

Musings from Chris Firth (DG)

November 2020

Rotary Foundation Month

District Conference 2021 Update: Cancellation of Torquay 2021

The face-to-face Conference planned for March 2021 is cancelled. Both the conference team and the venue have agreed that the future is too uncertain for it to happen in the usual way. All deposits paid to the Grand and the Riviera have been returned to the District.

I am very disappointed about this because I was hoping it would be the opportunity to hold a post COVID get together and celebration of Rotary in D1100.

The Conference team is planning a virtual conference in late April on a specific theme with speakers from around the world as well as within the UK. More details at the next District Forum in January.

In addition, Graham Ogden (DG 2021) and I are working on a big social get-together at the end of June next year to combine District Handover with a bit of a party celebrating a momentous year in Rotary, subject to COVID of course.

Overview

This month has been one of both looking back and looking forward, but the underlying message is the same: Rotarians and clubs in this District are adapting and being creative in our response to the COVID restrictions.

I'll start on a sombre and thoughtful note. I was invited on 11 November to a virtual Act of Remembrance Ceremony hosted jointly by the Rotary Clubs of Evesham, Pershore and Chipping Campden together with Pershore Inner Wheel. A very moving, very personal and reflective event reminding us through music and words of the sacrifices made on our behalf over time.

It would be interesting and bring us closer if you could research how Rotarians in our District were involved in all these conflicts. Rtn Dick Mattick of Swindon Old Town (local historian and retired history teacher) has researched this for the Swindon area and is willing to talk at club meetings.

Children in Need

Children in Need this year has been affected by COVID but despite this **Newent RC** raised almost £5000 for CIN this year. The club has been able to support the local Sheppard House Day Centre with local refurbishment and improvement using CIN and Newent resources. Another example of Rotary in Action. Thank you, President Bruce, Neil and all members of the club. It was good to hear Past RIBI President Gordon McNally from Kelso speak at Newent on the 30th. Another example of Zoom inviting speakers from outside our district.

The Rotary Foundation

November was Rotary Foundation month where we are reminded of the wide reach of our own Charity: District and Global Grants, Rotary Scholars and Peace Scholars, VTT projects and many more. In 2017-18 Rotary TRF awarded \$86,677,399 in funding to 1,306 grants throughout the world.

Demand for grants is growing from the existing 6 Rotary Areas of Focus. From 2022, the 7th area of focus *Protecting the Environment* will become eligible for grant support. <https://www.rotary.org/en/our-causes/protecting-environment> This means even more pressure on TRF which depends on donations from members, clubs and districts three years in advance before they are available.

So, donations made in this year (20-21) will become available in 2023-24. I am aware of the pressures on clubs this year in particular, but I hope that you are able to contribute a significant part of the recommended \$100 donations per member so that we are able to support people less well off than ourselves both at home and in the wider Rotary family.

In November the **Radiotherapy Treatment Centre at Great Western Hospital** finally came out of the ground. <https://www.brighterfuturesgwh.nhs.uk/radiotherapy-centre-update/> is a rolling update of progress. This project would not have been possible without the support of local people and Rotary Clubs in the Swindon area who achieved a major Global Grant of masterminded by the Rotary Club of **Swindon** and Rtn Howard Small (**Marlborough and District**).

In addition, Peter Wells gave out District Grants to all the clubs who had applied and were eligible. It's good to see so many clubs and causes benefitting. Let us know the progress of each grant.

The Fourth Tri-District Workshop 12 November

Amanda Watkin General Secretary of RGB&I gave us an insight into the **Rotary Global Hub** initiative. This offers direct membership to potential Rotarians who are not certain which club they want to join. https://youtu.be/3_sQOfDsLv8 for the recording.

D1190 has produced a simple guide to the Hub

https://www.rotary-ribi.org/upimages/distreps/1190/Membership/Rotary_Global_Hub.pdf

We've already had a couple of inquiries from the Hub, so it has got off to a good start. More in the New Year.

Raising funds and celebrating Christmas: creativity over Christmas appeals.

Just a few of the activities I'm aware of.

