

## Musings from Chris Firth (DG) COVID Vaccination Support Edition January 2021



**January is Vocational Service Month.**

### Why this special edition?

This is a message about how we in Rotary can respond to the COVID Pandemic and the Vaccination Support Campaign.

Every day we see an increase in the number of positive COVID cases and an increase in the number of deaths attributed to COVID.

Saturday's numbers were 2.62 million cases and 70,541 deaths since the pandemic began in England. Many of us have suffered personal losses from the disease whether in our families and friends or in our clubs.

This time we have the prospect of an effective vaccination programme which has already started with some 1.5 million doses already administered.

Government has made an appeal for volunteers to help both in the medical and the support elements of the vaccination programme, to support the existing NHS staff and avoid burnout and exhaustion.

This support programme will go on for many months of this year, at least until everyone has the vaccine and is protected.

### What Rotary is doing and what D1100 clubs and members can do

RGB&I asked all districts to nominate a COVID support coordinator.

Lynda Bowen. [Lynda.Bowen@gmail.com](mailto:Lynda.Bowen@gmail.com) of the Portishead Rotary Club has come forward as the District Link. Lynda is an experienced senior Public Sector Manager who has worked in Emergency and Resilience roles throughout England as part of her main role.

She has contacted Assistant Governors who are now working with clubs identifying the scope of potential volunteering support within our villages, towns and Cities. In some cases, this will be building on existing volunteering activities by clubs, sharing current practice and identifying new opportunities.

So, Rotarians and clubs may be at the centre of local activity as in Ross on Wye and in others playing supporting roles as in many other locations, or coordinating area activities as Alan Bridge of Colwall Rotary Club is beginning to do in Hereford and Worcester along with many of the clubs and members.

## What can you do as an individual member?

### *Stay Safe*

The first and most important thing is to stay safe and well and stick to the current rules. Already this third wave is more prevalent, invasive and aggressive than in previous lockdowns. It will not go away, although its impact will be lessened by mass vaccination, and track and tracing.

This is one reason why it is so important to maintain contact with those members who you may not have seen regularly on Zoom.

### *Major Volunteer Groups*

NHS and other volunteer groups are looking for volunteers to act as Stewards as long as they are not in the vulnerable groups.

Clubs are working with their local GP practices and other community agencies. If your club is doing that, then let Lynda Bowen know so we can avoid duplication and overlap.

### *Short of support*

If you know of any areas short of support, then also let Lynda know and we can look for local options.

### *Skills needed*

All of us have supervisory and management skills in a variety of roles. Many skills will be needed over a long period of time. These will include creating spreadsheets of volunteer rotas; managing teams of Stewards; working with the public who will be anxious frustrated and fearful; ancillary support and vaccinators (subject of course to the administrative requirements which seem to be reducing).

You all know your patch better than many other people. You will have built up relationships with key community figures whether medical, community group, local authorities and agencies, and will know how to approach them.

Now is the time to make contact and offer Rotary services and make a major community impact.

### **District Contact points**

District COVID Coordinator: Lynda Bowen: [Lynda.Bowen@gmail.com](mailto:Lynda.Bowen@gmail.com)

Assistant Governors: (from District Website)

Stewart Ross District Secretary: [sross425@gmail.com](mailto:sross425@gmail.com)

Please stay safe, well and obey the rules

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