

1VDG Lion Brian Donovan

Can I say that this has been an eventful year? It has been an unprecedented year and one in which our normal events and activities have been difficult to achieve. It has not altogether been impossible to continue to provide service and I am immensely proud to hear how resourceful our family of Lions have been.

I have still been able to visit clubs via the power of Zoom and MS Teams, and it has been great to catch up in this way, I have an undertaking to catch up with 29 of our clubs in this Lionistic Year, some clubs have not been able to use video conferencing, instead keeping in contact by telephone, it does not really matter what format is used, the key is to keep in contact with each other. It's good to talk, I would encourage all members to continue look out for each other.

In any normal year I would have attended MD and International Training camps to prepare for my next role, should I be given a vote of confidence. This has not been possible, and the training has been totally reorganised into a series of on-line sessions, with the MD team working in parallel to the International team, the upshot is that most weekends have been filled with one virtual activity or another.

For the international training I am in Group 22, which comprises of about 27 1VDGs from Canada, the USA, England, Turkey, Ireland, Sri Lanka and India, we have regular catch-ups (the Group Leader is based on the Pacific coast of Canada, so he has an early start and those in Sri Lanka have a late one, I join in these at 2pm, so not so bad for me. From the last week in April to the first week in June, each Saturday will be given over to a Training session, which includes videos and online courses to complete prior to the session, then homework, over those 6 weekends we would cover what would normally be packed onto a 4 days face to face course in the US. The training will conclude with breakout sessions during the Virtual International Convention.

I have also been attending the MD Council meetings as an observer and also meeting regularly with the Vice Council, so that we have gelled more as a team.

The strangest thing this Lionistic year was holding our virtual Santa Grotto, there I was in front of a little laptop, dressed as Santa, and then seeing little faces appear on the screen, the first session (these were two hour slots with the kids getting about 10 minutes each) was painful as I just could not think straight, I realised that when out and about in the cold, on the sleigh doing the street rounds or in the Market Square grotto, it was far easier to get into character, I had to have a reminder list beside the screen to make sure that I kept on track.

I am so looking forward to be able to get out and about in the community again