

December 2025



Bramhall & Woodford Rotary Club

**1st August to
31st December**

Lyrical Lesley

Hello Rotarians and friends

Merry Christmas all Rotarians. Three months have whizzed by since our last update, that is because we are so busy it has just flown by.

Committees in October brought the beginning of Ways and Means getting the Christmas rounds and Nottcutts sorted, and an Irish Night for March, this is ongoing but a sneaky chat with Peter Crosson has brought in many new ideas. On the 8th of October we had one of our chatting nights bringing new ideas for Social Nights, Charities to support etc. On the 15th October the wonderful Robert Newgrosh showed his amazing Magic skills and how he has adapted this into a way of showing school children how to engage with Lateral Thinking, Maths and Memory. He is currently running 6-week courses at local schools. Charter night was held at The Crown and Conspirator: great attendance, a lovely warm friendly feeling with Wilmslow sending four of their Rotarians. I have reached out to other clubs myself : The foundation Dinner with Pat , Congleton Charter with Pat and the Wilmslow Charter night which several of us attended and Wilmslow were thrilled, I will continue to do this creating links and fellowship.

On November 12th we had the fabulous engineers from the Etihad Project, the club was mesmerized at what is being achieved there. They showed us detailed slides and drawings to illustrate the changes. Simply Amazing! On the 19th Michelle Higginbotham spoke of the Women of the SOE, a fascinating account of the wonderful ladies working behind enemy lines in WW2, truly inspiring. Our social night was at Tumeric Twist on Dairy ground, a night full of laughter and chat coinciding with a raffle and Auction to get Richard on international over the line for his Uganda Project. He kindly auctioned his own holiday home in Anglesey - what a trooper. It worked and indeed he has achieved his goal. Our last committees of the year was on the 3rd December all looking towards our Christmas duties as Elfs , Santas, and The Sleigh rounds , as always a magnificent effort thank you so much . I was warmed to see all other Rotary Clubs on facebook hitting the road with their Christmas floats and I sent them greetings. Our Christmas Party at the Golf Club was a great success. The food was great, the company wonderful and Michael had devised entertainment a little quiz and mimes, which were three groups who acted out their given scenario. Each had great merit but Harry and Dev's dentist scene stole the show. Dev was in the dentist chair with a broken arm and acted out like a pro I feel Rada may be his next calling. Our president's drinks are on the 29th at Duttons. Please come along and celebrate all our hard work and meet as friends. You all inspire me, thank you to all committee Chairs you do a magnificent job, and I look forward to the next chapter in our journey.

Signing off Lesley

1 October 2025 - Committees

16 Rotarians attended for the Meal and 4 after the meal.

Harry: Secretary. Paul Scullion contacted Harry regarding bringing some Rotarians to our Charter eve. Also proposed is a whatsapp group for speedier communication when needed please let Harry know if you do not want to be on the whatsapp group or do not have a smart phone facility.

Mike: Treasurer: In the General Account is £1300.00.
Charity £1500.00
Business £17918.44.

Please start paying in for the Charter eve to the general account.

Bob : Club Services: Bob has some great talks lined up, another ideas evening, 2 Rotarian Job Talks, A Politician, we shall all look forward to that.

Michael : Social: Michael has a full programme arranged; Unfortunately, he could not be with us so Lesley did his update. We visited the Plaza for a night of Macbeth, unfortunately the sound was not the best so some of us struggled to hear the dialogue but a great social all the same. Our next Night will be our Charter night please pick you menu options, and pay to the general account. Feedback regarding the menu could there be any other options ?

Maggie: Ways and Means: The scarecrow festival was not as successful as it has been in the past. Nevertheless £399.00 was achieved thank you all who contributed your time. Snapes Estate agents have pledged £600.00 as a sponsor for the Xmas sweets not in the bank yet fingers crossed that is going to be a huge help. Our Christmas rounds start on the 29th of Nov. The float has been given the go ahead to go out one last time. It's not what any one wanted but here we are. Construction Q kindly paid for a slick Advert on Facebook with a donation option they Paid £150.00 for us, how kind. We just need the public to get on board over the festive period and achieve the total we need to renew our float. 1st of November is the pocket money stall at the Methodist Church this is a community event any volunteers ask Maggie its only 2 hours. 8th of November we are going to Hazel Grove Inner wheel 2 hours with the pocket money stall and some proceeds to Wellspring/Mary's Meals. Woodford Winterfest is Friday the 12th we need a Santa Volunteer for their Grotto. Fashion Show in November ideas are coming together one being "Through the ages."

