

REPORT for WATTON TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Via Zoom 20th April 2021

THE ROTARY CLUB of WATTON AND DISTRICT

Rotary has a worldwide membership of well over 1 million members. There are 55,000 in Great Britain and Ireland spread over 1800 clubs in 29 Districts. Our District, designated 1080, has 74 individual clubs.

In March 2020, all these clubs were faced with the worldwide problem of Covid, and it was soon mandated, by the International management body that there must be no further social meeting until it was safe to resume. This had the effect of simplifying our plans, but at the same time complicating and changing them on a local level in a fundamental way.

The motto of Rotary is "Service above Self", which can sound a bit pompous, but is a sound principle for us all to live by. In our case it manifests itself in doing things for people, who need help. This means in practical ways and not "just" giving money. In Watton we give substance to this by doing projects in our community, like our Umbrella Festival and assisting at the Town fireworks event. Not to raise money, and not in essence charitable, but to add to public participation and fun. These have not been possible in 2020, and we have diverted our efforts to delivering "Bags and Biscuits" to the Norfolk and Norwich hospital and increasing our financial donations to those charities that are still able to help people directly. At home this has included over £3,000 to the Watton Foodbank and £500 to "Nelson's Journey"; overseas this has included 8 Shelter Boxes costing £600 each and a donation of £500 to "Mercy Ships".

We have continued with our non-financial support to Wayland academy awards, and continuing with our Community Service awards, recognising those who have given special service in our community.

In all we donated £8,250 in our most recent financial year. Although our fund raising from within the community has been reduced with very little chance for public events, we have managed to raise more from online events, and from within the club.

We are totally aware of the interdependence of organisations within the Town, including the Town Council and our Rotary Club, but also The Academy and other schools, as well as our Churches and charitable organisations. One good thing that has come from the difficult year we have had, is the growth in "Good neighbourliness". We recognise the key role played by our Town Council in leading this growth, and we particularly appreciate the support given to Rotary over many years and hope it will continue.

Michael Haythorpe

President Watton and District Rotary Club

10.04.2021