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Rotary Matters

Maidenhead
Rotary
Club



The digital newspaper for Maidenhead Rotary Club - no.2 April 2021

**‘A lovely
man and
a great
Rotarian’**

**Obituary and
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Harry Patel

February 1963 - February 2021

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WELCOME to the latest Rotary Matters, the digital newspaper for Maidenhead Rotary Club.

In this edition we take time to remember and pay tribute to our great friend and Rotary colleague Harry Patel, taken from us by Covid-19 in February.

Even as he fell ill Harry was still arranging half-term lunches for children on free school meals. This only serves to highlight that, as Rotary celebrated its 116th birthday that same month, the work of Rotarians is as relevant and important as it has ever been.

As well as reviewing the news from the club for the past few weeks - from reports of club meetings you may have missed to our support for schools during lockdown and our ongoing help for our international projects - we take a look at a new environmental project.

End Plastic Soup is an international initiative now adopted by our club and across this area in response to environmental protection being added as Rotary's seventh area of focus.

And as we begin to emerge from the limbo forced on us by a year of lockdown and zoom meetings we also discuss - in Mary's message (right) and on P11 - how we want the club to look in the future and how members can be more engaged and involved. It's your club so please make sure you have your say in helping to shape it for the future.

Message from the president:

Moving forward in fellowship

AS I WRITE this the sun is shining, summertime has begun, and Easter, a season of hope is almost here.

It has been a difficult year so far, but with all of your contributions, we have managed to keep going. Although we do not like it, thank goodness we have Zoom, which has allowed us to have our virtual meetings attended, on the whole, by the same numbers as when we meet in our usual way.

We are a social club, with the shared commitment to help those less fortunate than ourselves.

We can complain we have not had much socialising due to the restrictions imposed by the pandemic—the President's lunch, the weekend away and the Quadrilateral visit to Bonn and then St Cloud all had to be cancelled.

But on the positive, we have contributed to such causes as Foodshare, children's meals at half-term, the homeless, and to our sister association, the Blind Club. We have continued to support our overseas projects.

In October we planted crocuses to commemorate the near-eradication of polio, we awarded our Covid-19 Heroes who had gone over and above the call of duty during this difficult time.

We have held Zoom interviews with students in two schools to help them with their future lives -whether into employment, apprenticeships or further education.



Members of our Rotary family continue to help out with the vaccination programme at the Town Hall.

There are other examples where it is evident that, in spite of difficulties, we have not been dormant!

There have been sad times, of course. We lost Sheila Fontaine through Covid. Recently, we have all lamented the untimely loss of our much-loved and respected Harry Patel. Our thoughts and prayers are with Alka and their two children.

We are now planning for better times if our roadmap continues to go well and we stick to the rules. We are looking forward to Yvonne Johnsson-Mullin's project Bag-a-Bargain and Janet Perry's Open Gardens Weekend as well as the Golf Tournament, an Environmental Walk, Bikeathon and the Boundary Walk, all of which are being planned.

As we look forward to the new Rotary Year, there are issues that need further thought and discussion. At our last coun-

cil meeting it was agreed that we should canvass members as to what they want from the club.

Initially, the most pressing item is the venue for our future meetings and the time and day of the week we meet.

We need to review our present committee structure to ensure we are making best use of members' time.

It would be great if we had more members willing to stand for chairmen and women of committees and other positions in the club.

What prevents them from doing so? It was agreed that a review group should be formed to report back by the end of May. The membership will be Martin as chairman, with secretary Frank Knowles, Jim Howles as the next president-elect, Janet as membership and programme secretary, Gurdial Singh, and myself.

It is obvious that in any organisation such as ours, we will not agree on all issues. There will need to be compromises and we will continue to be democratic in any changes for the future.

So, let us go forward with renewed commitment to our local communities, ready to tackle challenges at home and abroad. With your contributions we are surviving a unnatural situation, so let us go forward as true Rotarians in the spirit of fellowship and friendship.

Mary Spinks,
President, March 2021

A fitting legacy for Harry

More than £2,300 now donated in memory of Rotarian for Aarti children's home

DONATIONS in memory of long-serving Rotarian Himanshu Patel, known to everyone as Harry, will be used to support one of the club's international projects close to his heart.

A Rotarian for more than 21 years, Harry passed away on Saturday, February 27, from Covid-19 at Wexham Park Hospital, Slough, where he was being treated in intensive care. He was just 58.

Following his death, Harry's family asked for donations to support of the Aarti Children's Home in India, and so far £2,376 has been raised.

