

WEEKLY BULLETIN 12

Rotary Club of Lochaber

Wednesday 10 June 2020

A warm welcome to the twelfth edition of our little bulletin designed to keep everyone in touch with one another during this extended period of lockdown. I really hope you are well, managing to adapt to these strange and uncertain times, and sticking to the government's guidelines. For those of us who are "shielding", the Scottish Government's original advice was to shield until 18 June, but this has now been extended until "at least" the end of July.

As I write this note (Tuesday morning), there have been no coronavirus-linked deaths in Scotland for two whole days. Hopefully, things will continue to get better.

.... Club Zoom Meetings

Last Wednesday's virtual meeting was chaired by Richard and attended by 12 of our members. Discussions included selection of committee members, District prep Zoom courses for incoming conveners, flood damage at Lochaber High School and a very wide range of other topics. Everyone contributed.

This week's lunchtime meeting is at 1pm today..... Richard circulated joining details by email on Monday and I hope you can join us.



zoom
Video Conferencing

.... and we're starting with an interesting and comprehensive update from Past-President and retired Head Teacher Paul ...

Hi Everyone,

Hope you are all well and coping with the situation. Many thanks to Ken for his excellent Newsletters and for the invitation to contribute. Life goes on pretty much as usual here in the stockbroker belt of Lochaber.

My life hasn't really changed all that much - most of the day in the garden with the occasional excursion on my bike along the canal. Nevertheless, Helen and I are both looking forward to things easing up a bit although we are determined to be extremely careful. I've always considered myself to be reasonably fit and I'm certainly not overweight but I am a type 2 diabetic and that's quite high risk. However we are both looking forward to a game of golf and fortunately the local club members are being meticulous in applying the safety rules laid down by the Golf Union.

Our main concern, like so many other parents, is for our family. Our daughter, Jayne, and her husband recently left good careers in London to take over a self-catering business in Pitlochry and, of course, this is all very worrying at present.

Our son, Mike, was due to fly back from Antarctica on Easter Friday just before all the South American countries closed their airports. Consequently BAS (British Antarctic Survey) have had to charter a medium sized cruise liner to bring them all home. As of today, 3rd June, they are just north of Grand Canaria, all bored rigid!

I have been greatly impressed by efforts that members of Council have been making to keep the club moving forward under difficult circumstances. Sadly, I believe that the community and indeed the country will be facing some difficult financial problems in the not too distant future. A lot of people will need our help. Hard times bring out the best in individuals and organisations - I'm optimistic that we'll be up to the challenge!

All the best, Paul

**THE 2020 ROTARY
VIRTUAL CONVENTION**

Rotary  2020 ROTARY
VIRTUAL CONVENTION
14-15 JULY

.... and, in these dark and strange times, we continue with some bright and welcome news about Past-President David Mee's brother John - He has been awarded a Paul Harris Fellowship by the Rotary Club of Broughty Ferry !!!

John is an occasional visitor at our club lunch meetings. The announcement in his Club's Facebook Page says "We were all hugely happy for John to receive this award at our virtual AGM last night, with the help of his wife Sarah, who made the presentation." When our Club sent congratulations to John, he thanked us and responded "that makes it special". David and John's Dad was a founder member of Abertay Rotary Club in 1964 - now the Rotary Club of Broughty Ferry



..... and a newsy update from our northernmost member Anthony Jones.

It is good to be able to report that there are lots of positive things happening in our different communities. Recently the community at Invergarry hit on a constructive idea to remember 2020, the 'year of lockdown'. Villagers are now busy painting coloured stones with the aim of designing a display that will be sited near the Millenium Cross on the grass bank, just outside Glengarry Parish Church. There are all kinds of ideas as to what form the commemorative stone will eventually take. These include rainbows and animals, birds, fish and turtles evoking the biblical story of creation. It will add colour and also be an opportunity to pause and reflect while also, be an opportunity to give

thanks for the end of the lockdown whenever it comes. When the lockdown is over the stones will be delivered individually by families to the church for piecing together.

As is happening all over Scotland at the moment, village families and children are also being encouraged to paint 'rainbows' to display at the village service station. So, next time you are travelling through Invergarry do call at the garage, do take time to stop and look at the colourful drawings on display donated by the village children.

Friends in Glengarry Kirk Session and the community are also planning forward in their diaries to the end of the national restrictions to hold a special service of thanksgiving and celebration. We are continuing, in the meantime, to exchange our ideas and carry on business by zoom and via the internet. Regular 'ring arounds' are also keeping us in touch with the immediate needs of the parishes of Fort Augustus and Glengarry. These are essential 'tools' but, none can replace the joy and fellowship of meeting together physically. We look forward to that time when we can finally leave behind the isolation and, the worry for our loved ones that lockdown brings and experience again life in all its fulness. With best wishes, Anthony

.... finally, an interesting "Letter to the Editor" from Past President John Hutchison

Time to strengthen community resources

Last week's uplifting letter from John Maitland encouraging us to focus on good news sat well with your report on the various COVID-19 support groups that are springing up, the Ballachulish initiative in particular.

The Kilmallie Community Council will this week issue similar house signs and help-slips with their Community News, distributed free to every house and business in the area.

But Ballachulish is no stranger to caring initiatives and we always need to remember the pioneering work and evidence given to the 'Dewar Report' of 1912 by Dr Lachlan Grant, GP at Ballachulish, who set out a bold vision for a National Health Service. The subsequent Highlands and Island Medical Service became the pilot for the National Health Service, implemented in 1948.

When I was involved with the Rural Parliament, the Scottish Government surveyed community councils about being given more powers but were very disappointed with the response rate, learning that many community councillors were scunnered by their poor resource allocation as set against responsibilities. As a result, no additional powers were given; all negative.

In Scotland, we have around 1,200 community councils for a population of 5.5 million but Switzerland have around 50 per cent more, pro rata, with more budget and powers.

While the Ballachulish folk taking forward this initiative won't necessarily be the community council of course, they deserve our congratulations but highlight the related need to strengthen community resources of all types in whatever way we can.

**John C Hutchison,
Fort William.**