

STORT VALLEY ROTARY

NEWSLETTER

October 2020

**Tuesday 27 October at 7-30pm Join an Event by
requesting a Zoom Invitation
With Sue Scott Davison
Arts Programmer at the Rhodes Arts Complex**

PRESIDENT'S PREAMBLE



Fellow Rotarians
and Friends,

I am delighted to say that Stort Valley Rotary Club is going from strength to strength. Over the last 3 months we participated in a very intensive Mail Drop and Social

Media Campaign. During this time we recorded 200,000 interfaces with the public in the area around Bishop's Stortford. In addition our Speaker Programme has had 1,200 viewings, either live or via our YouTube channel.

Amongst the general public there has been a growing misunderstanding as to what Rotary stands for so, hopefully, we have partially corrected this.

Around the world, Rotary does some amazing work, with their most high profile initiative being their part in more or less eradicating Polio. On a more local scale Rotary Clubs support, either financially or practically, many local causes which are in so much need of help.

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Stort Valley Rotary has managed to continue to offer support throughout the Pandemic, with our largest intervention being the support of our Life Education project which has proved so valuable across our primary schools.

Our new Website is now up and running and proving to be very popular and we are about to launch, within the Website, an online fundraising platform which will initially support 3 locally-based charities.

We are all getting very skilled at our online presentations and meetings. Our last club meeting on 22nd, reported later in this edition, involved 7 presenters, from inside and outside the club, giving 5 minute talks on what our club is achieving. Lasting just over an hour it was all very informative and worked well.

Kind regards,
Gordon Morrison, President

Find us at:
stortvalleyrotary.com

AFTER FIVE LONG MONTHS WE CAME TOGETHER FACE-TO-FACE FOR A GARDEN PARTY



In August, despite the Covid-19 crisis, our President Gordon and his wife Mary entertained 30 members and partners to a garden party in the grounds of their beautiful home in Much Hadham. Complicated organisation was necessary to follow Covid-19 regulations and we thank Gordon for the time and effort he put into this. Bishop's Stortford Town Band played whilst we ate at tables of six and afterwards we were able to chat to each other using the ample space of the garden to keep safely apart.

We frequently meet on zoom and through other social media. This, however was a very special and enjoyable occasion as none of us had met face-to-face since lockdown.



LEAVING THE EU WILL HAVE CONSEQUENCES



Nick Von Westenholtz is Director for European Exit and International Trade for the National Farmers Union and his talk was an update on the one he gave us last year. He said that, although this talk

centred on farming, inevitably politics and the wider consequences of Brexit would be considered.

The whole dynamic changed with Boris Johnson's resounding victory in 2019. The confusion of the May government and the hung parliament were swept aside and the way cleared for Boris to "Get Brexit Done" and leave the EU by the end of January. It soon became evident, however, that Boris's majority did nothing to change the weaknesses in the withdrawal agreement and the political declaration. As things stood, despite denials from the Government, there was going to be a border down the Irish Sea.

The frictionless free trade we have enjoyed with the EU for at least 20 years will end with the transition period in January 2021. It is unclear what any trade deal negotiated will look like and, if no deal is negotiated, we will fall back onto World Trade Terms. Both situations involve cost to trade which must be balanced against the benefits of regaining sovereignty and the freedom to negotiate trade deals with other sovereign countries.

Nick mentioned realities we were having to face, such as that size matters when negotiating as we have considerably less weight than the EU, USA or China for instance. Also we no longer have the skilled negotiators we used to have and that negotiating has become fiercer. Negotiating has also changed, it used to be about tariffs

but now it is more concerned with rules, regulations and standards. Chlorinated chicken is the issue that grabs the attention which is odd, bearing in mind we seem content to drink chlorinated water.

Immigration will be regulated raising problems from many industries including farming. In recent years, many jobs have become unattractive to the British, despite technology taking over much heavy, unattractive work. The water here is being further muddied by the Covid-19 pandemic as unemployment rises.