Steve: Community Service: Steve had a full team tonight and they are busy deciding the way forward. They have 16 charities to consider. Youth Speaks has two teams to support, Sue will be their Liaison. Wrap up is in the mix logistics and location need to be clarified. Young Musician Of The Year we have a possible

applicant David will be the lead. The blind run may be revitalized taking blind service users to Walthew House on a Monday. Steve is liaising with the CEO Sandra. Lots going on.

Richard: International: Richard is in the middle of the School project in Uganda alongside 3 other Rotary clubs the target for each club is £2500.00 and we have a target of £800.00 to fulfill our side Richard is quite happy to put his own Social on as he is very aware the charity Account is quite low at the moment. Lend with care running smoothly helping small Entrepreneur's. There is going to be a new Rotary International Lead.

Ian Communication/PR All in hand to put adverts in SK magazine and the Stockport Post.

A O B Lesley Updated club on the seminar On The new Direct member Hub and Rotoractors. she now knows how to access help from the hub if needed. She has asked The Public Image lead from District for some help on promoting club membership.

Lesley

8 October 2025 - ideas evening

This could be the briefest report ever!

16 of us enjoyed the new menu at the Pointing Dog, and David Rose joined us later.

The MAIN EVENT was a discussion in groups of 4 about ideas for future meetings, social events and the like. It was quite a fruitful session, and Lesley is collating the ideas and will circulate them to club members.

We went home quite early!

Dennis

15 October 2025 - Robert Newgrosh – Magic Skills for Schools

Robert Newgrosh – Magic Skills for Schools

Twenty one members and guests attended the meeting. We had the room set out with separate tables of fours and sixes instead of the U-shaped arrangement. We intend to try this for a few months and have members change tables regularly to get more mixing.

Robert started by performing three card tricks assisted by members of the audience. The card tricks looked fairly simple but left the audience baffled as to how they worked. Robert has run training courses on stock market skills for many years and then decided that teaching a course on magic skills, using playing cards to primary school children, especially those with learning difficulties, would help to improve their social skills and confidence. The tricks are both entertaining and educational. 14,000 children from Primary Schools have so far taken part and he has received glowing reports from schools. Teachers comment that learning and performing the card tricks has improved children's confidence and improved their social skills. Unfortunately he does not get as much interest from schools as he would like and would like us to help spread the word.

The evening was both stimulating and entertaining.

Bob Preece

22 October 2025 - Charter Night

On Wednesday we celebrated the Club's 39th birthday at the Crown and Conspirator in Bramhall.

Michael spoke first and outlined the format of the evening, then handed over to President Lesley. Lesley welcomed the guests which included members from Wilmslow Rotary Club who had joined us. They are a little older than us, soon celebrate their 88th year.

A good meal was then enjoyed, followed by Michael's quiz which he told us had been used many years before. The winner's, therefore, were either very clever, or had wonderful memories...

Handing over then to Lesley, she inducted and welcomed our two new members, Sharon and Gary Lawrence into the Club, and 'Rotary Family'. Sharon read out 'The Charter' as is the custom.

Michael told us of winning a recent quiz whilst on board their river cruise and winning a wonderful prize - a Saga keyring.... We then had a 'spoken quiz', finishing off the evening at 10pm.

Chris Monkhouse

5 November 2025 - Committees



We were joined for our committee meeting by a delightful visitor by the name of Devaki and she is a member of the Rotary Club of Chennai Verve. The club was Chartered on Oct 3rd this year and is located near to Madras, Southern India.