Discussions are now taking place with the charity to decide how the money will best be spent as fitting legacy for Harry.

The popular Maidenhead restaurateur and dedicated family man joined the club in September 1999. He served primarily on the youth services and fundraising committees, often hosting meetings in his restaurant.

Harry was the driving force behind several restaurants and catering businesses in Maidenhead, most recently Gourmet Chicken, now based at the Maiden's Head pub in the High Street.

Born in Nairobi, Kenya, Harry came to the UK as a small child and grew up in London. He studied chemistry



Harry Patel in his Gourmet Chicken restaurant

at Trent Polytechnic but decided to forego a promising career as a scientist, instead joining the family newsagent and confectionary business.

His first venture in Maidenhead was a newsagent in the High Street in the 1990s which, with the coming of the internet, he converted into an internet cafe and sandwich bar. Harry also ran a snack wagon delivering to businesses around the town.

He was an active member

of Maidenhead Chamber of Commerce, serving on its town centre committee, and he was the organisation's president in 2001.

But Harry's real passion was for cooking, so he completed a fast-track catering course at Thames Valley University, which included training at the Sheraton Hotel in London. With his new skills he started a successful business in London providing canteen services to construc-

tion sites and also opened Nosh, a restaurant in Maidenhead. The business evolved through several phases, including as an Indian restaurant, to eventually become Gourmet Chicken in 2013.

"He just loved cooking. He enjoyed eating out and good food. When we went on holiday he would want to try everything and bring back ideas. He really enjoyed culinary conjuring," said his wife Alka. The couple, who were married in 2005, have two children, Anjali, 13 and Rohan 11.

A dedicated Chelsea fan, Harry loved football and enjoyed cricket with his son, who plays at Boyne Hill Cricket Club. He was also interested in politics and enjoyed discussing domestic and international issues with friends and family.

As a Rotarian, Harry possessed a strong sense of community service. Most recently he was involved in providing lunches for children missing out on free school meals during half-term, continuing to organise them even as he became sick with Covid-19.

"That's just the kind of person he was," said Alka. "Above all he loved making people happy. He was a doting father who lived for his family and would do anything to make us happy. That was his purpose in life."

Rotarians pay tribute to 'a lovely, kind man who helped others in need'

I got to know Harry when he was a member of our youth committee and we held meetings at Gourmet Chicken. He delighted in serving us chicken titbits during the meeting. He was a family man and I remember how proud he was of his children after they performed at Maidenhead's Got Talent. Recently, he asked me if our club would support his giving of food parcels to children in need during half-term. He was a true Rotarian and he will be missed by all.— **Mary Spinks, President, Maidenhead RC**

Harry was such a lovely man and so popular in the club. His business interests stopped him from attending as much as he would have wished. When he walked into the meeting room there was always cheering, and his name called out. You knew he had arrived even if you hadn't seen him come in. What a guy. - **Peter Silverthorne**

A close friend, loyal customer and outstanding Rotarian. I will miss him - **Rosario Sardo**

A lovely man who cared for his family and helped others in need — **Tony Lodge**

Harry is leaving a large space in his family, the community and this club. It was a joy to have known him — **Pat Lattimer**

We would like to express our profound sadness on the passing of Harry Patel. 'Lovely man' expresses exactly how we will remember him. Our thoughts are with his family — **Joëlle Barber, Présidente, RC de Saint-Cloud**

A tree-mendous occasion

Planting marks Rotary Day and inclusion of environment as seventh 'area of focus'

A TREE-PLANTING ceremony in Oak-en Grove Park on February 23 marked both the 116th anniversary of Rotary and the organisation's historic adoption of 'protecting the environment' as a core objective.

It is the first time Rotary has added a new 'area of focus' to its original six objectives: promoting peace; fighting disease; providing clean water, sanitation and hygiene; maternal and child health; supporting education; and community economic development.

The Rowan tree was planted for Rotary Day by Maidenhead Rotary Club president Mary Spinks and Cllr Donna Stimson, the borough's cabinet member for climate change and sustainability.

Mary said: "We felt planting a tree was the most appropriate way of marking both the Rotary anniversary and our commitment to protecting the environment."

"Green issues are not new to Rotary. But with growing concern about climate change, its inclusion as a seventh area of focus will allow us to tackle environmental protection with the same commitment as our campaign to eradicate polio."

She added: "Many of our members also spent the day on environmental projects, such as planting their own trees or picking up plastic where they live."

