

## THE ROTARY GENERATION GAME

At Club Council on 25 February 2020 a lot of time was spent thinking about how we could regenerate the work of our Club. That exercise was repeated on 3 March at the business meeting. Here is a summary of the things that were discussed and the opinions and thoughts that were generated.



To prompt people's thinking we started off with an image of what this year's Rotary T shirt might look like. It was a bit tongue in cheek showing the old men, Statler and Waldorf, from the Muppet Show. Is this the image that others might have of Rotary? Is this sense of older guys who enjoy a bit of fun how we might see ourselves?

### This year's Rotary T shirt?



Needless to say the exercise that followed, asking what a future T shirt might portray was quite revealing. The main themes on the things that we should advertise are shown on this next image.

## What goes on tomorrow's T shirt?



- CLARITY ABOUT OUR VALUES
- CLEAR SIGNS AND SYMBOLS OF WHAT WE DO
- EMPHASIS ON FELLOWSHIP
- SAY WHAT WE DO TO HELP OTHERS
- A CLEAR MESSAGE ON THE BENEFIT OF OUR FUNDRAISING ACTIVITY
- WE VALUE DIVERSITY

The next exercise was to look at what a Rotarian from another Club had posted on the internet to challenge colleagues' thinking.

### Rotary Blogger

#### To do good in my community.....

- I don't need to endure weekly 'corporate chicken'
- I don't need to pay a subscription
- I don't need to listen to a load of talk at meetings
- I don't need to be bound by outdated rules and regulations
- I don't need a top-heavy hierarchical structure to govern me
- I don't need to be connected to an old-fashioned and out of date organisation
- **Do I need a Rotary Club to connect with similar minds to do good in my local community?**

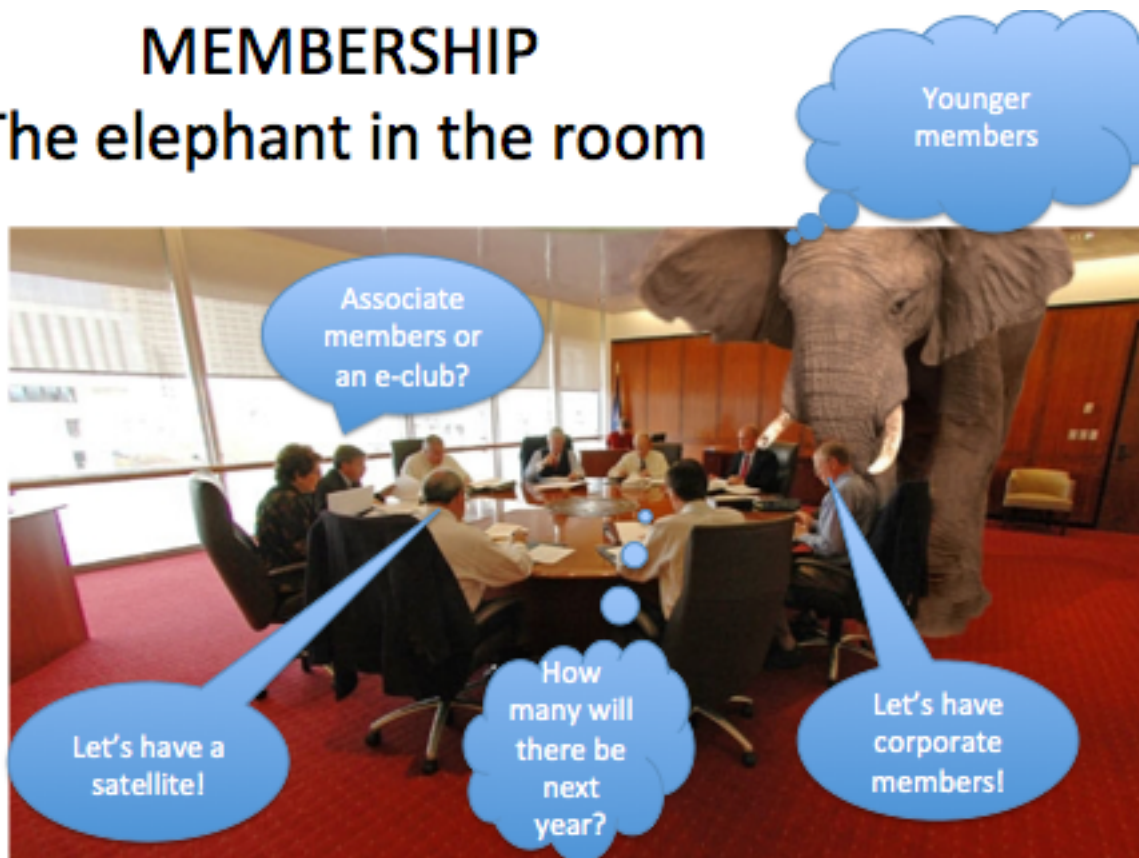
## Give us your wacky ideas – how can we make the Club a better team?



