

**March 2024**

**Rotary**  
Congleton



# **NEWS** *Letter*



**What a story.  
32nd Year of Swimathon  
416 Swimmers in 69 Teams.**

## **IN THIS ISSUE**

**President's Patter**

**Three Pages of News... It  
all happened last  
month!...**

**Swimathon 4-pages of  
Photos - Every Team...**

**Wildlife Gardening  
Competition...**

**Diary Update...**

**9,630 Lengths  
Swum in total.  
A Record 265  
Lengths by  
The Mermaids  
Over £12,000  
raised so far.**

**Well Done Everyone!**



## Presidents Patter

There are still opportunities to join one of the project teams, particularly Foundation and International and the Tree of light.

As a reminder of the recent presentation on Foundation the four main elements of Foundation are:-

- Annual Fund**
- Disaster Response**
- Polio Eradication**
- Endowment Fund**

The breakdown of subs paid, showed that 65% goes to Rotary International with half of that coming back to District to fund District Grants, whilst a significant proportion of the payment made to R.I. is used to fund Global Grants

The Swimathon event held at Congleton Leisure Centre has been a great success once again with 69 teams taking part, swimming nearly 10,000 lengths. The girls team at Congleton High School did particularly well, setting a new record by swimming 265 lengths. Sandra and her team did a fantastic job in ensuring that the event ran smoothly throughout the 2 days that the event was held.

The District Conference will take place at the end of April in Llandudno and is being attended by 20 delegates which is fantastic and will doubtless make an enjoyable weekend for those who are there.

Other forthcoming events include Rotarians helping to support the Centenary of the War Memorial Hospital via the Town Council. The hospital opened in 1924 following fundraising by local people. Although relatively small, it offers many facilities and services, as well as providing a wide range of local healthcare outpatient services to the residents of Congleton and the surrounding areas

**Brian**

## Helping Hand from Estate Agents



Not only did a team from estate agents, Timothy a Brown enter Swimathon enthusiastically, but they advertised the fact – and promoted the event – with full-page advertisements in the Congleton Chronicle on two consecutive weeks.

Their team of 6 – 'The Stupendous Six' – dropped in, jumped in, swam and shot off, back to the office to complete their days work!!

They sponsored the event and their team also raised money for their chosen charity, MND.

Knowing no bounds to their enthusiastic and generous support of Rotary-Congleton, they also supported the prizes in the Wildlife Garden Competition, also featured in this issue.



## Heliosa gets the good eggs

Rotary-Congleton's secretary Rod Goodier delivered 40 Easter Eggs to Kirsty Maskery at Heliosa Nursing Home in good time for the Easter weekend.

Kirsty said 'The smallest thing - such as an Easter Egg - can put a smile on the faces (of the residents)!



## Saturday March 23rd at Congleton Town Hall – Music from the Classic FM 'Hall of Fame'

On behalf of Congleton Rotary Club members, president Brian will welcome the audience to what promises to be a fantastic evening of superb music.

Rotary is very proud to have been associated with the Congleton Youth Orchestra from its inception, and it seems remarkable that the Youth Orchestra has been around now for about 30 years and continues to provide young people from Congleton and the surrounding areas with the opportunity to learn, play and perform music in an orchestral setting.

The Youth Orchestra is unique for young people, as it involves all the regular orchestral instruments that you would expect to see in an adult orchestra, including brass, strings, woodwind, and percussion.

The Youth orchestra is an important facility in the Town and is something we can all be justly proud of.



# Youth Speaks

Sunday March 10th saw several Rotarians including president Brian at Macclesfield Academy for the Rotary District Final (South) of the 'Youth Speaks' competition. Initially we didn't expect to be there but the Senior Team from Congleton High School won through as the 'Best Runner-Ups'. The team put up a much improved performance but so did all the other 3 senior teams. The team didn't win on the day but they were upbeat about the whole thing in terms of the experience and confidence they had gained from participating in the Rotary competition. They are already looking forward to assisting next year's school entry!

Well done Congleton High School!