Cllr Stimson, who helped arrange the planting, said: "I was delighted to be



President Mary Spinks (right) and Cllr Donna Stimson plant the tree in Oak-en Grove Park.

approached by Mary. We are already working with Rotary on their Open Gardens weekend and hope to collaborate further on other volunteering activities. As we come out of this dreadful pandemic we are looking for opportunities to draw communities closer together and organisations like Rotary can play a key part."

A few days later the first official

duty of the club's new president-elect Martin Trepte was to hammer in the plaque for the tree.

Martin, who will take over the club presidency from Mary in July, said: "Protecting the environment will be a key focus for Rotary in the future - especially through encouraging the small changes we can all make that will cumulatively have a huge impact."



President-elect Martin Trepte hammers in the plaque (right).



Celebrating 116 years of ordinary people making extraordinary things happen



Examples of Rotary in action: from helping people in lockdown to youth development and protecting the local environment.

Rotary never more needed

“ROTARIANS are ordinary people from all walks of life who like to play a part in making extraordinary things happen – and undeterred by Covid-19 they continue to do so,” said Maidenhead Rotary Club president Mary Spinks.

It the past year Rotarians in Maidenhead have risen to the challenges of the pandemic, setting up a volunteer service to support those isolating, providing volunteer marshals at vaccination centres and donating laptops to schools to help home learning.

With many of its usual activities curtailed, the organisation adapted to the ‘new normal’ by holding meetings over Zoom, launching a Covid Heroes award scheme, and making events such as the Boundary Walk Covid-safe. In October the walk went ahead in a special ‘bubble’ format to allow charities to raise much-needed funds.

“This has been a difficult year but Rotary has time and again proved its value to the community during the pandemic and will continue to be just as important as we emerge from it,” said Mary.

Maidenhead has three Rotary Clubs, plus a Rotaract Club for 18-30s. With a range of local, national and international projects to get involved in, members use their time

February 23 marked the 116th anniversary of the founding of Rotary. And, as a year under lockdown has shown, Rotary has never been more relevant or important. But what exactly is it? And who are the Rotarians who continue to work so hard to improve the lives of people in our community and beyond?

and skills to help others. But they also have plenty of opportunities to make friends and have fun along the way. They can get involved as much, or as little, as their time allows.

Each club operates independently but they are all part of Rotary International, a global organisation dedicated to helping those in need and working towards world understanding and peace. With rising concerns over climate change, this year Rotary is

adding protecting the environment as a seventh ‘area of focus’.

Under the umbrella of ‘Rotary in Maidenhead’ in more ‘normal’ times the town’s clubs are either the driving force or a key supporter of many popular community events, such as the annual festival in Kidwells Park.

They also run initiatives for youngsters promoting literacy and numeracy, CV-writing and interview skills,

some of which have moved online to still be provided during lockdown.

Each club has international projects they support, such as providing education and training for girls abandoned at birth in India (pictured below), and a European youth adventure programme to promote friendship and self-development (above, centre).

Collectively the clubs have supported Rotary’s international drive to virtually eradicate polio, now endemic in just two countries, and are staunch backers of Shelterbox, Rotary’s disaster relief charity which has helped more than a million people in the aftermath of catastrophes.

And for its members Rotary offers much in return. Eddie Clarke, a Rotarian for nearly 40 years, said: “I started my business in Maidenhead in 1980 and I joined Rotary because I felt a need to put something back into my community. Rotary has been an essential part of my life, forming my most close friendships over the years and has brought me into contact with wonderful people.

“It has also been a great networking organisation and I would encourage anybody in business to consider joining Rotary as a great way to get know other business people in your hometown, while at the same time having great fun.”



A place for living, not dying

Thames Hospice is about 'getting every ounce of joy out of living as possible'

THE NEW Thames Hospice is not a place for dying but a place for making the most of living. That was the key message from an uplifting talk about the charity given to the club in March

Guest speaker Margaret Thomas, the hospice's supporter relationship manager, told the club how its expert care improves the quality of life for people with life-limiting illnesses.

"The hospice is about getting every ounce of joy and life out of living as possible," she said. "We give hope to those who appear to be hopeless. Hope helps people."

Speaking over Zoom, she outlined the story of the hospice from its launch 32 years ago at Pine Lodge in Windsor, through its merger with the Paul Bevan Centre in Ascot, to the opening of its new facility near Bray Lake in October last year.

She explained how over the years the charity had provided extraordinary care to many hundreds of people through in-patient services, day care and nurses in the community. But an ageing and increasing density of population meant a new and bigger hospice was needed.



