

DOWNPATRICK LIONS CLUB

Newsletter No.02 July 2020

Handover Time



Downpatrick Lions Club has appointed Raymond Crea (right) as its new President. He was presented with his chain of office by his predecessor John Dennis during a socially distanced handover. John had said 'My term in office, although disrupted by the terrible pandemic, has been very rewarding and I would like to thank club members and the wider public for their enthusiasm and support.' President Raymond stated how delighted he was to take on this important role and looks forward to finding new ways to raise funds in these challenging times for the numerous charities that Downpatrick Lions support.

A Word from our New President Raymond

I am delighted and honored to be your President for the coming year. This is a role which Immediate Past President John and very many of you have filled with great distinction, so I know there is a proud tradition to maintain. I am also keenly aware of the tasks that lie before us.

This presidential year will not be one any of us could have imagined for reasons we all now understand. Many of our traditional service and fundraising activities are no longer possible, at least in the short term. To use the language of commerce, our business model is broken. However I know this won't be entirely the case with Downpatrick

Lions and I am confident that the club will do its utmost not to be defeated and continue to give the valuable service to the local community that we have given for more than 40 years.

The Forward Planning Group have been busy looking at possible options for fund-raising and are working on a plan for a project to raise funds for a local charity using online and social media channels. This should be ready shortly to present to the club shortly for your input.

Later in the year, subject, of course, to government regulations, perhaps we could start to run our popular table quizzes again. It would be very desirable to be involved with the car and coffee event and to have the very successful murder mystery night again.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Immediate Past President John and Lion Andrew, for their work in launching those events.

Some of our service activities such as the senior citizens evenings have had to be put on hold, but it is great that the Talking Newspaper has been able to work within the restrictions and is able to continue. Thanks to Vice President Neill and the team of readers for keeping this going

We have held several successful Zoom meetings in the last couple of months very well chaired by John. They are a good substitute when physical meetings cannot be held, but I think many of us would love to get back to the usual face-to-face meetings. Now that the Covid19 regulations are being relaxed I think it may be possible to meet up in a safe manner



Directors 2020/2021

President:
Raymond Crea

Vice President:
Neil Hamilton

Treasurer:
John Orr

Secretary:
Robin Kilpatrick

Past President:
John Dennis

Club Meetings:
Lakeside Inn
Ballyduggan Downpatrick
Twice per month at 8pm

NewsLetter:
Robin Kilpatrick
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Mission Statement

To empower volunteers to serve their community, meet humanitarian needs, encourage peace and promote international understanding through Lions Clubs

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keeping to the Government social distancing guidelines and I would like to do this very soon for our next meeting.

So, here's hoping we have an enjoyable and successful year.

Raymond

ABOUT LIONS CLUBS INTERNATIONAL

Lions Clubs International is the world's largest service club organization with more than 1.4 million members in approximately 46,000 clubs in more than 200 countries and geographical areas around the world.

Downpatrick Lions Club formed in 1973 is one of 108 Clubs in Ireland. The 2,300 members of Lions Clubs on the island of Ireland are organised within District 133 of Lions Clubs International.

District 133 was established in 2017 and replaced District 105I which was part of a Multiple District that also included Lions Clubs in Britain. The 108 Lions Clubs in Ireland are administered by a District Governor team comprising the District Governor, first and second Vice District Governors and the immediate Past District Governor. They head a Cabinet, comprising administrative officers, project officers and the chairs of nine Zones representing clubs throughout the country. All posts are manned by volunteers and Lions Clubs do not have a head office or professional staff.

A Tom Briggs Dander

A walk of interest involves the grounds of the old Downpatrick Workhouse 1833. This is where the new Down High School site is. Entrance is through the council car-park on the Strangford Rd. The diggers and archaeologists have been busy on trenches and test pits over a large area of 6 or 8 large fields. Ancient baby graves have

been disinterred. It's possible to visit the original Workhouse graveyard which is surrounded by 4 walls and can be entered between two rows of overgrown hedges.

Continue downhill and you'll arrive at the Quoile Rd. beside the Quoile Bridge.

Lion Tom

Talking Newspaper

For just over forty years, Downpatrick Lions have been keeping the blind and visually impaired informed about what is going on locally through the Downsound talking newspaper. However, this was abruptly halted last March when Covid 19 hit all sections of normal life in our community.

Some months previous to this, the idea of trying to expand the reach of the talking newspaper had been kindled after seeing the work of the National Institute for the Blind who had been promoting the use of smart speakers or voice assistants to help those who were visually impaired. Smart speakers or voice assistants such as Amazon's Echo where you ask 'Alexa' or Google's Assistant such as Home Mini where the command is 'Hey Google!' can provide effortless assistance for those wanting to find out everyday requirements such as 'what's the weather like' or even just simply the time.

The idea was to produce a podcast of Downsound alongside the traditional production of tapes used by our existing long time listeners. The podcast would be accessible to anyone with a smart speaker that was configured without the need for physical postage of recorded media. A small digital recording was produced to set up a trial and this was uploaded to a podcasting platform or 'host'. The platform chosen was a delightfully named host called Buzzsprout that seemed

to provide all the requirements that we would need and best of all it was free!

With the recording hosted, it then needed to be listed or 'published' on a wide number of 'directories' used by the voice assistants to find the Downsound Podcast. A listing is in the form of an RSS feed that is specific to the podcast. This proved rather more problematic especially as the process was a bit of a steep learning curve! Whilst the podcast was listed on many directories, getting the smart speaker to find it was another matter!

The problems arose as listings must be very precise as in all digital processes. Leave out a dot or put in a space where it is not required and 'you are snookered' as the saying goes! After much head scratching, partial success has been achieved as the trial recording is now readily available on Google's Assistant. Anyone who has a Google Assistant such as a 'Home Mini' can ask- 'Hey Google, play Downsound Talking Newspaper' and they will hear the trial podcast.

Alexa is proving more troublesome but we will keep working on her! Very soon we should be able to produce a full podcast of readings from the Down Recorder and Mourne Observer.

Unfortunately, it's not known when we all will be able to return to the Downsound recording room in the Downshire Hospital to resume normal service, but it is probably not going to be for some time. The podcast version of Downsound can be produced by one person at home and there is scope for this to be developed so that this can be done on a normal laptop or desktop computer. There is still some work to be done but I am very confident we will get there!

Lion Neil.