

**THANKS FOR LIFE (TfL) PROJECT**  
**DG 2009/10 UPDATE John R Samuel 15/6/09**

Introduction

The "Thanks for Life" (TfL) project was an initiative set up by all twenty nine DG's in Great Britain and Ireland during the Governor Elect Training Session in Brussels in the autumn of last year.

Objective

As a group we felt there was a lack of awareness in the public at large of what Rotary was about and that this could be alleviated by a Coordinated National Project with strong media support including the national press and the BBC. The idea of all the clubs carrying out a similar activity nationally over the same time period was particularly attractive.

Timing

The 23<sup>rd</sup> February, Rotary Day, the birthday of Rotary was chosen as suitable date around which these activities could happen.

Thanks for Life Project

Immediately following the Bill Gates presentation at San Diego we opted to use Rotary day to support the Polio Plus challenge under the banner "Thanks for Life". The primary activity is to tell school children the story about polio. Let them know how they can help by donating a pound to save the lives of poorer children in the four countries of the world where polio still exists and ultimately to rid the world of this terrible disease.

There will be secondary activities such as:

A coordinated, wide-ranging media coverage to maximise both national and local PR and marketing opportunities.

Clubs will be encouraged to work with their local schools and businesses, generating wide publicity for Rotary and its projects.

There will be an associated *Window of Opportunity* week, to encourage clubs to take empty shop windows to display their local activities and those of Rotary internationally

Funding

This is no RIBI funding available to support this exercise although we have their blessing and support to proceed with it. See appendix 1. Funding was achieved by a donation of \$1000 from each District in these islands amounting to a total of \$29,000 – a cost of about 35p per member. This money will become available on 1<sup>st</sup> July when each District will pay its portion out of their 2009/10 budget. In addition the 2009/10 DG's have jointly applied for a PR grant from RI which, if we get it, will quadruple the money we have to spend. See appendix 2.

We will know whether we are awarded this grant in a few months time.

Further Information

For those who were not able to be at the last District Assembly, the slides I used for my TfL presentation can be seen on the District website:

DG presentation at Assembly:

<http://www.rotary-ribi.org/districts/homepage.asp?DistrictNo=1080> Select "Thanks for life power point presentation"

Probably some of this information was given to you at your club assembly by the District Officer present.

In the meantime PR material is available for viewing along with some useful links. Here is the link to the TFL downloads page

<http://www.herefordwv-rotary.co.uk/dgpages/dgthankslogo.htm>

Have a look at the "Final Inch" Video – its thirty eight minutes but it is worth it. RI is currently negotiating the right for Rotary to use this freely.

District 1080 Thanks for Life Committee.

I have set up a "Thanks for Life" Committee chaired by John Gillespie. The composition is as follows:

John Gillespie – Chairman

Diane Harber – Secretary

John Samuel – Contact to the twenty nine participating DG's in Britain and Ireland

Hugh Davies – Foundation input

Mark Little – International input, polio and NID expertise, some experience in talking to schools re polio.

Caroline Yates – Advice on best practice on approaching schools plus loads of other advice.

Nigel Neville – link to possible "Thanks for Life" dinner at King's Hall, Cambridge or other venue.

Gunther Escher – Communications committee

This committee had its first meeting on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> June. Please allow this committee time to get established and remember it will be several months before we know whether we have a PR grant for RI. The aim is to get this project up and running in February 2010 with as many clubs throughout the UK and Ireland involved. The committee will be the conduit of information flow for the District. If we learn collectively from within the District and from the information that will be provided by other Districts we should do well. That is how Rotary should always work.

Latest Information

As of Friday we have now been allocated Thanks for Life space on the RIBI website. This area is currently not accessible from the main navigation menus, but will be when it goes fully live. For the moment it can be accessed at <http://www.ribi.org/thanks-for-life>

Each District is being asked to provide any material they have so we can all share. Articles, links to useful websites, pictures, audio, video for all types of reader. Anything interactive especially welcomed - see the Primary school page for an example. Please don't email all 29 DGs with your ideas, send them to John Gillespie and he will send them on to the web coordinator.

John R Samuel DG 2009/10  
D 1080

## APPENDIX 1

Rotary International  
Public Relations Division – PR Grants  
1560 Sherman Avenue  
Evanston  
IL 60201  
USA

22 May 2009

Dear Sirs

### **RI PR Grant Proposal: 'Rotary Day'–23 February 2010**

I am particularly proud that all twenty-nine Governors within RIBI have agreed to organise a huge publicity project focused on Rotary Day, 23 February 2010, Rotary's 105<sup>th</sup> birthday.

On that day, and in the week surrounding it, there will be opportunities for clubs to tell their Rotary stories to the general public. This will have the potential to increase our membership by raising awareness of our Rotary Polio Eradication Campaign, the Bill & Melinda Gates Challenge, and the work of Rotary in general.

This is the first time, to my knowledge, that all twenty-nine districts in RIBI will be working together on a single publicity project for the benefit of Rotary, which will invite members of the public, including business people and schoolchildren, to participate in our Rotary activities.

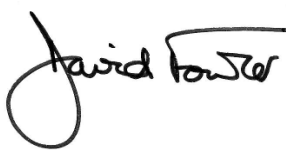
Co-ordinated, wide-ranging media coverage is proposed to maximise both national and local PR and marketing opportunities. Clubs will be encouraged to work with their local schools and businesses, generating wide publicity for Rotary and its projects.

There will be an associated *Window of Opportunity* week, to encourage clubs to take empty shop windows to display their local activities and those of Rotary internationally.

I am delighted personally to endorse the application to the 2009/10 RI PR Grant fund, being made by every district in RIBI. This unique joint project has the potential to generate a terrific amount of publicity that will undoubtedly enhance awareness of Rotary throughout these islands.

Yours faithfully

David Fowler

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Fowler". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial 'D'.

## APPENDIX 2

### Thanks for Life Project – District 1080

Just after Carole (my wife) and I got married in 1967 we both spent a year in India while I was working for Unilever. We will never forget the first few days in Bombay when we saw desperately poor children, crippled with polio, dragging themselves after a rubbish cart in an effort to salvage something edible. We resolved we would do something about it, but the task was just too big for two young people. It was only when I joined Rotary that I found out that there was an organisation that cared enough and was big enough to tackle this problem.

I have no hesitation in wholeheartedly supporting the “Thanks for Life Project” which will bring us a step closer to finally eliminating this terrible disease.

As District Governor 2009/10, I am particularly supportive because:

1. It supports my local Clubs in working within their own communities
2. It shows local communities what we are doing in Rotary - “Window of Opportunity”
3. It takes the story of polio directly to children in this country and links them in to the plight of less fortunate children in other countries. It should also remind grandparents of the fear of polio that all parents felt in this country not all that long ago.
4. It shows my Clubs how well we can support them at District level when a large number of District Governors use their initiative to pool their efforts and finances.

Following my District Assembly there was a positive buzz regarding “Thanks for Life”. A Rotary International PR grant would make such a huge difference in the level of advertising material and PR support we can give to support so many Clubs in the UK and Ireland carrying out this very worthwhile project.

District 1080 has included the sum of \$1000 in the 2009/10 budget as a payment towards the cost of the “Thanks for Life” project. This budget has been passed by vote at District Council.

John R.Samuel

District Governor 2009/10

District 1080.