

## **Cheadle and Gatley 41 Club – meeting 15 November 2021**

### **General Discussions**

Attendees were Dave Barrow, Lee Childs, Chairman Russell Dymond, Sir James Fairbrother, David Ham, Dave Khan, Peter Lee, Kevin Lovett, Peter Owen and Jeremy Toone (10)

We met in the White Hart, Cheadle for a couple of beers before dining at La Cueva, Cheadle.

#### **Chairman's Introduction**

Chairman Russell opened the discussion highlighting the general feeling that C&G41 Club has significant issues, which if remain unresolved could lead to a reduced programme and ultimately, the potential closure of the club.

Russell would invite each member to present their thoughts, feelings and potential ideas. Each would talk without question or interruption.

#### **Major Issues**

The issues to be addressed can be summarised thus:

- Existing Membership
- Recruitment
- Attendance at meetings
- Format and frequency of meetings
- Communications
- Other key points raised
- Summary
- Next steps

The following notes are a combination of points raised by the above 10 and follow up comments passed to me (DH) in the proceeding couple of days.

#### **Existing Membership**

We have 31 fully paid up members of Cheadle & Gatley 41 Club.

The 15<sup>th</sup> November meeting was attended by those 10 listed above. Other regular attendees are Messrs Coleman, Kellett, McElvenny and Walker, giving us a core of 14.

There are 3 'Country members' who would attend if they were in the area – Messrs Curran, Rose and Sloan. Two of our group are unwell (Messrs Seth and Tipping), leaving 12 who should be contacted to establish why they need to be persuaded to attend – These are Messrs Cotter, Croft, Davies, Gilland, Gray, Green, Guy, Heyes, Kershaw, Mather, Smith and Newsome. All of these gents have contributed significantly in the past and we would welcome seeing them again.

#### **Recruitment**

Round Table is currently on its knees with only around 3000 members nationwide. It would seem unlikely that this will ever recover.

Cheadle & Gatley Round Table have maybe 6 current members but it would be extremely unlikely that any of these would ever progress into 41 Club due to the wide age gap that now exists.

So – we will never expand our membership via the established route.

Do we have past 41 Club members and/or Round Tablers who have left but may be approachable to joining us occasionally – people such as Digby, Mott, Bale, Ousbey, Edge – am sure there must be many more?

Do we have other contacts – not necessarily past Tablers? Or maybe lapsed members from other local Clubs ?

We are told Lions enjoys expanding membership and their ideals were always similar to those of Round Table – does anyone have contact with local Lions clubs?

Knutsford have a local group called the Rex Probus club with similar ideals to ourselves, enjoying trips out, events etc. Is there mileage in seeking out similar clubs in our area?

### **Attendance at meetings**

The general level of attendance is very poor and as such it is not possible to hold the conventional meetings we have always done i.e. – in a private room with bar access and a hot meal. The turnover would simply not be sufficient for premises to provide this level of service and this particularly applies to our current hosts at Cheadle Golf Club. We should not be bickering on cost – the value of friendship far outweighs the cost of a meal and a few beers.

One of the first priorities is to establish exactly who is and isn't turning up to events. For far too long now, and to the exasperation of those organising events, a significant number of members simply fail to respond to any communication. This is not acceptable but there isn't a simple solution without involving the already busy organisers with more time and effort. It is suggested that the Secretary issues a list a couple of days prior to each cut-off date - showing those attending, those not, those who are permanent apologies and those who have not replied – hopefully shaming them into action. For consistent offenders – the Chairman must personally intervene.

Equally – the level of turnout prevents many of the types of meetings we have usually held – in particular speaker meetings or external guests.

### **Format and frequency of meetings**

Monday 15<sup>th</sup> meeting was most enjoyable. Good food and good banter. Whilst we are “regrouping” – a monthly meal at a local restaurant will certainly keep us ticking over.