Devaki is visiting her daughter, a doctor who is hoping to become a psychiatrist and who is currently working in Cheadle Royal. Devaki works as a travel agent. She brought us a flag from her club, but unfortunately, we couldn't give her one of ours.

Maggie shared the Christmas float rota and latest flyer. It was illustrated with lovely drawings completed by local children who attend Queensgate Primary School.

Club Services Committee – Bob

The programme is now complete up to the end of 2025. In January 2026 Archana might give us a job talk. Bob is also trying to organise a visit to the local fire station, possibly, January 21st. Please note that the annual Christmas Float Quiz will take place Friday January 28th.

Social Committee – Michael

Events are organised until the end of the year, meal at Turmeric Twist on Wednesday November 26th, and Christmas party December 11th. The Stanneylands has also been booked for our President's night on March 27th. This event will probably cost about £45 per person, the food is reported to be very good and there will be an interesting speaker.

Ways and Means – Maggie

There are still lots of things that need attention, last Saturday Maggie & Leslie raised £138 on a pocket money stall at the Methodist Church. This coming Saturday Sinead will join Maggie at St Peter's Church to run another pocket money stall. This time to money will go to Mary's Meals and the Wellspring.

Maggie has secured sponsors, Snapes and Little Big Heads, for the float round sweets. The rotas are still a little bare, so we need more Rotarians, three more team leaders, seven more assistants and lots more Santas! We also need a van to pull the float. Maggie has a lead she is exploring but there might be difficulties with insurance. A new, quite long route has been added for Woodford Village. An Irish Night has been proposed for Spring 2026 and if anyone has any links or ideas for helping to organise such an evening, please let Maggie know.

Community Services – Steve

On October 27th Steve and the committee met at Duttons, Bramhall to discuss the way forward for engaging with the community. All are keen to update our charity contacts.

Notes from Steve & Sue's meeting, Signpost for Carers, in Heaton Moor Oct 27th

The last meeting with Signpost was held on February 16th 2023, following which it was agreed the Charity would be the beneficiary of the Duck Race May 2023 proceeds. Apart from a "thank you" presentation at BWRC by the then CEO, Julia Hewer, there has been no contact. Bethan Kelly became CEO in February of this year. Purpose of this meeting was to re-establish contact and to confirm that Signpost will be on our list of regularly supported charities. We learned that RC Stockport Lamplighters are regular supporters of Signpost also and a small number of their members have some hands-on involvement in support work on a very informal basis. This is something we could consider in the future. Detailed financial analysis has not been undertaken but latest Accounts at 31/3/25 show total income of £911K expenditure £882K with reserves of £541K (restricted £196K) represented mainly by cash balances of £497K. Bethan confirmed her willingness to make a presentation to a BW Rotary meeting with a suggested timing of next January 2026—Bob Preece to be requested to arrange. It proved to be a good meeting with the Signpost team who are keen to foster a relationship with BW Rotary.

Notes from the social committee meeting at Duttons, Bramhall

1. Meeting arranged with Millie's Trust – November 12th at 11.30am – Steve and Sally to attend
2. Chelwood Food Bank – meeting to be arranged shortly with Don Phillips, Chair of Trustees and Linzie Hogan, General Manger. S.L. to action
3. NHS Stepping Hill – meeting to be arranged with Kate Leadbetter. S.L. to action
4. Stockport Without Abuse – email from Jeanette Carlow in June to advise there has been a delay at SWA setting up the Family Therapy Sessions using the proceeds of Duck Race in May 2024. S.L. in diary to contact J.C. in December.

Community activities

1. Whilst the public response to Wrap Up, donating 153 coats at Waitrose, Cheadle Hulme, was not as good as last year (c400 coats) we agreed the exercise was worthwhile. Next year will have our Club's earlier involvement and will be much better publicised.
2. Thursday Club – further investigation and contact with the organiser, Carol Sergeant, to be arranged. S.L. and B.B. to arrange.
3. Walthew House – Blind Run. Contact established with Teresa at W.H. who agreed to make enquiries of their "customers" to establish if a taxi service would be useful.
4. After discussion regarding ways in which we could develop a Club Members' hands on involvement with good causes/charities and examine opportunities for collaboration with other local Rotary Clubs, we decided to make a series of 'scatter visits'. We agreed visits to be organised by: Steve at Stockport

Lamplighters (provisional date 28 November with S.L. and S.P. attending); Sinead at Glossop; Sue at Wilmslow (invitation since received for their Charter Night and several of our members will attend); Bruce at Poynton; Sally at Cheadle Royal. Ideally, we should have three BW Members on each visit – two from our committee plus another – President Lesley has subsequently said she would be happy to be involved.

