

Tony Loughran

Presidents Review 2022-23

(Based on report to AGM 2023)

It has been a honour and privilege to be the 101st President of our Rotary Club.

I have enjoyed the year very much and am pleased that the work put in a year ago, organising the programme, committees and internal day to day running of our Club has paid dividends. We have had a successful year on many fronts and our actions and work have clearly mirrored Rotary's core values. In particular, our service activities in our local community and internationally, and the interaction with the youth of today.

The Club's three avenues of service are through the Community, International and Vocational Service Committees. I would like to thank Richard Kemball-Cook, Raj Dasan and Mary McGeary for leading these Committees so well in the diverse works that we have supported.

Our commitment to local charities with generous donations have shown our support for the local community, notably donations to the Rising Sun Domestic Violence and Abuse Charity, Thanington Neighborhood Resource Centre, the local branch of the Salvation Army and the Prince of Wales Youth Club.

The St Patrick's Night Evening, superbly organised by Peter Hermitage, was one of my personal highlights, and it was great to support Joey Wicks and his team at the Youth Club. Joey has been a fantastic supporter of our Club and it was great of him to also give his time and immerse himself so deeply in the Rotary Young Chef's competition.

On the International front, we have continued our growing relationship with the Rotary Club of Dhaka supporting eye operations and a clean water project. A thank you to Julie Reza for all her energy on this project. Ukraine and Turkey has featured strongly with collections, purchasing Shelterboxes and supporting Aquabox and WaterAid (plus 150 hats knitted through one of our networks went to help babies in Ukraine). We have also supported entrepreneurs through LendWithCare.

On the Vocational front we had another successful year. We were fortunate to meet Leigh Saunders who has enabled us to widen our support.

As a Club we enjoy a very high profile in the local community through the support we provide, e.g. the writing competitions, the Innovation Competition, and continued support for the F1 in Schools team at Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School in Faversham.

My own highlight was the 400 or so mock interviews we carried out earlier this year. Thank you to all those who took part and in particular to Brian Dobinson for driving this project through. In addition, our social media presence is without doubt one of the best in our District and a big thank you to Julie Reza for always promoting our Club.

I mentioned above the Young Chef Competition above. This was a collaboration with the Rotary Club of Canterbury Sunrise. With good teamwork and with Sunrise and Joey's help it was great success. Indeed so good we also hosted the regional heats earlier this year! It was great to see the efforts that the youngsters made with their cooking. The dedication and flair – with the proud parents looking

on. I have a particular interest in food and will always remember the winner making her pasta, good flour and eggs and expertly rolling out the dough. The finished ravioli was 'bellissimo'!

At our meetings we have had a good variety of speakers. My thoughts when putting the programme together was to focus on those who support of our local community. The highlights for me were Gerry Ferrett who spoke about the work of the Royal British Legion (Poppy Appeal) and more recently the Street Pastors (a group of unsung heroes working in our City Centre). Good speakers are hard to come by, but we have been very fortunate to have our own resident star, Andrew Barchi to entertain on a few occasions. I believe there is still one more talk at least to come!

Some very good outside events took place when we could not be at the Cricket Ground. At Betteshanger with Sunrise, an "American Supper" courtesy of Richard and Cora Kemball-Cook, a Reculver Walk, a theatre production at Nonington courtesy of Phil Abbott - and another successful Christmas Party. Of course I must not forget the Duck Race, which underpins our charity giving. The contactless machine made all the difference!!

I was very pleased that after the invitation by St Quentin to visit them in November we were able to enjoy their company and fellowship again. It was an excellent weekend, full of interest and fun - with the President's address in French giving the best laugh of the weekend.

The Pentangular in Leiden was also a huge success and it's a credit to this Club that we had the largest party going (and won back the Pentangular clock because of this!)

Finally, one of the reasons that I have been able to enjoy myself is thanks to the help given by many Rotarians and Club Council which have helped to keep our Rotary Club on track. I am grateful for this.

Tony Loughran