**Obe (above) won the overall First prize in the entire competition and Charlie came Second, beating much older entrants**



*Team: Emma - Chairperson, Jamie – Speaker. Harley gave the vote of thanks.*

# Rotary wins a battle - with the squirrels



Late last year, Rotary-Congleton fitted 20 bird nesting boxes in Congleton Park.

The squirrels liked the design and promptly set to attack the boxes and open up the access holes, presumably with the intention of doing harm to the residents.

The RSPB designed a fix to thwart the attack! Simon Fallis, who leads Rotary-Congleton's environmental team has repaired all 20 boxes with metal plates, more than sufficient to beat the squirrels, and provide safe houses for the garden birds.

No birds or eggs have been harmed as the nesting season is just about to begin.

# Quinta walks off with Rotary Young Photographer prizes!

Six pupils at The Quinta primary school won prizes and two of the school's talented young photographers won overall prizes, coming first and second from nearly 100 entries including those from the two senior schools. In addition to his prizes, Obe, the overall competition winner gets a special date to photograph Bromley's community project 'The Hub' for a story being planned by a professional journalist, working with Congleton councillor Susan Mead.

Two complete classes entered the Rotary-Congleton Young Photographer competition. A full school assembly on Friday, 8th March saw all the winners receive framed copies of their photographs, a certificate and Amazon vouchers. Meanwhile, every entrant received a certificate and a copy of their photograph.

Competition organiser, Rtn. Cath Brown presented the prizes while Rotary's Youth Events organiser, Eric Westwood addressed the school and praised the high standards of their work in what proved to be a challenging competition.

The school was the last to receive their prizes in this year's competition. Headmaster Mr Will Sharpe particularly wanted the whole school to see the winners receive their prizes.

**Swimathon 2024 - The year that Rotary-Congleton passed the £400,000 mark since the annual event started - with every penny supporting charities and worthy causes.**

**This year, back at the new Congleton Leisure Centre with – for the first time - a glass wall between the spectators and the swimmers. Compere Eric Westwood said that this impacted on the usual enthusiastic and noisy support given to the swimmers, but didn't prevent the teams' enjoyment of the two-day event.**

**Sixty-nine teams entered and swam 9,630 lengths of the pool.**

**Over the years since 1996, Swimathon participants have covered a total 4,094 miles and 262,547 lengths of the various pools.**

**One team, the Bennetrans, led by matriarch, Kim Bennet has attended every Swimathon over the years! The Everybody Leisure Club entered a team of swimmers and set what could have been the record, covering 243 lengths of the pool in 55 minutes! They were beaten by three youngsters, the 'Mermaids' from Congleton High School, who swam an amazing 265 lengths! Three generations of the McCutcheon family, led by grandmother Lyn, swam with the Air Cadets teams. Congleton Amateur Swimming Club were also returning with their team, many of whom have taken part for around 20 years.**

**Primary school teams from Marlfields, Mossley, Quinta, Astbury, Smallwood, Buglawton, Marton and Blackfirs all turned up in force with their teams taking all 6 lanes for one session. Sandbach and CHS were there for the seniors with CHS swimmers taking all six lanes for their entire one-hour slot.**

**Recipients of moneys raised this year, LOL Foundation and The Old Saw Mill both entered teams. The Scouts and Brownies were there and the Air Cadets, regular swimmers, filling 5 lanes of the pool.**

**The Mayor, Cllr Rob Moreton and Mayoress, Helen spent most of Friday afternoon presenting medallions to the swimmers.**

**The WAGS team had raised over £1,200 in sponsorship by the weekend with their half-share of the proceeds supporting Beartown Rickshaws. With money still coming in from sponsors, the Rotary Club confidently expects to distribute over £12,000 to charities and good causes.**

**Local company Derek Rose generously provided two star raffle prizes of deluxe pyjama sets while Congleton Town Council, Timothy a Brown and Browns jewellers provided sponsorship.**

# The Team Photos...







**And Finally...  
Rotary's Own teams of Rustic ( some very Rustic)  
Rotarian swimmers and friends.**



Back, next year....



