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## **International Team**

### **International Relations Officer – Phil Robinson**

Well, what a horrible year it has been, and we all hope that an end is in sight across the world with the vaccine roll out in full swing. A year that has focused us all on what is most important to us and what parts of our lives we really miss when they are taken away, and many of us have lost friends and family.

The international picture is pretty similar everywhere with significant restrictions across Europe as Governments try and find the right balance of people’s lives against the needs of the economy, jobs and mental wellbeing.

For Lions across Europe and the wider world, it has been a case of exploring new ways of doing things. Where Clubs have been able to adapt to online working and meetings these clubs continue to thrive, but for others we must all hope that once face to face meetings are again possible, they will come out of hibernation. Our twin districts in France and Germany face the same challenges and have worked together on some excellent projects especially cooperation between Germany and France to supply PPE has been a major Lions focus.

In the UK we just managed to run the UN day at the Houses of Parliament before lockdown 1. A new booking system was trialled and by all accounts worked well. Next year will almost certainly be a fully digital UN Day hopefully by convention we will have some more details.

The Convention in 111MN Germany went digital and the DG Team and myself were pleased to join online. We had the additional benefit of having simultaneous translation for the German Convention from DGE Steve Coe’s wife Anne Marie who is a fluent German speaker. It really made a difference, thank you Anne Marie. Our colleagues in France decided to postpone their Autumn congress until April 21.

Our Twining with 111MN is 45 years old in 2022, and our colleagues under the guide of Vice District Governor Rothwitha Hahn are planning an excellent weekend event in Germany to mark this key milestone. I will circulate booking details as soon as they are available. But note the date 22-24<sup>th</sup> April 2022

I hope several colleagues from Germany and France will join us for Convention, where they will have a few minutes to tell us some of the things their districts are doing to support their communities during the pandemic.

On the wider international picture, International Convention in Singapore was cancelled so all International Officers were extended for a further year, however Multiple Districts and Districts have been authorised to use digital voting enabling us to proceed with the elect of officers and the voting on Resolutions. Europa Forum was cancelled in favour of a 1 day digital Symposium which was very successful.

MD Convention will be the 1<sup>st</sup> May and will be fully digital

**LCIF Co-ordinator – Jackie Robinson**



My Fellow Lions we are half way through Campaign 100.....

I am very pleased to be able to announce that NPS and Chichester Clubs have signed up to become 100 Model Clubs. 😊

I thank them both for their commitment to LCIF and hope that this may encourage a few more clubs to sign up before the end of this Lions year.

Please look on LCIF website for more details or feel free to email me for more information.

I am really asking clubs to donate to OUR foundation, it is this where emergency grants are sent from when World disasters happen, without our help and donations LCIF will not be able to continue to provide these grants.

We will not be able to help with hunger, diabetes, and all the other projects that LCIF is involved in.

*The Mission of Lions Clubs International Foundation is:-*

*To support the efforts of Lions clubs and partners in serving communities locally and globally, giving hope and impacting lives through humanitarian service projects and grants.*

Over the past 100 years, we have proven that Lions united in service can transform millions of lives. As Lions, we serve proudly, empowered by our global foundation. Together, we will be able to serve more than 200 million people a year by 2021. Our goals are expansive and no individual Lion, club or district can take them on alone; but together, empowered by our global foundation, we can.

We remain as committed as ever to serving proudly in the areas of vision, youth, disaster relief and humanitarian causes. As the challenges facing our world expand, so too must our focus and capacity. Our foundation is strengthening our humanitarian mission by expanding our global causes to include diabetes, hunger, childhood cancer and the environment.

100 years from now, we hope Lions will still be making the world a better place.

***Please Lions of 105se this is not a lot to ask, let us see if District 105SE is still “The Best District in the World”.***

### **Belarus Appeals Chairman – Chris Iles**

2020 has been a difficult year for us all, and Gomel Lions Club in Belarus is no different to the rest of us. Although Belarus is a relatively sparsely populated country compared to the UK, they still have similar problems due to COVID-19, although the mortality rate is incredibly relative to us. Initially the government in Belarus was in denial at the severity of the virus but now they have to acknowledge that it is a serious threat to public health. This year also, much publicised was the political unrest following the presidential elections. The City of Gomel, the second largest city in Belarus, is over 300 kilometres to the Southeast of the capital, but it saw similar unrest and demonstrations which have generally subsided now. The members of Gomel Lions Club were very careful to keep clear of all controversial activities and went about their community service as well as possible. Unfortunately, several of the senior members are of pensionable age and have had to isolate from the COVID-19 threat as many of us have. Luckily, they have some very active younger members with talents and abilities which many of us would envy.

Thank you for the support we have received from a few Clubs this year for the two appeals we launched in January 2020. Unfortunately, the donations received have not been sufficient to complete either project which is disappointing but not surprising under the current circumstances.

**We therefore once again ask for your support** for those two current appeals which are to replace and repair the roof of the Ulukovje Orphanage which houses up to 200 children with learning difficulties, and the Vaselevichi school for blind and partially sighted secondary school children to replace outdated equipment used to train the children in Braille writing for a worthwhile career, plus other items. Both projects we would recommend to you as being highly worthy of your support. For anyone wishing to know more about these appeals there is an appeal in the January Newsletter and I am happy to provide more detailed information.

In the past year it was disappointing that Trustees could not pay their annual long-weekend visit to Gomel in the Autumn, to review the outcome of our previous year's projects. In this case it was for the support of leisure activities at the Orphanage School for Emergency Services for which we signed contracts in 2019, and this has now been completed successfully with all the equipment and facilities provided as promised. Thank you to all clubs which supported that appeal.

We are pleased to be able to report that the community work of the Gomel Lions Club continues to be very effective in the region, working in partnership with several charities including the Heritage of Chernobyl and the Children's Charity, both of which are represented in Gomel Lions Club with senior members. However, they could not be as effective as they are without the continued support of the Lions Belarus Trust in 105SE. Gomel Lions are very grateful for the support they receive from us and constantly thankful. Gifts are distributed at many events which they organise for families in need, orphanages, and old people's homes, in the weeks leading up to Christmas and throughout the year and we saw evidence of these donations in all the visits we made last year. However, one change would appear to have come about recently and that is the use of Social Media to appeal to the public for support for their projects plus sponsorship from local companies and this would appear to be having some effect which is encouraging for their future success. They still cannot appeal to the public for funds but do ask for donations of toys and goods etc.

My sincere thanks to my fellow Trustees of the Lions Belarus Trust, Past Chairman Howard Lee, Peter Drysdale, Frank Lees, Paul Withers, Mike Shaw, and Jackie Robinson for their support and to our friends in 111MN and 103IE, without whom many projects would not have been the success that they were.

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