



Rotary Whitchurch UPDATE

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PRESIDENTS FOR 2026: ANDY DANTON AND PEGGY MULLOCK



June is a time for annual change in the leadership of Whitchurch Rotary. It's when the president, Brian Acty, becomes 'past president' and hands over to a new team for the coming year. That team is now led by:

ANDY DANTON as President. A relatively new Rotarian who joined only four years ago but has made an impact in community issues and the Lifeline home alarm service. Andy moved to Whitchurch, from Kent, in 2018 after a firefighting carer with Kent Fire and Rescue Service which included posts in Community Safety and as Safeguarding Officer.



PEGGY MULLOCK is the 'First Vice President'. After service as a Whitchurch town councillor, including a term as Mayor, she became one of the best-known county councillors in north Shropshire for nearly two decades – notably for her work in children's welfare, fostering and adoption. In 2014 she became the first lady member of Whitchurch Rotary and was president in 2019.

NOW THE SECOND BIGGEST ROTARY CLUB IN THE DISTRICT

One of Andy's first jobs as president was to see Whitchurch Rotary become the second biggest club in the District – which covers most of Staffordshire and Shropshire and part of the West Midlands.

Membership hit 43 with the addition of Jeremy Fitton and Kassie Courson – taking the total just two members below Wolverhampton.

Jeremy (*second left*), from Bronington, is retired from a retail and food service career – notably as a Sainsbury's store manager and as Retail Security Manager at their Holborn head office. He has also worked for Iceland Foods, as well as Greencore (the UK's largest sandwich manufacturer), and was managing director of a Bury-based fishmonger, a director in charge of worldwide food supply to the Ministry of Defence, and a director of operations for a fresh food delivery business.



Kassie Courson (*second from right*) took a short break from her active Rotary membership after moving to Whitchurch in 2020 from her hometown of Macomb, Illinois. She was a well-known local businesswoman, there, with a prominent record of voluntary, charity work and not-for-profit enterprises. Kassie has been a valuable supporter of Whitchurch Rotary and we're more than pleased to welcome her back.

No wonder Membership Officer Dave Simcock (left) is smiling..!

BEST BUDS

Yes ... you will have noticed that the Rotary gardening squad have been out and about again ...!
Big thanks to Clair and Walter Schafer's blossoming team.



"FANTASTIC, EXCELLENT, WONDERFUL"



Praise can flow both ways – if you're lucky! And the award-winning Fron Male Voice Choir was on the receiving end of a great deal after their fundraising concert, with Welsh harpist Dylan Cernyw at St Alkmund's Church.

But the choir graciously turned their own thanks back in Whitchurch's direction when their spokesman Neil Haywards added: "It was an absolute pleasure for us to perform - a fantastic venue and an excellent audience, truly a joy. The whole choir is still buzzing from it, and we hope it won't be too long before we can come back again ... a truly wonderful evening."

The concert raised more than £3,000 towards the next prostate screening event that the club will be organising, again, later this year.

THE FUTURE OF LIFELINE



It's not been an easy decision ... but one of Whitchurch Rotary's major community healthcare services has now changed hands.

The emergency 'Lifeline' system - which provided personal domestic alarms for around 160 local elderly, disabled or vulnerable people - had been organised by Rotary for more than 30 years. But advances in technology, rising running charges, and the growth of the town's population have been pushing costs higher every year. And the latest upgrades in the national telephone phone service are now making the current alarm equipment obsolete.

Until recently we have always managed to cover expenses from fundraising events and public donations - from which we also support many other local causes such as our Christmas meals, prostate testing and an ongoing programme of grants to people in our community who need help. But the speed of advances in technology means that home emergency alarm equipment becomes outdated faster and more often. Updates and expensive replacements are needed more frequently. And the UK's landline telephone system is currently undergoing a major upgrade that means current Lifeline units will not work with the new digital service.

New housing developments also mean that more people are coming to live in Whitchurch so the number that need the Lifeline service is constantly growing. And this adds an even higher expense to cover from a club charity account that is already under pressure.

But the alarm system is continuing without Rotary. We negotiated an agreement with the service partner 'SureSafe' - a UK market-leading provider of personal alarm and telecare services - who monitor the Lifeline units from their call centre. The service was handed over at the end of May and SureSafe is subsidising the upgrade costs. We have explained the new system to all our users and we hope their safety at home will continue for as long as they need it.

AND PETER GETS THE DAVY LAMP



And Peter Williams, the Eisteddfod-loving organiser of the Fron Choir concert, was rewarded with the club's annual Davy Lamp award for the member who goes the extra mile to shine a brighter Rotary light in the town.

Making the presentation to Peter, who is also the club's archivist, was one of the last acts of this year's outgoing president Brian Acty.

KEEPING HOPE ALIVE

Bethan Young's visit to talk about the work of Hope House was always going to touch an emotional chord.

Because Hope House is a children's hospice where services are tailored for patients suffering life threatening conditions. It may be just a walk in the garden or a physiotherapy session, painting nails, brushing hair or end of life care.

But government funding of just 15-17% means they need to raise £10 million each year to keep their two venues going.

So, if you're running a charity event, consider Hope House as your beneficiary or simply enter the Hope House Lottery for just £1 per week.

Go to www.hopehouselottery.org.uk



Bethan Young with outgoing President Brian Acty.

GIVING A HELPING HAND

A final word about one of our other relatively new projects – 'Helping Hands'.



This fund was launched to give emergency financial help to people or groups who might desperately need a quick response for an urgent reason.

That reason, however, has to qualify for our support but, if you know anyone who might need some kind of help, please get in touch and we'll see if we can offer ... a helping hand.

Send an email to:
secretary@whitchurchrotary.org.uk