International Committee – Richard

Lend with Care is progressing well. The meal at Turmeric Twist will also be a fundraiser for the appeal for 'Uganda Special Needs School'. There will be silly games, a raffle and they need donations of prizes ... please. You can bring them on the evening or take to Archana's House on Seal Avenue. Archana, is a dentist, and one of the prizes will be a voucher for an appointment with her dental hygienist. The committee could do with bottles, hampers and things which could become Christmas gifts. There will be an auction as well, Richard owns a beautiful cottage on Anglesey. It can sleep 10, has an acre of land and is ideal as a get-away for a family, children and dogs. The auction will be for a weekend stay and one week stay. There is a reserve price £300 for a weekend, and £500 for the week. Richard is hoping that by the end of the evening at Turmeric Twist, (and with the money already collected) the £11,000 target should have been raised.

Richard is also trying to raise funds for the disaster caused by the category five hurricane Melissa which has had a catastrophic impact on Jamaica. This collection is being planned to take place Saturday November 9th in Bramhall Park. Richard will confirm details later.

Communications & PR – Ian

Press releases have gone out about the Christmas float and an article published in Inside magazine. The publicity information posted on Facebook about 'Wrap Up' certainly made a difference and resulted in a few hundred coats being donated,

Treasurer – Mike

Nothing else to report but balances in the accounts are:

General Account, £2,100

Charity Account, £2,500

New Float Account, £18,800

Sue Preece

12 November 2025 - Carl Brierley – Etihad Project

19 diners including 2 speakers, Carl Brierley, Neil Capell and Ian Faulkner, Michael's son in law.

The subject was MCFC NS Extension at Etihad Stadium, East Manchester.

Carl is Project Director at J. Sisk and son, his biggest project since starting as a bricklayer, various construction management positions of new build and housing conversions and now this £300m project.

His younger colleague Neil is Project Director with a 15 years background in this field.

Carl started with a history of the site which was a coal mine in East Manchester many years ago then heavily bombed during WW2. After ordinance clearing Tony Blair laid a foundation stone in 1999 on this brownfield site. Transport and residential housing developed with M60 and tram links for Commonwealth Games Stadium in 2002. In 2003/04 it was converted into a 40 seater football stadium for Man City who lost their 84,000 seater stadium which caught fire. (went there as a youngster as it alternate and scope, with Man United).

Carl continued with 5 points of setting up a project in 2 stages. The goal and scope and feasibility, a plan, assembling a team to build employing 70/80 contractors and 100 staff. The pricing and sourcing of materials etc allowing for delay risks. The work is carefully coordinated, monitored and most importantly communicated with the stakeholders.

Neil explained the problems of arranging deliveries and work schedules on the various sites.

The main project is the removal of the old roof on North end of the Stadium and replacing it, which was a major achievement. It involved one of two highest cranes in UK and logistical planning. He went on to explain the complicated technicalities to hoist the roof into position. At one stage they called in a world expert lady Professor from Porto to check the tensions of the supporting stays! The next stage was to increase the seating capacity from 53,000 to 60,000 and required digging up the pitch during the 6 week summer break. Fortunately all went according to plan!

This Northern end leads directly into a 401 Key Hotel with 401 deluxe suites. At the other side of the stadium they have built a football museum, shops, offices and a covered fan park for 3000 people - City Square.

More of the income comes from outside sales and they are developing hospitality services, providing work for local people in the form of apprentices and giving the community social value estimated at £1K. Neil, finally showed us a fantastic Digital Animation of the project from the start to present day.