Margaret Thomas speaks to the club.

Ground was broken on the new site in January 2019 but the planned opening in July 2020 was delayed by Covid-19.

The new hospice has 28 in-patient beds – an increase from 17 – in three wings.

As well as in-patient care, the hospice offers day care, counselling, and complementary therapies. A family support team helps the children of patients – it is currently supporting 200 children.

Other facilities include an education centre offering training to develop both hospice staff and care workers from other organisations, while the Palliative

Community Response Team provides round-the-clock help and support to patients at home.

The site also hosts a shop and community cafe, which the public are encouraged to visit to both learn more about the hospice and help raise much-needed funds. It costs more than £10million a year to run the hospice, 49 per cent of which is met through statutory funding. The rest comes from a massive ongoing fundraising effort - from individual donations to events such as the Santa Dash and Sunflower Walk.

"We survive through the largesse of others. If it was not for groups and individuals who support the hospice we simply could not continue," said Margaret.

Maidenhead's three Rotary clubs have joined forces to sponsor two important outdoor areas at the hospice - the family courtyard and the bereavement garden. Our club has committed to contributing £2,500 towards the funding effort, and has previously helped to provide garden furniture for the family courtyard.

For more about Thames Hospice see <https://thameshospice.org.uk/>

Headgear high jinks help lift Zoom meeting blues

IT WAS 'hats-on for Rotary' at the club's family meeting in February when participants were asked to wear their most unusual headgear – the funnier the better.

The display of marvellous millinery was the idea of president Mary Spinks who wants meetings, currently held over Zoom during lockdown, to remain lots of fun.

From bonnets, boaters and berets to caps, keffiyehs and chapeaux of every kind, the array of hilarious headpieces even included an impressively modified hanging basket to promote the club's planned Open Gardens event in June.

Judging fell to guest speaker Rhidian Jones - appropriately sporting a mortarboard - who had given a fascinating illustrated talk about Beethoven punctuated with examples of his music.

For Rhidian, a former tutor in music for the Open University and assistant director of music at All Saints Church in Marlow, the clear winners were husband and wife team Eddie and Eileen Clarke.

Eddie's head was proudly adorned



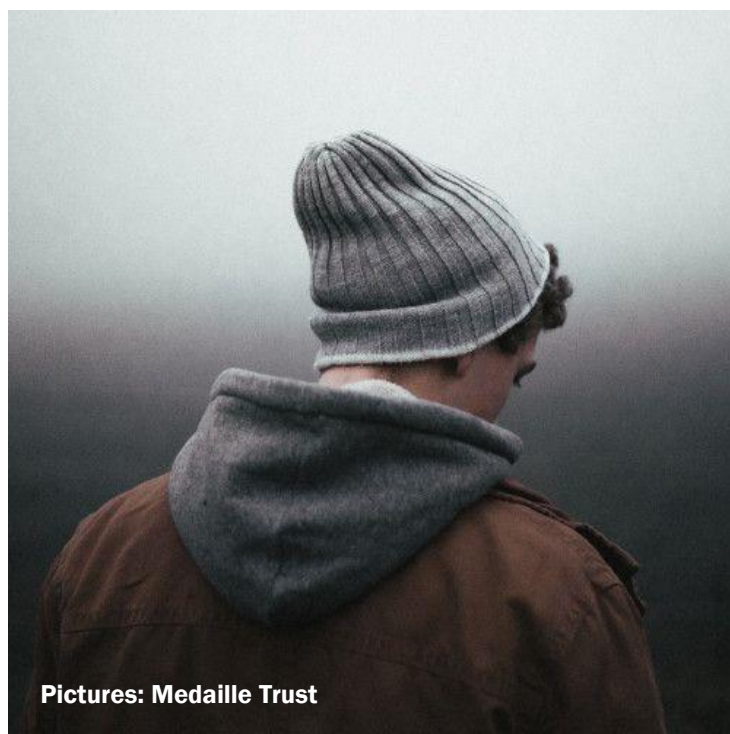
Worthy winners Eddie and Eileen Clarke sporting their prize hats.

by a colourful fluffy horned creation, while Eileen had entered into the true spirit of the event with her 'gin and tonic' hat.

President Mary said: "It was lots of fun and just what we needed in lock-

down when we are all getting a bit fed up with Zoom meetings.

"Everyone enjoyed themselves and many thanks to our guest speaker for being the judge and picking the worthy winners."