## Have a picnic and then fall asleep!



A raffle with three superb quality prizes raised additional money for Swimathon charities.

A wonderful wicker fitted picnic basket and two sets of top quality pyjamas made attractive prizes and raised £333.

Not only did Congleton pyjama manufacturers, Derek Rose provide two of the raffle prizes for Swimathon, the company also raised sponsorship for Stoke on Trent Foodbank and sent a team of swimmers to the event.

Mrs Hilary Yates from Smallwood generously gave the picnic basket.



*Rachel organised the Raffle and Brian drew the winning tickets*



## Listening out Loud came and Spoke!

Every year for over two decades, Rotary-Congleton's Swimathon has encouraged teams to swim and raise sponsorship for a charity of their choice. Rotary keeps 50% of the money raised and nominates its own beneficiaries, dividing its share of the money between them. This year, one of the charities is the Listen Out Loud Foundation.

Rotary-Congleton had a fascinating talk from the charity - set up in 2012 to help ex-service people adjust to 'normal' society after fulfilling their duty to Queen and latterly King and country. As many as 10% of all veterans leave the service either homeless or with mental and physical problems brought about by the traumas of conflict.

LOL has helped many veterans to adjust to life after the Services. It has found a home for 87 ex-forces personnel and helped with counselling and with the results of PTSD for countless others.

Jill Dolman and Andy Dolman Bayley founded the charity and recently opened the All Ranks Mess Cafe on Victoria Street next door to Morrisons supermarket. Open to the whole town, the cafe forms part of its mission is to help veterans to become integrated back into society and give them a much-needed platform towards independence. The cafe serves not only as a meeting point and a hub for the charity's work but also for its services providing counselling, re-training to help find suitable employment and support with minor offences and re-integration into family life and society.

Members of the Rotary Club and their friends and partners quizzed the speakers about the work of the charity and were universal in their praise for its work. The hope is that future fundraising will support the foundation's desire to help underprivileged children and older people. Supported by Tesco, they hope to be able to extend the number of breakfasts that they currently offer to young children.

## Rotary helps Quinta to keep its pupils safe outside school



'Parking Buddies' are pavement signs reminding parents and guardians who drop their children at school to look out for their safety – and the safety of others near to congested school entrances. Obstructing driveways, parking on school markings, leaving engines running, and throwing out unnecessary pollution is a scourge of our age. Schools discourage it as do local residents. So, to overcome the problem, prominent kerbside signs remind

drivers of the need to park carefully and considerately when dropping off and picking up. In the interests of safety Rotary-Congleton has contributed to primary schools requesting help – and Quinta is the latest.

**Head boy Connor and Head girl, Isabelle proudly display some of the new Parking Buddies outside the school at pick-up time..**



# Rotary Launches a Major Wildlife Friendly Garden Competition for All to Enter

Private gardens in Congleton cover an area estimated to be equivalent to over 400 football pitches! As a result, the environmental team is organising a Congleton-wide competition to make householders with gardens of every size – and even people with no garden at all – become more wildlife-friendly.

Simon Fallis is running the competition. His own garden consists of pots of plants on the balcony of his apartment! He is keen for everyone to join in and appreciate the value of their open spaces and think about how they could all be used to benefit wildlife. 'We want to encourage people to help our declining bird species, vital pollinators, and our beautiful butterflies,' he said.

To enter the competition register online before June 1st complete with a photograph of the 'garden' space in question. A final photograph submitted by August 31st when the competition closes shows the improvements made. The rest is up to the judges! *(All Rotarians are encouraged to enter, but, as with most similar competitions will not qualify to win the main prizes).*

The competition prizes are being sponsored generously by two local companies Timothy a Brown, Estate Agents and Smithy Farm Garden, who are funding two generous first prizes of £100. The prizes will be given as gardening vouchers redeemable at Smithy Farm Nurseries at Scholar Green

Timothy a Brown claims to be 'Passionate about Property'! How very appropriate, say the organisers that the competition aims to enhance the enjoyment and appearance of every property in Congleton. Co-sponsor Smithy Farm is a family business offering a wide range of homegrown plants and gardening supplies from their garden centre and shop on the A34 at Scholar Green.

