

THE ROTARY CLUB OF MELTON MOWBRAY

A Reference Guide for Members

Introduction

Rotary International is an international service organisation whose stated purpose is to bring together business and professional leaders in order to provide humanitarian services, encourage high ethical standards in all vocations, and help build goodwill and peace in the world. It is a secular organisation open to all persons regardless of race, colour, creed, religion, gender, or political preference.

Rotary commenced in 1905 when Paul Harris called a meeting with three of his business acquaintances in Chicago, USA. They chose the name Rotary because initially they rotated subsequent weekly meetings to each other's offices. Within a year the club had grown such that it became necessary to adopt the now common practice of a regular meeting place.

More Rotary Clubs were organised in the USA. The first Club to be granted a charter outside the USA was in Winnipeg, Canada. The Rotary Club of London received its charter in 1912. Although there had been meetings in Dublin earlier than in London, that club did not receive its charter until after the London club was chartered. The Rotary Club of Melton Mowbray was chartered in 1928.

The Structure of Rotary

There are more than 34,000 Rotary Clubs and over 1.2 million members, known as Rotarians, worldwide. Members usually meet weekly for breakfast, lunch or dinner, which is a social event as well as an opportunity to organise work on their service goals.

In order to carry out its service programmes, Rotary is structured in club, district and international levels. Rotarians are members of their clubs. The clubs are chartered by the global organisation Rotary International (RI) which has its headquarters in Evanston, Illinois.

The Rotary Club is the basic unit of Rotary activity, and each club determines its own membership and the projects which it promotes. Each club elects its own president and officers from its active members for a one year term. The clubs enjoy a good deal of autonomy within the framework of the standard constitution and bylaws of RI.

Rotary Clubs are grouped into districts, lead by a district governor who is elected by the clubs in his or her respective district. Our district is numbered 1070 and comprises over 80 clubs. Within our district are seven areas with an assistant governor (AG) who supports and guides the club presidents within their area. There are over 600 districts worldwide and these are subdivide into 30 zones. Two of those zones are linked together as Rotary International in Britain and Ireland (RIBI). This is an untypical structure within Rotary.

Our district currently extends from Shepshed in the West to Boston in the East and down through Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Peterborough and Huntingdon to Brackley and Biggleswade in the south. Our "mother club", responsible for our formation, is Leicester and we have been responsible for forming the "daughter clubs" of Rutland, Melton Mowbray Belvoir, Uppingham and Melton Aurora.

The Rotary Club of Melton Mowbray

The club is managed by its officers with the support of a committee structure. Their work is co-ordinated by a Club Council comprising the officers of the club and elected members. The officers of the club are elected by the members to the position for which they are elected for a year, although it is usual for the Secretary and Treasurer to be re-elected for more than one year but for no more than five consecutive years.

The President presides at all meetings of the Club and Club Council and is expected to represent the Club within Rotary and the community as a whole.

The President Elect is elected to be the President for the succeeding year, and presides at meetings in the absence of the President. The conduct of the club assembly, which sets out the proposals for the year in which this person will be the President, is the responsibility of the President Elect. The President Elect will normally be the chairman of the Club Service Committee which is responsible for matters relating to the operation of the Club.

The Vice President or Vice Presidents are elected by the members, normally to be the President in a following year. Their responsibility within the Club will vary.

The immediate Past President becomes an officer of the Club for the year following that of their presidency.

The Secretary is responsible for the administration of the club and proper recording of proceedings at meetings of the club and the club council.

The Treasurer is responsible for the administration and control of the club's finances.

The Club Council is a co-ordinating body with some specific functions relating to the administration of the club. It provides a means for those responsible for all the activities of the club to discuss them and secure agreement of proposals for members' approval.

The Club has committees to plan, promote and implement activities in line with its purpose. These relate to the administration of the club and to the delivery of service projects.

At the present time we have a club service committee which has the responsibility for organising the regular club meetings, and for other fellowship, recreational and social activities for members.

Linked to the club service committee is a sub committee with the responsibility for communications between members themselves and between the club and the wider community. Also linked to the club service committee is a fundraising committee which is charged with supporting the projects committees in raising funds necessary for the delivery of their projects.

There is a membership committee which is responsible for matters relating to the recruitment and retention of members. We would expect to maintain a membership of between 40 and 50.

The club has recently formed a satellite group which meets for 45 minutes from 6.15 pm on Tuesdays. This enable members who cannot attend the regular weekly meeting to attend. It is also aimed at making membership possible to a younger age group who still work and would find a weekly lunch time meeting impossible.

The Projects Committees

The community service committee is responsible for projects which are intended to benefit the local community and in particular those who are disadvantaged.

The vocational committee is responsible for projects which are related to the utilisation of the skills of members or support for vocational needs within the local community.

