

What a year it's been

THE ROTARY CLUB OF CUCKFIELD AND LINDFIELD

By David Wilson

We've raised £30,000 for charity, we've got our hands dirty, we've given local children a boost and we've even made our mark in developing countries, but above all - we've had a great time doing it. We meet on Tuesday evenings at the Bent Arms, when we have a meal followed by a speaker or a business meeting. Occasionally we meet elsewhere with partners and friends, and then we have a prestigious speaker such as Sussex Police Commissioner Kate Bourne.

In the last 12 months six new members have joined us to bring our numbers up to 44. With this strength we have been able to carry out a wide range of activities. Our major fundraiser is the annual Darts Marathon where teams of six from the area throw for an hour, aiming to achieve the highest score. The 30 or so teams get themselves sponsored and we typically raise about £10,000 each year. We support St Peter and St James Hospice and Chestnut Tree House Children's Hospice every year, but we also support other local causes, particularly those struggling from cuts in government funding. Mental health is an area where we are making an impact at the moment.

It's not all about money and we do a lot for young people in the area with the Youth Speaks and Young Musician Competitions, a Youth Leadership Course, reading assistance in schools and the distribution of an illustrated dictionary. Currently we often get our hands dirty planting a new garden at the local hospital that provides mental health services.

Internationally we support an orphanage and school in disaster-torn Haiti, including paying the salary of one of the teachers and providing medical supplies and educational equipment. Lend-With-Care is a great scheme which we help to finance. Loans are made to small entrepreneurs in developing countries to help them start-up or expand their businesses. The beauty is that the loans are repaid in full so that we can lend the money out again.

Our year runs from 1st July and we elect a new President each year. So, our outgoing President, Alec Landauer, handed over the chain of office to our second lady President, Judith Pratt. She is going to have a hard task to follow his act.

Rotary Cuckfield & Lindfield is one of 29,000 clubs in 200 countries with a total of 1.2 million members. Although well-organised, we're a rather irreverent bunch of men and women. So, if you've got a bit of time to spare, you've done OK in life and want to give a bit back, come along to one of our meetings and find out what we get up to. We'll give you a warm welcome. Contact Jamie Wallden on 07866 536 277, jaimewallden@mansellmctaggart.co.uk and see our website: www.rotarycl.org