There are two categories;  
**1): Homes with gardens and**  
**2): Houses or apartments with courtyards, patios or even a balcony or just a window box.**

Simon Fallis, environmental team leader, lives in an apartment himself. He is keen to include people living with balconies and to inspire them to encourage birds, bees and butterflies and to make even their



limited space a wildlife home from home! Potted plants, window boxes, a bee hotel, a bird feeder and a miniature water feature will fit even the smallest space, make an attractive feature and add to and enhance it. Many Congleton homes comprise terraced houses with patio spaces and the same applies. A corner devoted to potted plants – the smallest at the front, the larger ones behind, can make an attractive feature. Add in a bird feeder and a bird box, a bee hotel and a small water feature. Simon says the wild birds will come in and feast on seeds and fat balls, and drink from the water feature while butterflies will be attracted to the flowers. Bees and insects will help pollinate the flowers, the scent will add to the ambience and the corner will become an amazing space in no time at all. Furthermore, there's an attractive prize to be won to add to the benefits!

In the other category – Homes with gardens, the expectation is that a corner of the garden or a border should become the feature and become the entry to the competition – not necessarily the whole garden! The same criteria

apply, maximising the use of the available space to create a feature that will impress the judges. Rtn. Fallis says that with so many new houses being built in Congleton, there is a massive opportunity to develop a wildlife-friendly garden from scratch.

Simon has an information pack available online for anyone interested in entering the competition. The pack is full of helpful ideas and suggestions on how to make your garden or patio more wildlife-friendly with suggested layouts and advice on the best plants to grow.

## Here are the details of the competition.

Entrants should register their interest in the competition before June 1st and send a photo of the area before they start their plan to develop the area. Photos taken on a smartphone will suffice and should be sent to the competition email address... [simonfallis@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:simonfallis@hotmail.co.uk) Entry forms are available online and on leaflets distributed door-to-door and on Rotary stalls at the Makers Markets and in the Congleton Information Centre.



The final photograph, showing the completed wildlife garden area should be submitted on or before the competition end date on 31st August 2024. If appropriate, more than one photo may be submitted taken over the period of the competition. The judges will consider every entry and will make an appointment to meet the shortlisted entries, take professional photographs for publicity purposes and choose the winners in the two categories.

The judges will be looking for measures taken to encourage wildlife, for example, bird feeders, fruit trees and bushes, wild flowers a herb patch and if possible, a wild area. For larger areas, they might like to see a shelter, bird and bat boxes, hedgehog houses, and bee hotels. A water feature, a dish or a bird bath for smaller areas while a bog or a pond might be possible in larger spaces. An added bonus might be evidence of the use of peat-free growing agents, compost making, or a water butt. Some say that gardens should not be too tidy, but all of these considerations are up to the individual entrants.

'We are hoping that the competition might inspire people living within the CW12 postcode area to think about the opportunity their own outdoor space provides for supporting our endangered wildlife and take steps to improve the environment in their gardens – even if those gardens are represented by plants in pots' said Simon Fallis.




# The Rules

**By entering the Wildlife Friendly Garden competition you are confirming that you have read, understood and agreed to the rules as stated.**

- 1) All entries to be registered before 1st June, 2024.
- 2) The Rotary Club of Congleton reserves the right to cancel or amend the competition without notice for any reason. All amendments will be notified to entrants.
- 3) All entrants may take photographs and make written records of their work and wildlife successes and send this as their entry. **The minimum requirement is a photo taken before the start and one taken before the finish date. There is no need to make the whole garden 'wild' - just a corner or a feature is all you need to do.**
- 4) All submitted photographs must have been taken within the entered garden and within the competition period. (Photos taken with a 'smartphone' and emailed are acceptable).
- 5) There will be 2 categories of entries based on garden size. The winner in each category will receive a prize of £100

**Category One: House with Garden**  
**Category Two: Patio, Courtyard, Balcony, Window Box**

- 6) At the end of the competition on 31st August 2024 all the entries will be examined based on photos and any written material submitted and short lists of finalists produced.
- 7) Entries on the shortlist will be visited, by appointment, and professional photos taken. Privacy and locations will be respected.
- 8) The winners will be selected from the finalists and prizes awarded. The judges' decision will be final. Winners agree to attend a presentation with photographs and appropriate publicity.

