One of the things that concerns us all is the future shape of Rotary in the district. For example, how can we become an even more effective volunteer force at a time when volunteering needs will grow as a consequence of local impacts of COVID on jobs, mental stress and poverty? To help in this we are engaging in the RGBI/Carers UK Partnership. Linda Clarke is the District Lead and she will be talking about the need to create a network of club ambassadors at the **District Forum on 19 November**.

Also, at the Forum: **President Hagop** from the Rotary Club of Beirut Cedars who will update us on progress and talk about future needs. So far, the Just Giving Fund for Beirut has raised over £14000 for food parcels for displaced families. Thanks to everyone who has contributed to this fund or has donated directly to Beirut Cedars. We are also looking at a Global Grant for a more sustainable project. This is taking time to scope but we are aiming at a project supporting primary education in one form or another.

So, put **19 November** in your diary. There is also normal business to go through (Approval of Annual Accounts, DG update, other updates) but the focus is growing community impact at home and overseas.

Youth Services

Andy Jarret and his team are promoting Youth activity throughout the district. Andy has come up with a few ideas to continue this in the absence of face to face contact and I hope you will support him.

One special plea from me. This district is a world class centre of STEM based companies and organisations In District we have **Bloodhound Education** (based at Berkeley) providing hands-on science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) activities for students aged 7 upwards, as well as resources for teachers and parents to support learning in the classroom. Normally it takes real engineering into schools through engineering challenges, projects and workshops but are not able to do this because of COVID. The Trust has developed a kit Bloodhound in a Box - a STEM toolkit for schools including all the equipment and resources for teachers to run hands-on Bloodhound workshops including templates for multiple use making it sustainable. For as little as £3 per pupil Rotary Clubs can fund a Box for their local primary school. If you want to know more contact Chris Fairhead chris@fairhead.me.uk at Thornbury or David Story davidtstory@hotmail.com at Dursley.

Finally: Rotary People of Action

Thank you, Nailsworth for inviting me to the Halloween Walk. Everyone won. The club was able to enjoy friendship face to face and promote the club: children were able to dress up and enjoy a walk in the sun: parents were delighted to give their children an exciting activity.



Chris Firth
5 November 2020

Postscript

The 2020 DG group has produced the following ideas from around RGB&I.
Pick one that you fancy and have a and let everyone know how the experience went.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES (subject to rule of 6 and Tier restrictions)

Social Walks (both people and dog)
Dining/coffee meetings
Drive in cinema
Balloon races
Sponsored walks
Car rallies
Treasure hunts
Drive in Carol Service
Recipe Boxes - these are given to Foodbanks to encourage families to eat and cook together. (the Chancellor has sent in a recipe!)

VIRTUAL CLUB EVENTS

Virtual duck races
Race nights
Gin and wine tasting (Laithwaites have a good video guide to 'Hosting your own Virtual Wine Party')
Murder Mystery night
Quiz
Photography competitions
Youth writing competition
Step counting around the house/garden
Dog shows – using photographs!
Painting competition
Partnering with clubs virtually in other places to learn from each other and share ideas.
Joint meetings with your overseas exchange clubs.
Partnering with chamber of commerce to look at ways to support training and employability and also to help tackle growing unemployment.
Volunteer virtually, lend your vocational experience and skills to help others who are struggling
Host open events for businesses to come online and identify needs and then allocate an appropriate business mentor and potentially some financial support
Making Rotary TikTok videos
Opening up Speaker event and making them open o other clubs and members of the public
Scatter evenings to other club zoom meetings and share experiences at your next meeting
Book club evening (members talking about books that have inspired or affected their life).
Virtual Bake competition