An amazing presentation followed by interesting Q & A's. Meeting finished about 9.35pm.

David R

I forgot to add that the Etihad site is owned by Manchester City Council and leased to the Etihad consortium.

Etihad in Arabic translates as "Unity" representing 7 UAEs. David

19 November 2025 - Michele Higginbottom - Women of SOE in WW2

Present: 14 Rotarians (plus 3 more joining after the meal)
Guests: Michele Higginbottom (Speaker)
Mary Monkhouse
Brenda (friend of the Monkhouses)

In the absence of our President and Vice President the Chair was occupied (very capably) by Michael Lacey.

After the meal our speaker, Michele, gave a thoroughly fascinating talk on **Women of the Special Operations Executive (SOE) in World War 2.**

In the summer of 1940 with the Germans seemingly getting the upper hand in the War, Winston Churchill arranged for highly secretive organisation, known as the SOE, to be set up with the objective of combatting the progress of the Nazis. Of the 270 recruits, 39 were women and it was considered they would be less conspicuous when operating behind enemy lines. Training over 6/9 months was intensive in armed and unarmed combat, explosives and demolition, map reading, wireless operations, morse code, reconnaissance, resisting interrogation, how to evade capture and they had to be fluent French speakers. They carried suicide pills. Many were parachuted into France and established contact with the French Resistance Movement. Effectively spies, they were not protected by the Geneva Convention.

Michele gave details of acts of heroism performed by individual women either as couriers, wireless operators, sabotaging railway lines, blowing up bridges and other acts of espionage. Regrettably almost half of did not survive and if captured they were brutally tortured and interrogated, taken to Ravensbruck or other concentration camps with several being executed.

The SOE women were highly Decorated, some posthumously, with two receiving the George Cross. SOE was officially dissolved in January 1946.

A passionate and moving presentation from Michele about an unbelievably brave and resourceful group of women performing selfless heroic acts in an extremely dangerous environment.

Steve Littlewood

26 November 2025 - Social - Meal at Turmeric Twist

32 members and friends dined at Turmeric Twist in Bramhall. There was a raffle and an auction which raised enough money to complete our fundraising for a school in Uganda.

3 December 2025 - committees and EGM

Thirteen Rotarians plus guest Peter Crosson met to eat, five more joined later.

EGM. Existing members were confirmed in post, Philip for President 2026-7.

A member volunteered to act as Vice President pending the election of a president 2027-8.

Committees.

Maggie reported float collections of £147 to £1032, noted no collector turnout on the Monday, despite reminders, generator trouble again, and an increase in donations. We discussed Rotary support, lack of, and possible remedies. We already have a Friends of Rotary Group running and communicated with. An Irish evening at Notcutts is in prospect in the spring.

The programme of meetings and functions is in place to the end of March '26, detailed in emails already circulated.

Community services include the offer of a first aid course, helping at Chelfod Food Bank, food collections at supermarkets, music and youth speaks competitions while International continues Lend with Care,

a bucket collection raising £300 for Jamaica raising, the Turmeric Twist event raising £1580

Members discussed recruitment and involvement and communications, visits elsewhere including

Cambridge, Rotary news in local publications, and the need to contribute money which we no longer spend on Christmas cards to the charity account, where £10 or preferably £30 from each willing member will render up to ten times as much of the float collection to be eligible for Giftaid.

We ended a very detailed and wide reaching meeting only described in outline above, by exchanging Christmas greetings with our wonderful President and each other.

Robert Cryer

11 December 2025 - Xmas Party

After much cajoling from Michael only a disappointing 15 members turned up for our Christmas PARTY at Bramall Park Golf Club. (Just 41.6% of membership.) As it happened those who did not join us missed out on a good meal, an interesting quiz and an absolutely hilarious session of miming by three teams created by table number.

Dev deserves an Oscar for his silent movie style miming performance – and, when the scores were counted, it contributed hugely to the win and the prize.

Harry and Dev have emailed some photos taken at the time.

It was good that the attendance was swelled by 8 guests.

Feedback tells me that everyone had a good time

Ian