

## New Kids on the Block

### Lessons from the Bradford Rotary Community Corps

The May issue of *SRS* featured the Bradford Rotary Community Corps' first official community event in support of the My Mito Mission charity. Just in case members were not familiar with the Rotary Community Corps (RCC) idea. This article is a short explanation of the RCC concept; how the Bradford RCC developed; and what lessons can be shared so as to foster more RCCs in the District.

RCCs are a bit like the friends of Rotary groups that many of our clubs have. In essence, non-Rotarian community volunteers working with Rotary. But Rotary chartered RCCs are rare in RGBI. Though they are common across the world. In fact, there are over 13,000 chartered RCCs worldwide. Involving around 300,000 volunteers. In demographic terms the volunteers are split 50:50 male female. Whilst all age ranges are represented volunteers do tend to be weighted more towards the younger age ranges. For more information see the [Rotary Community Corps infographic](#)

Bradford RCC is the first in the District to receive a Rotary charter – certificate of organisation. Membership is free. Of the more than 30 members the youngest is just 20 and most are under 40. Though there are some older members including a city councillor and a deputy Lord Lieutenant for West Yorkshire. They are more diverse than most clubs.



A photo of the nascent Bradford RCC. When a group of volunteers, from a range of voluntary backgrounds, came together at Christmas time to provide a lunch for socially isolated people in the Bradford Khidmat Centre. Also at the event was DGE Richard Greenwood who talked to members of the group about Rotary.

In a short space of time, with the sponsorship of the Rotary Adventurers, the Bradford RCC was born and chartered. Armed with their Rotary branded pull up banner they held a fundraising event for the My Mito Mission medical charity. Watch their reel here [My Mito mission event reel](#).

Bradford RCC are buzzing with plans for more events. In June they will be partnering with the Bradford Night Stop charity to host an event for refugees in Peel Park. Then a tree planting activity, in July, at the Bracken Hill Park Festival. Adding lustre to their already established environmental credentials as litter pickers,



What lessons are there for Rotary as whole from the first Rotary Community Corps in the District? Firstly, talk Rotary to any potential member or group. It can pay off.

Secondly, in terms of recruiting groups, give potential members the space to develop at their own pace. Younger people will almost invariably use online tools as opposed to the in-person meetings older Rotarians maybe more comfortable with.

Accept that whilst some RCC members may become Rotarians/Rotaractors in time. Many will always want to remain as RCC members. Continuing as the invaluable community assets they are. But by working beneath their Rotary banner the public can clearly see that Rotary is moving on from its old, pale, male and stale caricature.

Thirdly, cherish your Rotary youth alumni. These people are win: win gold dust for us. Two of the key players in the creation of the Bradford RCC are a RYLA alumnus and a Rotary Young Citizen award winner. So firstly, these two were already well disposed to hear an appeal to come and work with Rotary. But secondly, their formative experiences with Rotary had equipped them with the skills to become the community activists they already were. Thus, they quickly accessed their networks of contacts to send invites and the RCC was born. Older Rotarians simply cannot replicate such networking.

This successful networking by Rotary youth alumni has certainly vindicated the introduction of the District's R4R (Rotary for RYLA) programme. Whereby former Rylarians are sent a regular newsletter and encouraged to keep in contact with Rotary.

For more information on Rotary Community Corps, alongside membership retention and recruitment more widely, please contact District Membership leads:

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