Pictures: Medaille Trust

The unseen victims are often vulnerable people trafficked to the UK by criminal gangs on the promise of a better life.

Focus on modern slavery

A huge problem that hides in plain sight and devastates the lives of its victims

THE HARROWING scale of modern slavery in the UK today and what is being done to support its victims was revealed to Rotarians in March.

Guest speaker at Maidenhead Rotary Club's regular Monday meeting was Marc Pearson, an anti-slavery envoy for the Medaille Trust which provides refuge for the victims of modern slavery and helps them rebuild their lives.

A Catholic organisation set up in 2006 to help survivors from people trafficking, the trust is one of the largest providers of supported safe house beds for victims of modern slavery in the UK.

Marc explained that while slavery in the traditional sense still exists in some parts of the world, modern slavery covers people being forced into work for low pay under the coercive control of others.

Often they are vulnerable people trafficked from Eastern Europe on the promise of a better life.

But when they arrive in the UK they find the reality very different, forced instead into near slave-labour or even a life of crime while having to live in crowded and unsanitary condi-



tions. Victims include sex workers and people working in construction, agriculture, nail bars and car washes.

Marc said more than 40 million people are estimated to be trapped in some form of slavery across the world.

Research from 2018 estimated the number of victims in the UK could be at least 136,000.

In 2019 alone, 10,627 potential victims were identified by police, up 53 per cent on the previous year. It is a figure which has grown year-on-year since 2015, when the Modern Slavery Act was introduced.

"It's a good thing that more people are identified as it means more people get helped," said Marc, who explained the Medaille Trust has nine safe houses across the country, provid-

ing 116 beds for people who have escaped modern slavery.

Working with other organisations such as the Salvation Army, it provides support on the long journey from victim to survivor as it helps them rebuild their lives, often tackling problems such as alcoholism, mental illness and drug addiction resulting from their experiences. Last year the Trust helped 171 women, 86 men and 48 children from 47 different countries.

The Trust also tries to prevent people becoming victims and works in countries like Albania to stop those with limited economic prospects falling prey to people traffickers. At the other end of the problem it assists the police with prosecutions. It has helped score notable victories against criminal gangs, one of which had 33 people forced into construction work living in a single house.

Marc's talk ended on a quote from a former female victim. She said: "Medaille opened their doors to me when I was most in need. The staff walked by my side and helped me to find my way. With their help I spread my wings and today I fly high. I am free."



The team at Makinddu are once again providing important free treatment to the community.

Vital clinic re-opens

Makindu dentists back in action with support from Rotary Club

A DENTAL clinic in Kenya providing free treatment to a poor local community has re-opened its doors thanks to ongoing support from Maidenhead Rotarians.

The fortnightly Makindu Dental Clinic was forced to abruptly close at the outbreak of the pandemic last year after providing free dental treatment for the last 10 years with the help of Maidenhead Rotary Club and the individual fundraising efforts of member Gurdip Bahra.

But after careful planning and thanks to the hard work of the dental team, the clinic restarted in March to offer its much-needed services.

Operating in the secure precincts of the Sikh Temple Hospital in Makindu, the fortnightly clinic sees an average of 60 patients each week-end it runs.

The clinic began in 2009, replacing a dental camp held once or twice a year which saw dentists from Gurdip's family travel to Makindu to treat up to 300 patients.

It is co-ordinated by Dr PS Jandu, Gurdip's dentist brother-in-law based in Nairobi, who was instrumental in setting it up.

The launch of the regular fortnightly free clinic in 2009 was the club's Quadrilateral Project and was attended by Gurdip and fellow Rotarian Frank Knowles, who travelled to Makindu for the inauguration.

Funding included providing a fully-equipped dental suite with two new dental chairs and a portable X-ray unit among other equipment.

The club has recently sent a donation of £1,486 to help with the re-opening of the clinic under Covid restrictions.

Gurdip said: "We can all be proud that Rota-

ry has been part of a successful project over the last ten years which has made a huge impact on the lives of the underprivileged people of Makindu and the environs.

"This would not have been possible without the dedication of the local dental team and Sikh Temple in Makindu which provides not only a safe and secure environment for the clinic to operate in with good infrastructure, but also offers free food and accommodation to the professionals who travel from Nairobi to run the clinic."



A patient is treated at the clinic.

Funding for global projects continues

DESPITE lockdown the club has continued to support its numerous important projects across the globe.

In the last few weeks the international committee headed by Rotarian Graham Brunsden has authorised several donations.

