

WEEKLY BULLETIN 47

Lochaber Rotary Wednesday 24 February 2021

Welcome to the 47th edition of our little newsletter and a cautious welcome to the good news that thanks to the lockdown restrictions immediately after Christmas, coronavirus infections are down by two thirds since mid-January. The rate of infection has dropped from 1 in every 60 people to 1 in every 200. As Spring approaches and garden flowers open up so we hope will the country and we can return to the Alex - possibly by April/May.



Last week's online meeting was well attended. Chaired and hosted by President Richard, the topic of the day was "Alternative Careers" - what career path would our members have pursued if life had taken a different turn and circumstances had been different?

ALTERNATIVE CAREER PATHS

Architect Mike seriously considered a career as a musician. He recalled, when he was seventeen, spending his summer holidays working for Past-President Charlie Cochrane in the West Highland Estates drawing office and that took him into the more secure career of architecture and design; Outward Bound instructor Ron would have loved to have

become a professional yachtsman; Architect David never contemplated anything other than a career in architecture; Teacher Sheana could readily have had a career in food development, music or textiles; Accountant John would have excelled as a gamekeeper; Town Planner Ken had aspirations to become a newspaper reporter or journalist; Civil Engineer / Council Manager John, who instigated the whole discussion by informing us he was busy "path building" and felt it would have been a very satisfying trade, juggled with several potential career routes including that of a detective, motor mechanic or joiner; Physician John could have been a scientist; last but certainly not least, Church of Scotland minister Richard, who has already had a career change having been a tax inspector in a previous life, likes the creativity challenges of a job as an advertising copy writer.

Club Business: While Ferguson Transport are storing our knitivity tree frame this year we still need to identify storage accommodation for our collection of mostly festival-related Rotary material currently stored in Sheana's attic. We're looking to members to use their local knowledge and contacts to help find this much needed space!

Democracy Elsewhere by John Hutchison

Much of the work I do centres on democracy of one type or another. When I led the setting up of our first Scottish Rural Parliament in Oban 2014 I got involved in the European Rural Movement. Rural Parliaments are strong in Sweden and Estonia and I visited each of these in 2014 and 2013 respectively. That European experience made it crystal clear to me what a lack of democratic involvement we have in the UK and Scotland.



The Swedish Rural Parliament (above) involved 700 folk meeting from across Sweden (we had 380 in Oban) who, during an impressive hour and a half long session managed to agree a priority for 69 projects using modern technology, texting and real time projection of results.

The Estonian Rural Parliament was a smaller affair with around 300 folk and even the Estonian President attends. I met the incumbent Toomas Hendrik Ilves when I was there and he seemed to know a great deal about Scotland. Their first Prime Minister from 1992 was Mart Laar, then aged 33 leading a cabinet of average age 34. When he was interviewed for TIME magazine several years later he was asked what the country's first business plan was like. He famously responded that they didn't have one, but just did what they thought was right...



Estonian President Ilves.

We have a huge amount to learn from Estonia, not the least of which is their approach to doing electronic business where health records, voting, taxes are all on line. One of their key people is Anna Píperal, here:

https://www.ted.com/talks/anna_piperal_what_a_digital_government_looks_like which insight illustrates what can be possible. We all have unique CHI numbers so perhaps it could start there? But, they are not really unique to us since we get a new number if we flit to another NHS area: oh well, opportunity missed again...

Finland teaches us a thing or two about ageism and gender power too. Their government is a coalition of five parties with, as friend of mine said, not a handbag in sight!



DISTRICT 1230 - ANNUAL CONFERENCE ONLINE

Details of how to register for the online event will be available very soon. So, mark your diaries and calendars for 24th April 2021 for our Virtual District Conference, and watch for more exciting news as the event comes to life!



**Rotary in the
West of Scotland**



**DISTRICT CONFERENCE
IS GOING VIRTUAL**

Saturday 24th April 2021, 1:30pm

Rotary



Rotary Opens
Opportunities