We then looked at some wacky ideas for how we can make the Club a better team, how we can stay vibrant and relevant and how we can deal with the ongoing issue of membership.

# MEMBERSHIP

## The elephant in the room



The idea of the exercise was to get people to voice a variety of views. Responses to these questions are included from both meetings and responses that have been received since. They are interesting and are worthy of more thought and consideration. This hopefully summarises some of the key points.

### MEMBERSHIP

- We need to accept the reality that membership numbers could well drop.
- We should be more welcoming.
- We value and recognise diversity.
- We should be more inclusive.
- Let's do more to identify people's skills and and put them into active roles. This includes older members who have their own unique abilities to offer.
- Recognise that people will not necessarily be retiring at a younger age.
- Involving younger people still in employment in a lunchtime club is difficult.
- Consider associate and corporate membership initiatives.
- Consider creating a network of Rotary friends.
- Could we benefit from an accurate profile of club older and newer members to examine who are we currently attracting?(Age, employment status, gender, etc)
- There was an emerging theme that to concentrate on recruiting and involving the recently retired was likely to be the most beneficial. This will take effort and encouragement on the part of members and could involve more guest events.

### STRATEGY

- Be clear of our values.
- A long term approach should be set out to the Club and agreed.
- See how we can be collectively involved with the other two Canterbury based Rotary Clubs on issues such as membership, joint working and who we can demonstrate the alternatives to morning, lunchtime and evening meetings. Remember the public are unlikely to know that they are different.

- We should have a business plan each year that sets out a programme of the service initiatives for the year together with how that will be financed.
- The plan should involve everybody.
- A linked programme of fun based social / fellowships should be set out.
- Fundraising should be determined according to that plan.
- Look at how we can network with businesses and inspiring minds in the community. (We are trying to do that with universities)
- Whilst seeking to do new things, do not ignore the tradition and great history of the Club.

### THE WAY WE DO BUSINESS

- Working together:
  - Small active teams can concentrate on what is to be done and then involve the broader club in delivering those initiatives. (An example - Top Choir Kent.)
  - Could we rethink the way committees work? Some argue to decrease the number of committees and even merge vocational / community services. Others see the advantage of committees ensuring wider involvement.
  - Have less talking shops and more activity.
- Let's have a look at what other Club's do. Forest of Blean for instance have abandoned many of the traditional approaches.
- Let's spend less time on trivia.
- Consider why people join and what do they want from meetings? Different people want different things from the Club. Some are looking for fellowship whilst others want to help with the community support aspects, others a combination of both.
- Avoid uniform clothing.
- Could we have 2 evening meetings (although that would conflict with Forest of Blean and would not be attractive to some members).
- Get rid of some of the bureaucracy.
- Let's network.
- Better communication especially including more personal contacts. Where IT is used there will be some members who would benefit from having buddies to help.

### SERVICES ACTIVITIES

- Physical practical projects followed by a pint in the pub.
- Make the service activities more open and obvious to the public.
- We are undertaking some very successful work with younger people in the vocational services arena - let's build on that.
- Service is not just about allocating funds to organisations.
- Do not forget the successes of the Club (e.g. Millennium Fund, Mini Group Study Exchange, Joint Pentangular Projects, etc)
- Review the successes we have.

### FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES

- Plan these well in advance and encourage all the Club to be involved. You cannot leave this to one or two people.
- Ensure that there is a link between fundraising and service so that everybody feels part of giving service.

### FELLOWSHIP ACTIVITIES

- Build on what is being achieved now. There are good activities led from the presidential level and from others such as trips out.
- Nominate a speaker on the day.
- Abandon so many formal lunches.
- De-formalise and have wacky events.
- Make sure that we have the funds to do the things we do (such as Pentangular)
- Cater for older members and let them take a fuller part in the Club – use their talents
- More networking



- A buddy system to help members with transport, use of IT.

### NEXT STEPS

There was a conclusion that if the Club is to remain vibrant and relevant then we need to get on with the notion of regeneration. This paper is now being sent to all members for any further thoughts. It is then a matter of seeing what can be done quickly and what longer term plans are needed. As somebody said at the business meeting, let's "declutter" the Club and get on. The President, the President Elect and the Vice President can then get their heads together.

### Some final thoughts



Is this what we want committee meetings to look like?

"And should there be a sudden loss of consciousness during this meeting, oxygen masks will drop from the ceiling."

Is this what we want Rotary meetings to be like?

