

Brian Donovan – Nomination for District Governor



Me: I grew up in Stevenage, but have lived in Oxfordshire since 1993, I currently live in Abingdon, with my wife Lesley and children, Andrew and Sarah, who are also members of our Lions club. My eldest daughter, Louise, splits her time between Peterborough and Portugal.

I trained as an instrumentation engineer in the Scientific Civil Service at a Government Laboratory in Stevenage, building and maintaining equipment used for measuring air pollution. After completing my apprenticeship, the lab was merged with the UK Atomic Energy Authority (later to be privatised and eventually bought by Ricardo), so with my wife, and two children under 2, we had to up sticks from our happy flat, to be billeted in a former officer's house at Harwell (a former RAF base). I have worked at Harwell ever since, but as the children got older, we moved to the larger

neighbouring town of Abingdon.

Club Level: I first became aware of our local Lions Club through my wife Lesley, at the time she was a committee member of the Abingdon Operatic Society, and they engaged the Abingdon Lions to marshal the carparking during their events held at Abingdon School. Through this Lesley was persuaded to join, and I became a Friend of Abingdon Lions to support them, I was working away from home so was unable to commit fully at the time.

It soon became apparent that I was volunteering to help at all the club events each year. At work I was spending more time in the UK so felt that I could make that commitment and I joined in December 2014. Since joining the club, I have been the minutes secretary, Secretary, President, and also included a stint as interim treasurer and Service Chair.

Our club has a reasonable spread of gender and age. I am currently the Club Secretary.

Zone and District Level: I became Zone Chair for two Zones in the former 105A District, looking after eight clubs, I was Zone Chair for two years. I was also the GMT rep for the Zones so was active within the Zone, cabinet and GMT meetings. Whilst in 105A I volunteered for District Wide Events as well as working within the Zone.

My life in Lions: As a Friend of Lions, I stood alongside the Lions members at their events, from standing in a muddy field directing traffic, to door knocking with collection buckets during the Christmas Sleigh Run. After becoming a Lion, these things did not change, but I could also take on the delights of being Santa, running to catch up with the sleigh driven by a chap on a mission to get around as quickly as possible, or losing my voice at the end of a long day, being the Santa in the market square for the Christmas Extravaganza, or at School Grottos.

I have had to deal with significant change at our club, this transition has seen the Club increase the number of events that we attend to raise awareness of our causes, promote Lions and raise funds for our service activities. We have forged stronger links other local groups, including closer ties with the local Sea Cadets and community volunteers.

Attracting members is never easy, you have to work at it, those potential Lions are out there, but people in their 20's and even 40's can often find it difficult to commit to a fixed meeting and may not be able to attend all events as they may have absolutely no control over their work schedules, so we need to be more flexible in our approach as clubs so that we can accommodate the needs of a more diverse membership.

This has been a difficult year for us all, everything has changed but as Lions we still find ways to serve, it is sometimes the little things that can make all the difference in someone's life, that that is why I became, and have stayed a Lion.