The final area of concern is subsidies which are currently geared to production. Almost uniquely in the world it is proposed that the UK will be subsidised for the delivery of what is called "public goods," irrespective of whether food is produced or not. These might involve encouraging biodiversity, wildlife-rich meadows, flood alleviation schemes and other environmental initiatives.

These changes are bringing uncertainty and anxiety to farming and the food production industry. The industry has to adapt but recognises there will be casualties and problems competing with overseas producers who work to different standards.

Finally, Nick referred to the question concerning everyone - Deal or No Deal. He still favours there being a deal, although he is becoming less sure. To the farmers, no deal would be very problematic. For instance sheep farmers would suffer an immediate 40% tariff on exports to the EU which takes 40% of all UK lamb.

Nick plaintively concluded that the NFU are trying very hard to prepare farmers for January 2021 -, it is not easy.



**STORT VALLEY ROTARY KEEPS INFORMED ABOUT THE AFFECT
ON OUR LIVES OF THE GREAT CHANGES TAKING PLACE**

STORT VALLEY ROTARY ADVANCES THROUGH COVID

The Zoom meeting on 22 September was convened to update members and an invited audience on our club's work during the Covid-19 Crisis.

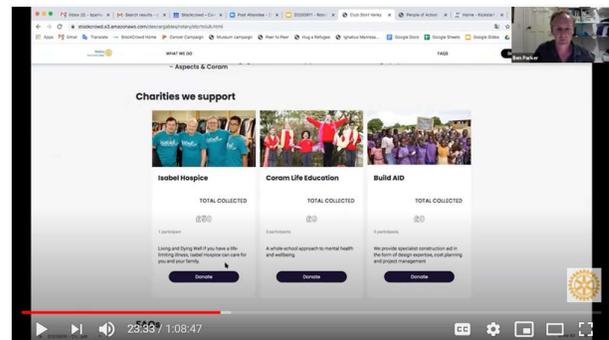
Since lockdown, conventional fundraising routes have been severely curtailed or shut down. Club Treasurer, Noel Younger outlined how remarkably our club has raised over £12,000, predominantly from members giving the money they might otherwise have spent on meals at club meetings and special appeals for specific charitable funds. We can now claim Gift Aid from HMRC and our initial claim, targeted at specific projects since 2018 for smaller donations, has raised over £1,500 so far. Much more will follow when we also claim for projects with larger donations.

We have already made contributions totalling £1,100 to Isabel Hospice and the BuildAid Biolite project and set aside a further £7,000 mostly for Coram Life Education but also more for the Biolite project. Both projects feature later in this report. £500 has also been set aside for the Portland Contact Centre.

Moving on to our maildrop and online awareness and recruiting campaign, it was noted that we have reached about 200,000 people. Rebecca Holmes showed how the proactive involvement with Facebook and Twitter had led about 2,000 people to our website. Very significant was that of the 10,000 views of video clips, almost 50% were viewed to the end. It is notable that a spin off from our Zoom speaker meetings is that we are approaching 1,500 viewings of the recordings on YouTube. Over the past three months, our Rotary club profile has been transformed and over the coming months we need to reach out and recruit members and friends to boost our work.



The trend towards online giving has been accelerated by Covid-19. Ben Parker explained how with his platform Stockcrowd, he has developed a new way of channelling funds to end users through websites of organisations such as Rotary. This means that direct online donations can be made through our website to selected charities. The charity receives the money direct, but Rotary can aggregate all contributions made this way. The system is about to go live on our website with three nominated charities, Coram Life Education, Isabel Hospice and Build Aid.

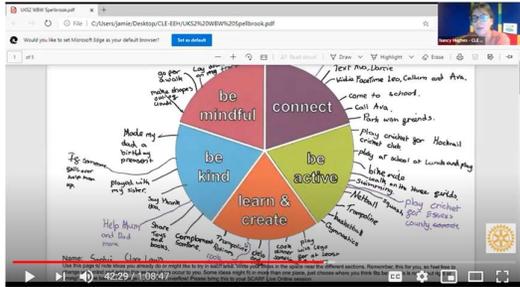


Nancy Hughes talked about the work she has been doing to keep Life Education going despite the restrictions imposed by Covid-19. She opened by thanking our Club for the donation that allowed her to come off furlough to do the work.