The largest of these is £4,417 to the rebuilding and re-fitting of the Saurpani primary school in a remote region of Nepal, which was devastated by the 2015 earthquake.

The scheme is the club's Quadrilateral project for 2022 and the donation represents the first tranche of funding for the reconstruction.

In addition the club has made a £500 donation to the Chachoki eye clinic in the Punjab, India, a project treating people with cataracts the club has supported since 2010.

Finally a £590 donation has been made to the Rotary charity Shelterbox to help provide relief to the people of the Philippines displaced by a catastrophic typhoon.

Graham said: "As with the money for the Makindu dental clinic, all the funding from the international committee aims to provide as much benefit to as many people as possible."



Rotarian Eddie Clarke drops off one of the laptops at Desborough College.

Laptops aid lockdown lessons

LEARNING under lockdown was made much easier for students at Desborough College who do not have a computer at home, thanks to a gift of six laptops from the Rotary Club of Maidenhead.

The laptops were donated by individual Rotarians after club member Gurdial Singh saw a news report highlighting how students from poorer families were being most affected by studying at home under lockdown as they were less likely to have a computer.

Gurdial, who is the club's liaison person with Desborough, contacted the

Shoppenhangers Road college to confirm they needed computers before appealing to club members for old or unwanted laptops.

"The club membership response was both rapid and positive," said Gurdial. "Altogether we supplied six laptops between January 25 and February 3 to support home schooling during lockdown.

"This is part of our overall commitment to education and our school support programme."

He added: "We received more laptops than I envisaged - hats off to Maid-

head Rotary Club members for rising to the occasion."

Rotarians who contributed laptops and assisted with their delivery were Eddie Clarke, Eddie Piekut, Jim Howles, John and Karen Yates and Rosario Sardo.

Desborough's technical team then set up the laptops for the students to be able to use them. School spokeswoman Christana Sansom said: "What a wonderful thing to do. They are gratefully received by the students and staff of Desborough. Thank you Rotary."

Club provides vital interview experience online

STUDENTS about to start applying for jobs were given some vital interview experience despite lockdown, thanks to Maidenhead Rotary Club.

A series of mock interviews were held online for 30 students studying Health and Social Care at BCA, in Burghetts Green. For many of them this was the first interview they have ever had.

BCA had prepared a job advert for a care assistant in a local nursing home for which the students were applying. And on Tuesday, March 17, each student had a 15-minute online video interview with a Rotarian playing the part of a prospective employer, followed by five minutes of feedback.

Malcolm Falconer, one of Rotary organisers, said the

interviews were part of the club's schools engagement programme and would normally have been held in person. Obviously, that could not happen due to Covid-19 but we were determined they would still take place online.

"It went very well. There were five Rotarians participating - myself, Mary Spinks, Eddie Clarke, Eddie Piekut and Gurdial Singh. The whole

event was well organised and all the technology for the call worked."

He added: "Each zoom call had a BCA chaperone in the background and all interviews were recorded."

Adrian Stewart from BCA added: "We were all of the same opinion on how well the students interviewed and the professionalism of the Rotarians doing the interviews."



Time to end scourge of single use plastic waste

New district-wide group set up to tackle threat of micro-plastics to environment

END PLASTIC Soup - an international Rotary initiative with the ambitious aim of stopping plastic pollution being dumped into our seas, waterways and lakes by 2050 – has arrived in the Thames Valley.

But what exactly is plastic soup?

The term covers visible bottles and other large plastic waste like carrier bags but also includes the micro-plastics which have an alarming, albeit unseen, impact on our daily lives.

We use micro-plastics in so many products from face cream, detergents and teabags to fertilizers. They are also created from tyre wear and by washing clothes.

It is a massive problem with serious implications both for the environment and human health. Plastic breaks down into tiny fragments that get into the food chain, water we drink and even the air we breathe.

Started in 2018 by Rotary in Amsterdam, the End Plastic Soup Campaign has now spread to Rotary clubs throughout the World, including the UK. It aims to harness the same energy and commitment from the world's 1.2 million Rotarians that led to the near eradication of Polio, and bring it to bear on the problem of plastic pollution.

Throughout the World there are numerous projects where Rotary is leading or partnering with other organisations.

These include river and lake clean-ups from Mexico to Holland, the Philip-



ines to South Africa, and Russia to Italy.

An umbrella group for district 1090 in the Thames Valley has been set up after an inaugural meeting at the end of March.