We discussed quarterly meetings of a more traditional nature. Presumably – Xmas, March AGM, Summer and October (normally the memorial quiz). For these we would ideally need a private room but am sure this must be available (didn't we sometimes use The Ship at Styal?, or even the Governors House FKA Oakley Manor).

For the more formal meetings – we could invite other local 41 Clubs and by swelling numbers – probably have a speaker, charity, business meeting or other entertainment.

The cost of a decent meal and meeting should not be an issue to any of the members – make it worth it by improving the quality

The popular bowls and pitch'n'putt would easily be continued.

In relation to the six other meetings we could have an informal meeting at a suitable restaurant as we had on Monday evening.

As far as our programme is concerned some time during the summer/early Autumn we could organise some further trips – Amazon, Bakery, RHS, Bridgewater, Arley Hall, Avro visit, Fred Dibnah visit or Bentley factory or walking trips.

These need to be arranged well in advance and whether the numbers that only turn up are only six or a dozen it probably doesn't matter but at least we could set them in the diary for the year subject to the approval of our new Chairman. Some of these events may require a

trip during the day and it is noted that of the members who were there on Monday night forty five per cent of them are working full time. Kevin, Jeremy, DK and Jim with Peter Owen working part time and of course Damien is in full time employment as well. Nevertheless that doesn't mean to say that we can't try to progress these matters.

The International Weekend is without doubt our most treasured event and very popular and hopefully will continue in its current format and with good support.

The onus for organising these events is falling on too few shoulders and we should revert to small teams to contribute – especially in Programme and International. A good programme remains key.

It's been a long, long time since we had a joint social event with partners – and whilst a formal ladies night may not be practical – a night out at a restaurant could go well. Or heaven forbid – a safari supper.....!!

### **Communications**

Communications have broken down, because members do not respond to emails and many don't bother to advise the organiser whether or not they will attend.

Officers are frustrated by these issues to the point they don't wish to take on organiser roles.

Following the meeting held as long ago as 16<sup>th</sup> September 2019, when many of the points raised last Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> November, had been raised then. A survey had been sent out by Alan Walker following that meeting asking members to state what changes they would like to see, but alas only one response was received.

It is suggested we ask each member for one thing they would like to change

### **Other Key Points raised but not covered above**

In the current post-Covid environment, members may still fear attending meetings and being in close proximity to others. We are now all 'of an age' and need good reason to go out

Many of our members are no longer working - thus they need to be attracted to go out as it easy to become insular. Covid has changed many attitudes

If we arrange significant events, we would expect those members who can, to attend

Sad as it is, a similar fate that caused Poynton to fail. They had similar issues, but these weren't resolved

The Village as a venue was nice –felt the need to dress up with a shirt and tie. Smart casual dress code has become too casual

If we want to do anything charitable, we should support the National President's annual charity

41 club demographic has changed – the average age is now 67 – 73 and the 18 clubs in Region 7 have an average number of just 10-12.

### **Summary**

There were many good comments raised by the 10 just men. These notes will be issued to all attendees and then to the membership once agreed to be reasonably true, probably now into the New Year..

Moving forward, a further suggestion is to invoke a Grapevine, ensure all members are spoken to and determine if they want to attend formal and informal meetings, be in 41 and suggest one item they would like to change.

## **Moving Forward**

David H to amend minutes with input from RD and PO then send it to the 10 for comments (this document).

It is suggested we then sit on things until we have Christmas out of the way (20<sup>th</sup> Dec looks like it will be a good turnout)

After the New Year, suggest:

DB to publish on the website

AW to send these notes to all members with a note telling them about this session and requesting them to suggest one thing to change. RD to pen the note we want sent out.

Agree the list of Country members – who we wouldn't expect to attend and thus the rest we would.

Review the Apologies process

Potentially create a Grapevine to talk to each member and determine if they want to be a member of 41 or not. Could be a way of future communication

DK to ask Lions why they are succeeding

NK to ask the same of Rotary – NK would have been part of this evening's 10 had he been in the country

MG to persuade RT leavers to join us and ask current Chairman to come along

David Ham

November 2021

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