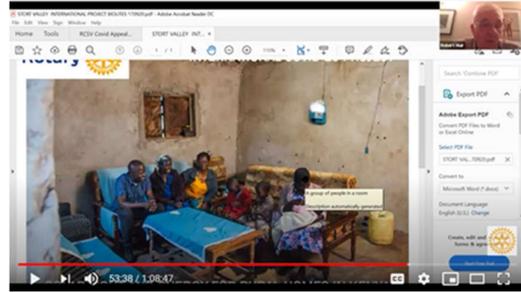
Nancy's project SCARF is a highly imaginative system of programmes which not only use online the wonderful environments the children have become familiar with but also allows the Educator to interact in real time with the children. Three programmes are now running for children in years 1 & 2, 3 & 4r

and 5 & 6. Teachers were involved with the development and already 18 bookings have been made for the new school year. The picture below is of the pie chart used by a teacher to prepare years five & six for the session with the Educator. It demonstrates the enthusiastic involvement of the children.



Harriet Gill Managing Director of Education and Wellbeing for Coram briefly followed Nancy pointing out that teachers are taking advantage of the programmes and training which concern teaching relationships and health education which are now mandatory subjects in schools. These valuable services are delivered either free or at very low cost to schools participating in Life Education.

Robert Muir gave an update on the BioLight project, a solar-driven system providing lighting, a radio and phone charger as shown in the picture (below). This is a Stort Valley Rotary initiative supported by District 1240 for a community in Kenya which Robert Muir's BuildAid charity is leading in our area. The system is solar-driven and designed to provide lighting for children to do homework in remote areas.



The system has proved incredibly successful and is, additionally, now powering vital communications under Covid-19 restrictions. With matching grants, £2,000 has been raised for the purchase of a further 20 BioLites. Robert also referred to another District appeal for a hand washing system which will be required when schools open again in Kenya. The system is completely self-contained. With matching grants, another £2,000 has already been raised and the project will go ahead. Robert will be travelling to Kenya as soon as travel is allowed.

Colin George suggested a project which could provide a much-needed lift to the town. During the campaign he had spoken to a gentleman who was interested in the history of the town and thought the town could benefit from a number of display boards and plaques explaining the town's history. Colin had explored the idea with a number of potential stakeholders who all indicated support. Colin will explore the project further.

STORT VALLEY ROTARY IS RESPONDING TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC BY EXPANDING THE WORK IT DOES IN THE COMMUNITY

Noel Younger, our treasure, has asked to have these guidance notes included in our newsletter:

Donations: the correct account is:

Sort Code: 20-36-98
 Account number: 60775738
 Full name: Rotary Club of Stort Valley Trust
 Fund Charity Account

However, some bank's online direct transfer software (including Barclays!) insist on the full correct account name, but then only allow 18 characters for it.

Other banks are less specific (e.g. NatWest are quite happy with an abbreviation of "SVRotaryCharity")

If you cannot transfer to this specific account, then please use the Club Account, which most of you have already set up for membership subscriptions:

Sort Code: 20-36-98
 Account number: 90334332

Full name: Rotary Club of Stort Valley Trust Fund

I can then transfer your donation online to our Charity account.

Gift Aid:

If you have not already done so, please send me your Gift Aid declaration form (for multiple donations) as soon as possible. I can then submit a Gift Aid claim.

If you would like me to send a form to you by email (or post) please let me know.

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FORTHCOMING ATTRACTIONS

Tuesday 13 October	Business Meeting
Tuesday 27 October	Sue Scott Davidson – Rhodes Centre
Tuesday 10 November	Julie Marson MP
Tuesday 24 November	Ed Antony – Director Mental Health in Schools

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