The international committee is responsible for projects which are to assist with humanitarian needs in overseas countries and to improve the understanding of international issues.

The Foundation officer promotes the Rotary Foundation. This is Rotary's own charity which provides significant funding for a wide variety of charitable and educational programmes, including grants to match the funds raised by Rotary clubs for their projects. We would aim to both contribute to and benefit from the Foundation.

The youth committee promotes the various Rotary sponsored competitions, encourages and supports financially the participation of young people in a variety of activities that should be of benefit to themselves and others. It acts in much of its work in collaboration with the other Rotary Clubs in Melton Mowbray. In particular the club supports an Interact Club at Melton Vale Post 16 Centre, consisting of young persons aged 16 to 18.

The work of the service projects committees is undertaken through our own charity. The Rotary Club of Melton Mowbray Charitable Trust has four trustees who are members of the club. They act, within the terms of a trust deed and legislation for charities, in accordance with the wishes of members of the club.

Election to Membership

Prospective members may contact a Rotary club to inquire about membership but can join a Rotary club only if invited to apply to join. Each prospective Rotarian requires a sponsor who is an existing Rotarian. The application is then considered by the members who are given a maximum of 10 days to produce a credible reason, if indeed one exists, that the applicant is unsuitable for membership. Following this, and subject to no proof of unsuitability being produced, the prospect is introduced to the Club and formally inducted into membership. The new member will be allocated a mentor who will introduce him to the detailed functioning of Rotary both within the Club and wider. There is no limit to the length of the mentoring period.

The Club does not have a formal complaints procedure, but during the period of mentoring it is the responsibility of the mentor to ensure that any complaints, misgivings, doubts etc are suitably addressed. Any member who has a complaint or grievance is entitled to raise this with the Club President.

Honorary membership can be conferred by election on people who would not normally be able to participate fully in activities of the club, but who have distinguished themselves by meritorious service in the furtherance of Rotary ideals.

Elections to Club Council

The officers of the club serve on Club Council, together with three to six other elected members of the club. It has been the practice for those chairmen of committees who are not officers be included in those that are elected, together with one or two members who do not have that responsibility. The chairmen of committees are usually nominated by the President Elect to serve as such in his or her year of Presidency, with the nominations confirmed by members at the Annual General Meeting.

Club Meetings

The club meets every Monday lunchtime between 1.00 pm and 2.00 pm. The current venue for club meetings is Sysonby Knoll Hotel on Asfordby Road, Melton Mowbray. There are exceptions in that the Club does not meet on a bank holiday Monday and would not meet for two weeks over the Christmas and New Year period. In addition where there is a fifth Monday in the month it has become a tradition that an evening meeting is arranged, usually with guests.

The meetings start promptly and members are encouraged to arrive in good time. Payment for the meal is taken on arrival by the stewards, whose responsibility includes the recording of apologies for absence for the next week. Attendance at the meeting is assumed unless an apology is given either the week before, or by telephone to Duncan & Toplis, preferably by the Friday before the meeting, but certainly before 10 am on the day of the meeting.

Dress for the meeting is usually smart casual, work or business attire.

The format for the regular meeting would comprise a welcome from the President with a grace, followed by a main meal, dessert and tea or coffee. Salads or other dietary options can be provided. After the meal there would be a toast to the Queen, then 20 minutes for a speaker or business with concluding remarks from the President and closure of the meeting with a toast to Rotary.

Club members are expected to play a full part in the activities of a committee. This is likely to involve attending planning meetings and participating in the delivery of particular functions, projects or activities. The Chairmen of committees are expected to co-ordinate the activities of their committee and to achieve a “joined up” approach in the club.

Special Meetings

There are four special meetings during the year.

We celebrate the granting of the Charter to the Club in March. This has traditionally been a formal black tie evening dinner to which guests from the community and other Rotary clubs are invited.

In April the Annual General Meeting is held with the principal business being to receive reports of the activities of the Club during the current Rotary year, elect the members of club council, confirm the nominations of committee chairmen, and determine the subscription for the ensuing Rotary year. In May the Club Assembly will give the opportunity for members to hear, consider

and vote on the proposals for the operation of the club and the projects that are planned for the forthcoming year. In November the Special General Meeting will receive the annual accounts and vote for the officers for particular Rotary years.

District Meetings

District meetings take place during the year. District Assembly is an opportunity in May to meet Rotarians from other clubs and hear what plans there are for the District programme for the ensuing year. District Council meetings take place three times during the year and are intended to keep clubs up to date with district and other issues. The District Conference in the Autumn is an opportunity to meet other Rotarians, enjoy a social event, find out about interesting projects and hear inspirational speakers. There are national and international conferences for RI and RIBI.