It will meet every three months to co-ordinate the work of three action groups that will meet monthly. Each of these will tackle an individual area: awareness and education; supporting club and district projects; and research, publicity and lobbying. Volunteers are

still being sought for the umbrella group and all three action groups.

Brian Jonson from Marlow Rotary Club is spearheading the initiative. He said: "We hope to start looking at our own River Thames, identifying the source of pollution and initially starting a clean-up of the many tributaries of the Thames."

The Thames has some of the highest levels of micro-plastics in the world with tiny fragments of plastic found in the bodies of crabs in the river.

Individual Rotarians are also being urged to help reduce plastic waste by changing their behaviour and using two pieces of plastic less each day. Alternatively they can pick up one piece of plastic waste every day from the street, beach, riverside so it does not end up in rivers the sea.

For details about getting involved with End Plastic Soup please email Brian at: endplasticsoup1090@gmail.com



Make sure your voice is heard

Membership consulted as first step of club review

A YEAR of lockdown has been tough for Rotarians used to sharing the fellowship a weekly meeting brings.

Zoom has been a lifesaver but while many of us have found it frustrating, it has also made smaller committee meetings much easier to attend for busy people.

But even before the pandemic there was dissatisfaction being voiced about where we held our meetings and the standard of catering. There were also some difficulties with succession planning for key roles within the club.

A year of being in limbo has helped to show each of us what is important about Rotary. So, as we begin to look forward to the return of face-to-face meetings, now is the perfect time to reflect on how we want things to be in the future.

To this end a review group is being set up with the purpose of ensuring the club is properly structured to meet the needs and wishes of its members.

Among the key aspects of club business to be reviewed will be when and where we meet and what the format of meetings will be.

Do members still want to meet at Monday lunchtimes? Is there still a role for Zoom in some way? Do members want a sit-down, two-course meal? Is there somewhere other than Desborough Bowls Club members want to meet? How much would they be prepared to spend on a meal? (It's been £12 for as long as many can remember).

In addition the review will be looking at whether the way the club is organised is still fit for purpose.

Is the current committee structure delivering what it needs to? How do we address issues of succession planning for key roles?

How do we engage and develop new Rotarians so they want to take on more responsibility and take up senior positions?

As an organisation Rotary is becoming far more flexible. Just because we have always done things in a particular way does not mean we have to continue to do so.

Of course, the only way a review like this can reach any meaningful conclusions is with the full and honest participation of all our members.

So, the first step will be canvassing the membership to find out what you want from the club. A simple questionnaire will have been emailed to you with this edition of Rotary Matters.

It is in word format so can be filled in on your computer and emailed back, or you can print it out and fill it in the old fashioned way.

As well as asking a few basic questions about club structure there is space to say exactly what you want from the club and from Rotary.

The review group will be chaired by president elect Martin Trepte, joined by Mary Spinks, Frank Knowles, Jim Howles, Janet Perry and Gurdial Singh.

Its aim will be to report by the end of May with recommendations that, with the agreement of club council, will then be presented to members to consider.

Martin said: "If this process is to work it needs the full engagement of the whole club. There are no right or wrong answers - we need to hear what everyone wants from being in the club so we can do everything we can to make it match their expectations."

Completed questionnaires should be returned to our new generic email address: rotaryclubofmaidenhead@gmail.com

More effective RGB&I governance

MAJOR changes are being proposed to improve the structure of the governing body of Rotary in Great Britain and Ireland (RGB&I).

Under the plans set to go before the annual RGB&I business meeting in May, the current council of 31 people (26 of

whom change every year) will be replaced by a smaller 12-strong board, most serving a three-year term.

RGB&I president Tom Griffin said the existing structure allowed little continuity, with each year effectively 'starting from scratch'.

He said the new board would be appointed for its skills, experience and knowledge, adding it will 'enable us to take an effective multi-year approach to tackling the challenges we face'.

If approved the new structure would be introduced from July 2022.

Business in brief

Committee chairs

THERE is only one change among the club's committee chairs for the next Rotary Year.

Jim Howles is stepping down as chair of the Community and Youth Committee to concentrate on the role of president-elect, and is to be replaced by Tony Hill.

Graham Brunsden, Peter Graham and Martin Trepte have said they will remain as chairs of, respectively, the International, Fundraising and Foundation, and Public Image committees.

New card readers

AS THE use of cash continues to fall, the club council has approved the purchase of four Sumup card payment readers to make it easier to accept charitable donations at events.

Sumup is a new payment provider which has agreed a special Rotary GB&I commission rate of 1.35 per cent on each charitable donation passed through them (our current rate is 1.75per cent).

