

Club Assembly 2022

We have survived the disruption of the past two years and I know we all thank Malcolm for his support, ingenuity and doggedness in keeping the ship sailing.

We are, however, in a position where we have members who, rightly, wish to step back a pace having given much of their time in the past. They enjoy the social element that Rotary affords them and are happy to support the club in spirit and in person if activities are not too strenuous.

We have members who continue to work in a wide variety of occupations, whose time is spent juggling to fit various commitments into a busy schedule but who still have a wide remit of contacts, ideas, and suggestions which make valuable additions to the "melting pot" of activities and projects.

We also have members who feel that they are not involved enough but do not have time to sit on committees or give up regular time to join us for Monday lunchtimes- and who perhaps sometimes feel superfluous to the general Rotary image or maybe it isn't quite what they expected from Rotary. We have lost such members in recent years.

In putting together committees for the next Rotary year I have come across several members who are happy with the status quo; too busy to take on more responsibility (or prefer not to make a regular commitment). We are a voluntary organisation - we don't "have to" feel pressurised and it works well when people are involved as they wish.

I have come to the decision that for the coming year we will try and work in a different way.

Membership under Julia has been very pro-active this year and she wishes to carry on for 2022/23. She has a good team working with her and we have welcomed new interested potential members as a result of their efforts. Similarly, Community, including Environment, has given the local community a lot of support as you have heard from Adrienne's report.

Youth - which we service jointly with the Belvoir club - has been covered to a large extent by the community team. However, mainly due to the pandemic it has taken a bit of a back seat.

Now is the time to re-engage the younger community and schools with the many opportunities that Rotary offers. I plan to talk with Pam Posnett, incoming chair of Belvoir about the way forward and following that, I have asked David Morris who will be returning to our meetings once his year of office as DG is completed, to take up this particular challenge.

We have continued to support the End Polio Now campaign - and received special commendation for our giving this year - (and we need to make an order now for this year's crocus order). We have continued to support our main charity, the Rotary Foundation and

were able to contribute our projected amount this year. More recently we have contributed to the District Disaster Fund relating to the current tragic Ukraine situation and indeed two members of our daughter club, Enterprise, have been out to help with the evacuation of disabled children to Rumania.

So how to invigorate the move forward.

I mentioned a couple of weeks ago that I felt we needed to focus the membership - engaging the present members whilst attracting new blood. I mentioned too that I would like to help support the Old Dalby Primary School in their final stages of fund raising for a "counselling" room with surrounding garden - perhaps incorporating a peace garden in this. At the time it was met by the members present in a very negative way. What publicity would be achieved? How could the general public benefit? There are lots of children who need similar help - so why Old Dalby? Were some of the comments.

The reason for Old Dalby was that they had the initiative to contact us directly (through our web site). When trying to encourage primary schools in the town to take part in the Bunny Run, only St Mary's and The Grove have contributed - but the children have had great fun.

I have listened to these and other points and have now formulated what I hope will be an acceptable way forward :

The Town Estate have very generously, and in principle at this stage, offered us ground within the Memorial Garden where we can site a Peace Garden. This answers the cry of being accessible to the general public, gain good publicity and also the all-important factor that maintenance in the future would come under the Town Estate's remit. Plans will need to be drawn up once the exact area is defined, and submitted to the Executive for consideration and hopefully approval. A project team will be formed and Pankaj has agreed to be part of this team moving forward. Ron Edwards has suggested contacting local growers with whom he has contact to help in sponsoring the planting - for example.

I have looked at the criticism that a lot of schools have children needing support. Therefore why stop at helping one school - why not more? I propose that we look at helping Old Dalby Primary first - in that their project is already on the table and moving forward - to join in their plans for their "quiet area garden". We learn from that project and then adapt the plan and approach other village schools with a similar proposal. With the schools within the town we can offer to help establish a plan, help with design and then the school could apply to The Raynes Trust for support funding. Whether more schools will go as far as Old Dalby and erect an outside room as well will depend on the individual school. Some schools don't have the luxury of grass in their playground area and may need a different approach. At the Bunny Run, Malcolm and Ian were approached by St Mary's Primary staff for help with their "wilding area". This could be incorporated also into a "peaceful area" but as Malcolm suggested, could be offered to Brooksby College as a project for their students.

Quite a few members feel that Club Service should be re-introduced (it was if you remember deemed to be superfluous during the pandemic period). It will therefore be reformed of a few members and will oversee the co-ordination of projects and the calendar. Members of other committees/teams will not be obliged to attend these meetings unless when planning for a specific event.

With regard to Foundation and the Polio Campaign and International, we will keep a watching brief on these and appoint teams to lead on enquiries as they arise - or as we feel we may like to be involved.

Finally I propose that the format of the calendar and meetings be slightly adjusted. Whilst the business meeting will generally follow Club Council, we will aim to have a speaker once a month, a social lunch, with the 4th week open to suggestion. Once a quarter we plan to have a trip to theatre/concert/visit and a scatter visit (taking a leaf out of Uppingham's book). We already have the Safari lunch to look forward to, and Phil has kindly invited us to enjoy the light show at Twin Lakes nearer to Christmas.

Mrs A L Blythe

Corrections made at the meeting :

The staff of St Mary's primary school spoke with Malcolm and Christopher Joseph (Aurora) - not Ian.

No formal presentation/application has been made to the Town Estate in relation to the formation of a Peace Garden.