



Friends of Fleet Lions

Summer 2020

LIONS IN LOCKDOWN

So much has changed in 2020. One thing we can rely on though is that Lions clubs around the world continue to help their local communities in many different ways. Lions clubs have cancelled or postponed popular events. Plans and projects have been put on hold. At times like this, the Lions' message - Kindness Matters - is a guiding truth. People are looking out for each other. They are keen to support local communities and volunteer to make a difference. We are reminded of the many caring people in this world.

In response to COVID-19, Lions in the British Isles launched a special fund to support those most in need, and offer direct help to thousands of individuals and organisations that provide vital local community services. That help includes: Food parcels, hampers and meals prepared for the vulnerable, support for COVID-19 community help/advice groups, the provision of scrub sets, washbags, ear protectors and personal protection equipment for the NHS, care homes, health centres, paramedics and other key workers, support for children and young people including school-based feeding programmes, resource packs and the refurbishment of IT equipment to assist pupils with school lessons from home.

Locally, Fleet Lions have been heavily involved with the Hart COVID-19 Response Hub and actively involved with the contact helpline which directs appropriate support within the local community. The Hub, jointly managed by Hart District Council and Hart Voluntary Action, worked in partnership with established voluntary groups and local volunteers. This then allowed individual Lions to be allocated contacts who needed help with shopping, prescriptions or just a chat.



Fleet Lions provided grants to Fleet Phoenix for education packs and food parcels for youngsters and funded a megashop at a local food warehouse for Hart Foodbank. The Lions have also been manufacturing "Ear Relievers" with the aid of a new 3D printer, for use by hospital staff and local health care professionals. These plastic flexible bands hold PPE face masks around the back of the head rather than the uncomfortable ear bands in common use. And when we all had to start wearing facemasks to shop then we handed out another 600 to the public in the Hart Shopping Centre.



For over a year, Fleet Lions, together with neighbouring Lions Clubs, have been reconditioning unwanted computers and peripherals for use by charities and voluntary organisations. However, since COVID-19 the focus has been supplying computers to disadvantaged families so their children can continue with their education at home. Over 400 families have been helped since schools closed. We need more PCs and laptops to refurbish so let IT@fleetlions.org.uk know if you have any to offer.



SIGHT FIRST

Lions around the world have long been involved with sight related causes with the aim of preventing unnecessary blindness. Locally, Lions have been involved with collecting/ refurbishing unwanted spectacles for use in poorer countries. All the ones collected in the UK are sorted by Chichester Lions before heading off via Le Havre Lions to various parts of the world. From our beer festival proceeds Fleet Lions also donated £1,000 to the RNIB (towards running seminars to help people who are

losing their sight to cope with this life changing experience) and £500 to the local Macular Society to organise special trips out for their members.

LIONS COMMUNITY STORE

The Lions Community Store is now back in operation following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Store is taking all practical steps to protect volunteers, donors and recipients. A visit will be of Crew members wearing masks and gloves and carry hand sanitiser and disinfectant spray and, of course, maintaining social distancing at all times. Each month the Store receive hundreds of requests, endorsed by social services or other caring agencies, for household items donated to the Store for use by people in need.

The Store is in desperate need of otherwise unwanted but useable household appliances such as washing machines, fridges, fridge freezers, toasters, kettles, microwaves and vacuum cleaners as well as items of furniture. They are open between 10am and 2pm on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays and can be contacted by phone on 01252 616988 or by email at admin@communitystore.org.uk



MELVIN JONES FELLOWSHIP

A community champion from Fleet has been honoured for outstanding service with a prestigious international award. Fleet Lions thanked David Millen for his dedicated work in the community by presenting him with a Melvin Jones Fellowship, the Lions' highest accolade. as well as a shield and badge, Mr Millen was invited to pay the Lions Clubs International headquarters in America a visit and will be a member of Lions for life.

The award was presented to Mr Millen for his outstanding commitment to serving the community both locally and further afield. For many years, he has been a major driving force within both the Scouting movement and the Royal British Legion, including organising Fleet's annual Remembrance parade. He also finds time to support community projects such as the Fleet Carnival and Christmas Festival as well as the Lions' annual beerfest and Fireworks Fiesta.



GOING FORWARD

Despite the Pandemic, the Lions' Year finished at the end of June and a new President was sworn in. Bill Petley took over from Mark Cooper so both of them will have strange years of office.



A number of events had to be cancelled or postponed in Past-president Mark's tenure, not least because quite a few of the Lions had to self-isolate too because of their age. Now things have become a little more relaxed so we are looking for ways to make some of our events and community activities happen. Zoom has played a big part in keeping us in touch and allowing us to keep making decisions.

Government rules won't allow our Fireworks Fiesta to happen. We have high hopes we can run our Santa Sleigh rounds in a covid-safe way. And put our 14th beerfest in your diary for 13 February 2021 – we already have the glass design. Here's last year's.



So watch this space: Lions will be out on the prowl and let us know if you'd like to join us by contacting membership@fleetlions.org.uk