Generic email added

A NEW generic email has been set up to make it easier for people to get in touch directly with the club. The email: rotaryclubofmaidenhead@gmail.com will be monitored by club secretary Frank Knowles and will be promoted in press releases and in social media posts.

Speaker secretary

JANET Perry is to take over the role of the club's speaker secretary from Eddie Piekut who is leaving to join Maidenhead Bridge at the end of the Rotary Year.

Please help by passing on details to her of any interesting speakers you hear about who might provide interesting talks to the club.

School liaison

MALCOLM Falconer has volunteered to be the new School Liaison Executive (SLE) for Claires Court in addition to being lead for the club's Schools Engagement Programme.

He said: "I really do want to get to a position where schools just think 'Rotary' when they need support with things like job searches and applications and they go nowhere else."

Litter-pick challenge to mark environment day

Plans in progress for event throwing down green gauntlet to public

PLANS are in the pipeline to issue a litter-picking challenge to the people of Maidenhead to mark World Environment Day on Saturday, June 5.

A joint project between Maidenhead Rotary Club and Maidenhead Bridge Rotary Club would see individuals, families and friends called on to take part in a World Environment Day Challenge to both celebrate the planet and help clean up our environment.

Plans for the challenge are well advanced and it is only awaiting the official green light from the council's Safety Advisory Group (SAG).

It will see participants urged to ditch the car and go for a walk – any distance and any route – arming themselves with a litter picker and bag to collect as much rubbish as possible along the way.

Participants will be asked to register in advance for the challenge, which will be free to take part in, so Rotary can measure the impact.

They will be asked to log how far they walked and how much litter they collected, with prizes on offer for the highest achievers and best photos. Everyone registered will receive a completion certificate.

Lisa Hunter, one of the organisers, said: "Since 1974, June 5 has been recognised as World Environment Day. We want the challenge to be both a celebration and a platform for each of us to do something that will clean up Maidenhead's streets,



lanes and public footpaths.

"It's a chance to get out in the fresh air in a hands-on eco-friendly activity that will make a difference to our environment.

"It'll be great fun and allow people to get some exercise at the same time."

Rotary will be appealing for donations from those registering which will be used to plant trees locally, furthering the environmental impact of the initiative.

Participants will be invited to a community tree planting day once Covid-19 restrictions allow.

Fellow organiser Jim Howles added: "Walkers of all ages and abilities will be encouraged to take

part in the challenge. Whether an individual, group or family this initiative is an opportunity to participate in World Environment Day. The format means it is safe to take part and people can choose where and how far they walk – though we suggest a minimum of a mile."

Protecting the environment was this year added to Rotary's core objectives as an international service organisation and the event could also be linked to the End Plastic Soup initiative.

More details about the environmental challenge and online registration can be found at: www.maidenheadbridgerotary.org.uk/environment-walk

Dates of planned events for your diary

THE roadmap out of lockdown means planning for a number of club events, several of which were 'on hold' can now be stepped up.

Please make a note of them as volunteers and participants will be needed as more details are confirmed:

Environment Day Challenge - Saturday, June 5 (see left).

Bikeathon - Date still tbc from Maidenhead Office Park.

Bag-a-Bargain - the stall will now be at Taplow car boot sale. Volunteers will be needed once a date is confirmed.

Open Gardens - Saturday, June 26 and Sunday, June 27. Plans are well advanced and dates have been revised to just two days. Volunteers will be needed for upwards of 20 venues.

Charity Golf day - Thursday, July 1, Temple Golf Club. A sponsor is still being sought for this club fundraiser.

Maidenhead Downhill Races - Sunday, July 25. A downhill soapbox kart racing event planned by Maidenhead Bridge, Volunteers will be needed.

Boundary Walk - Sunday, October 3. Preparation has started for the normal style walk so volunteers will be needed.

Club meeting programme

Day	Date	Venue & Time	Details
Monday	April 12	Zoom: 12.30pm	Business meeting + AGM Part 1
Monday	April 26	Zoom: 6.30pm	Speaker: Donna Stimpson: Our Environment
Monday	May 10	Zoom: 12.30pm	Business Meeting
Monday	May 24	Zoom: 6.30pm	Speaker: End Plastic Soup
Monday	June 7	Zoom: 12.30pm	Business meeting + AGM Part 2
Monday	June 21	Zoom: 12.30	Club Assembly
Monday	June 28	TBA	Handover meeting