**To enter the Rotary 'Wildlife Friendly Garden' Competition and agree to the Rules...**  
**Please enter by emailing your entry details (Name, Address, Postcode and Category) to the competition organiser, [simonfallis@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:simonfallis@hotmail.co.uk) All entrants will receive a full information pack by email with ideas and hints and tips to make the competition enjoyable.**

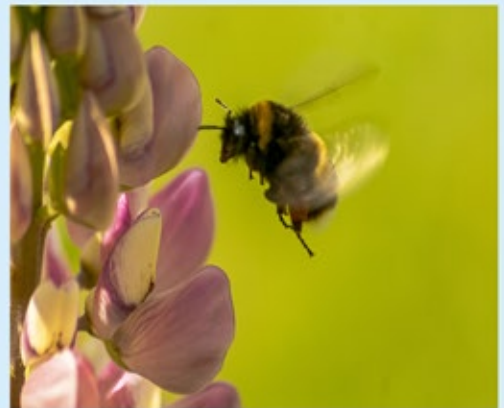
**Entries: With a 'before' photo of your garden, must be received by 1st June 2024**  
**email: [simonfallis@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:simonfallis@hotmail.co.uk)**



Sponsored by Timothy a Brown, Estate Agents



**Leaflets are being distributed to 12,000 households in Congleton. The competition will be promoted throughout on FaceBook and online**



**Endangered Wildlife:**

**Birds, Bees, Butterflies, Bugs and Hedgehogs. All are hoped to benefit from the competition**

# Diary Page

Monday 8th April: Swimathon debrief

Stew is taking off again. Watch out Mr Putin. Our own Ace is on the case!

Llandudno in the spring. Looks like a great weekend with quite a number committed to attending. Brian was hinting at an invitation to pre-dinner drinks in the presidential suite...

Another year end. Another AGM. Let's see what's in store for us all next year...

Impressario Parker strikes again! Usually such a great night of wonderful big band jazz music and 'bring your own refreshments'...

It's all over for Brian. Back by popular demand, Ian Robinson will now rule the roost for a second time.

Mon <b>25</b> Mar '24	19:00 PM to 22:00 PM	Social / Speaker Night
Footnote:		Bob Mallet - fraud
Mon <b>8</b> Apr '24	19:00 PM to 22:00 PM	Business meeting
Mon <b>22</b> Apr '24	19:00 PM to 21:00 PM	Speaker Night
Footnote:		Stew - Flying with the RAF during the Cold War
Sat <b>27</b> Apr '24	09:00 AM to 17:00 PM	District Conference
Sun <b>28</b> Apr '24	09:00 AM to 17:00 PM	District Conference
Mon <b>13</b> May '24	19:00 PM to 22:00 PM	Business Meeting
Mon <b>3</b> Jun '24	16:00 PM to 22:00 PM	AGM & Club Aassembly
Mon <b>17</b> Jun '24	19:00 PM to 22:00 PM	Social/Speaker Night
Sat <b>29</b> Jun '24	17:00 PM to 21:00 PM	Jazz Night
Mon <b>1</b> Jul '24	19:00 PM to 22:00 PM	President's Handover
Sat <b>6</b> Jul '24	15:00 PM to 22:00 PM	Welcolme our new President BBQ
Fri <b>12</b> Jul '24	15:00 PM to 23:00 PM	Astonbury
Sat <b>13</b> Jul '24	16:00 PM to 23:00 PM	Astonbury