Two very successful on-line auctions (**North Cotswold:** (£4000) and **Swindon:** (£11800). **Cirencester** is planning one in March next year (details later in the year).

I know of two clubs (**Malvern** (real) and **Pershore** (virtual)) with Trees of Light/Remembrance and electronic donation links.

Bernd in his **PI Newsletter** reported on the **Royal Wootton Bassett and District (and Swindon)** toy collection for the Swindon Refuge.

Cotswold Tyndale are still collecting Shoeboxes and are expecting to deliver about 800 before Christmas. Derek Aston reminded me that he is accepting them until Easter. Tyndale have also made and sold masks raising over £3500 by to be donated to the Stroud Refuge.

Santa sleighs are being dusted down and made compliant with COVID and are using electronic fund collecting. Insurance guidance is available.

Swindon Phoenix's Santa v Rudolph virtual Fun Run with Brighter Futures is from 28 November to 26 December. If you are interested in taking part, go to <https://www.brighterfuturesgwh.nhs.uk/events/virtual-santa-vs-rudolph-run/>



Let me know of any others and we will circulate.

Looking ahead to 2021

Implications of the COVID Vaccine

The roll out of the COVID 19 vaccine brings the day nearer when we will be able to meet face to face and resume community activities and traditional and new fundraisers. This is the time to start planning for both old and new activities. During lockdown and restrictions, many clubs have built new on-line relationships with community groups and local organisations or thought about new types of clubs within clubs. Time to convert those into action in the community as part of expanding our reach and increasing impact.

Carers UK Partnership roll out in D1100

Linda Clarke is our District Lead on the Carers UK Partnership which will be extended beyond 2021 and is looking for local Ambassadors with clubs or clusters of clubs to help build these partnerships. Linda has prepared a short information video that you can use when you talk to local carers and groups. <https://youtu.be/tCUCBBdsoS8>

Sharing your skills

The Carers UK Partnership has highlighted the need for specific skills in supporting local and national projects. I wonder: have you ever had a project that suffered for lack of skills in your club? Or do we know how many local community organisations are in need of the skills Rotary has learnt?

I have asked Alexandra Lloyd-Jones to work with clubs from January to find out what skills each club has within its membership. These are not just work based skills but also interests and hobbies that may be of use when we work with local organisations. At this stage no names just a list of the skills per club, to be available on District Website and as a document all clubs can use. More information will go out later this month and it would be good if you could complete the request.

Request for Voluntary support for COVID 19 Vaccination campaign

I received this request from RGBI on Friday 4 December.

The Voluntary and Community Sector Emergencies Partnership VCSEP (<https://vcsep.org.uk/>) has asked RGB&I to provide voluntary help locally in the national roll-out of vaccinations through districts and clubs.

The response from members has been brilliant. Lynda Bowen who has experience of Emergency Planning and Resilience has taken on this role and I have a range of offers both for medical and non-medical that we will log and follow up as soon as we know the scope of what we have been asked to do.

Older Drivers Forum (ODF)

The Forum is currently in 8 counties and **Rotary in Nailsworth** brought it to Gloucestershire as the first Voluntary Forum. It has gone in one year launching on 4th Dec 2019 to being part of the Gloucestershire Road Safety Campaign for November 2020 and in the future. The campaign has now taken off with 3 workshops in November and more taking part in December 2020 with participants from D1100 and beyond. This is a positive example of how a local Rotary campaign can work. As a result, the ODF for Gloucestershire have produced a promo video which I was asked to host for use in the other counties in D1100 and wider afield.

This is both a seasonal and long-term campaign with implications for many members and families in Rotary GB&I and I am pleased to support and promote it.

Go to <https://olderdriversforum.com/gloucestershire/> or write to odfglous@gmail.com if you want to know more.

Next Month's Musings

December's musings will be shorter and more seasonal.

If you have any stories that you wish to share with other clubs; good news, seasonal, personal achievements or news from organisations we have helped throughout the year; send them to me I will aim to publish in December.

A thought for these times

Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today. Malcolm X

Chris Firth
Governor D1100
2020-21

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