

## **Alan Mepstead President's Report 2020/2021**

### **(Based on AGM report)**

It has been perhaps the strangest year ever, not only for Rotary but for everyone. Many have had to self-isolate; we have been unable to meet with our loved ones, and for many it has become a year to forget. However, I would prefer to call it a year to remember when Rotary adapted and showed the true meaning of fellowship.

In the present lockdown we continued to meet each Tuesday online by Zoom. While not the same as face-to-face, we have had speakers from Bangladesh, India, Australia and Mauritius. We hosted a Zoom meeting of our Pentangular Partners with over 70 members from the five clubs attending.

We have had many talks, including on End Polio, Domestic Abuse, Psychology, Saris and Social Media. We danced to the tune of Bollywood. We had a quiz night. Told tales on "Would I lie to you", held a Murder Mystery Evening, and had a virtual Christmas Party. We had our own Panto attended by over 40, when some of us forsook all our dignity.

We have inducted two new members. Shabana & Crispin have brought a lot of new energy to the club. A warm welcome to them both.

As with all other clubs, our fundraising has been curtailed. Our main event the DUCK RACE had to be cancelled but our fundraising committee, led by Tony Loughran and in partnership with the Canterbury Auction House, organised a Charity Auction which raised over £3,000.

Members donated over £5,000 from their dining accounts and substantial cheques went out to seven local charities.

We were also able to support a Global Grant application by the RC of Dhaka for a Covid testing lab at a Cancer Hospital in Dhaka, and we obtained a District Grant to help our project for the Juba school South Sudan and which was recognised by the South Sudan Government as the best in the Country. In addition, we were able to make a contribution to Water Aid.

Together with our Sister club Canterbury Sunrise we lit up St Dunstan's Church for world Polio Day and our members planted literally thousands of Purple Crocuses across the City. We organised a litter pick at the local hospital.

We are now on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and have a page or even sometimes two in the local Canterbury Community Ad magazine which has a distribution of over 20,000 in Canterbury.

Our Schools competitions are doing well. We had 175 entries for our Primary Schools writing competition and winners have been notified. We are working in collaboration with Canterbury Christ Church University on our Innovation competition for secondary schools competition and they have extended it further into South East England to Sussex, Surrey and Essex. We are also running a competition for Secondary Schools – "A letter to my future self". Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School in Faversham ran an in-house competition to design a poster for this. We helped with a public speaking competition for schools. We are set to do mock interviews in May for one of our local schools. We have a number of STEM Ambassadors (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) working in collaboration with both of our Canterbury universities.

We continue with our plans for regeneration and Past President Peter Hermitage has shared a presentation with a number of other local clubs. Our aim has been to help and to engage with our

local community and at the same time foster the spirit of fellowship within the club. Hopefully the end of the Pandemic is in sight and the current ambition is that we will be free from restrictions by 17th June and start again meeting face to face.

Our President Elect Stephen Thompson is working on plans for both our Centenary and the hosting of Pentangular next year. He has produced an exciting plan for next year and I would like to thank him for all his support this year. I should also like to thank every member of this year's Council for all their work and contributions, and in particular Richard Kemball-Cook as Treasurer and Lewis Norris as Secretary. Finally, we have sadly lost both Alan Forrest and Gerald Colson this year and our thoughts and prayers are with their families.

Alan Mepstead

President 2020/21