

Club assembly - President's speech

Firstly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the officers of the club & committee chairs who will be supporting me this year. David Wynn-Mackenzie, Club Secretary & Win Harvey, Club Treasurer – two of the hardest, most important jobs and the club could not function without them.

Sadly we have just lost our International Chair – Peter Brown – (a great loss to the club – and some very big shoes to fill) It was good to see so many club members at his memorial service last week. Peter's daughters Sue and Caroline have asked that instead of refunding Peter's subscriptions, they be donated to Rotary charity. More about International later

Paul Whiteman, Community & Vocational. Berenice Deakin, Gold Hill Fair. Richard Shean, Golf Day. Paul Slimm, North Dorset Cycle Ride. Of course, all these events don't happen without the support of all club members.

Also thanks to Geoffrey Hughes, Almoner & Attendance Officer, for his special attention to detail – not much gets past Geoffrey. Tony Morgan, for the tremendous amount of work with our business partners & now the cycle speedway track project. John Warner, for filling our social diaries & last but not least Mike Farrow for organising the twinning.

As in previous years I am looking to give each committee a budget to spend, this has worked well in the past, enabling committees to decide which charities they want to support and bring their ideas to Club Council.

On the subject of committees, there has in recent years been an imbalance in the numbers of members who are keen to serve on community rather than international. We need to address that imbalance to get fresh ideas and bring forward new challenges. I am as guilty as anyone else, as in twelve years in I have not sat on the international committee, but I do plan to rectify that.

Members

As always, we need new members to join us, to enable us to fund-raise and be active in our community. We have a very good retention rate, in fact we received an award for this. At present we are 24 in number, including the 3 very keen & active members who have recently joined Trevor Clements, David Brittan and Tim Cook.

New members bring new ideas and fresh ways of thinking which makes for a thriving club, we hope to continue growing and gain a further two members this year.

Business Partners Scheme

Shaftesbury Rotary Club has the largest number of Business Partners of any Rotary Club – a total of eighty- six, who each contribute £50 a year, enabling us to support many causes. Our club has been held up as best practise with Rotarians from other clubs as far away as Eastbourne coming to find out– how Shaftesbury Rotary does it. A very special thank you to Tony Morgan as it has been his hard work in getting this scheme running. Thank- you Tony, you have certainly put Shaftesbury Rotary Club on the map.

Fund-raising

Gold Hill Fair, Rotary Charity Golf & The North Dorset Cycle Ride – continue to be our main fund-raisers. They are three really good events and we aim to further improve and promote them. For this year's GHF our main charity is the Air Ambulance. Last year we donated in excess of £14,800 to a wide range of local and national charities. I will leave Paul (Community Chairman) to give you his report.

Each year we organise & support "Kids Out" – taking disabled children from Yewstock School to Longleat, for the first time this year we will be supporting "Aviation Without Borders" giving disabled children a chance to have a short flight from Compton Abbas Airfield, our two pilots

Bernard Skam & Philip Proctor are generously giving their time. It reminds me of my very first contact with Rotary, when as a Girl Guide in East Knoyle, in the early 1970's, having passed my Aircraft Badge – Ron Homes a previous President of this Rotary Club took some of us on a flight, which was a fantastic experience. I did not realise at the time, that we were being flown by an ex pilot from Bomber Command!

We will be doing Shoeboxes again this year and volunteering our time at the Sturminster Cheese Festival (If anyone hasn't done that before it's a great one to volunteer for, as the Cheese Festival is a really good event)

Youth

We are hoping to work more closely this year with young people and Shaftesbury School. We recently had the Head Boy and Head Girl visit the Club. With the School we will be looking to expand the year 11 interviews. I have personally done these, they are very rewarding to do. It's not always the young person sitting in front of you - with the perfect CV and the predicted high grades that impresses you the most. We hope to have a pizza evening with the school to find out, how we can become more involved.

The Cycle Track Project – I will leave for Tony to report.

Foundation

Rotary own's charity. This year the Club has donated £2,555 to Foundation & Polio Plus, I would like us as a club to learn more about Foundation.

The Social Side of Rotary.

Rotary is about raising funds for charity, putting something into your local community, but it's also about fellowship making friends and having fun.

We have gone horseracing, dog racing, pig racing, had breakfast at the M1 Greasy spoon café, - (the one in Bell Street -that is). We visited the Fire Station and met our local retained fire fighters, and had the opportunity to climb ladders to the top of the tower – very noticeably it was your wives who climbed the tower – not many blokes went up! This was followed by an enjoyable Thai supper, to which the Station Commander Matt Scott & his crew joined us. With Firefighters very much in the news at the moment it was a good community event for the club to do.

Twinning

We had a very successful visit from our twin club Heerlen in April – a big thanks to Mike Farrow for organising the weekend and to the wives & partners who helped host our visitors.

We should also remember partners & families who play a big part in supporting the club, with all our events and it's always good fun to catch up with them socially.

Before I ask the committee chairs to bring us up to date and Tony to say a few words about cycle track, I just wanted to say this about this club. When I have had Rotarian friends visiting Shaftesbury, they always say it's one of the friendliest clubs they have ever visited, they comment on the banter, the humour & dare I say it the slight good-natured irreverence.

I think as a club we punch above our weight, we raise a fair amount of money, support some very deserving causes and importantly don't take ourselves too seriously. I hope we will continue to do so in my year and thank you for your support.

Trish Lever

President Shaftesbury Rotary Club 2017-2018