

Rotaract in Great Britain & Ireland

**Kickstart
your
Rotaract Club**

April 2005



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Abbreviations used

The following abbreviations are used in this Guide:

DC	Rotaract District Chairman (referred to as District Rotaract Representative (DRR) by RI)
GB&I	Great Britain & Ireland
RGBI	Rotaract in Great Britain & Ireland as a collective body
RI	Rotary International
RIBI	Rotary International in Great Britain & Ireland

1 Introduction

The RIBI Rotaract Working Party Report, published in September 2002 and adopted by the RIBI General Council in October 2002, recommended that RGBI formulated a plan to assist Rotaract clubs experiencing membership problems. And this is it!

Version 1 was published in November 2003, and has become a worldwide success, with Rotaractors from Australia, Luxembourg and the Netherlands getting in touch to say how helpful they've found it. Version 2 has been updated with comments received from Rotaractors (thanks for these!), experience shared on rotaractnet (a worldwide mailing list – see Section 7.6), and experience gained in the 18 months since Version 1...but we've still managed to keep it to 30 pages of quality guidance!

Hopefully this guide will inspire you to kickstart your struggling Rotaract club, even if, at times, it seems beyond hope. The ideas in this guide have been used by Rotaractors to rebuild their clubs, so they really do work.

And if your club is going swimmingly, with membership at an all-time high, and a full programme of events and activities, lucky you – but do not be so busy having a good time that you forget to continue recruiting new members. All Rotaract clubs are dynamic, with members joining and leaving all the time. It only takes a few months of more members leaving than joining for the club to face problems...make sure you don't find yourself there by introducing a permanent policy of active recruitment.

If you find these ideas do or don't work, or if you have ideas not covered in this guide, please let us know so that we can include them in the next version.

And, above all, remember – Rotaract is what we do for fun!

Gillian Wain

RGBI Chairman 2004/05

2 Assessing your Rotaract club's health

Sometimes you can be so busy having a good time, that you don't notice that your Rotaract club might not be in tip-top condition. Take a few moments to check through the list below (in no order of importance).

- Is your club well organised and running smoothly?
- Is there good fellowship, fun and all-round participation?
- Is there an interesting and stimulating programme of meetings and events?
- Is there continuing up-to-date information given to all members – including those without e-mail?
- Are members of your Rotaract district team invited to visit the club?
- Do the majority of members attend your club and district social events?
- Do all members have a positive attitude toward the recruitment of new members?
- Are new members welcomed and involved?
- Do the majority of your visitors become new members?
- Is attendance reviewed regularly?
- Are absentee members kept informed of your club's activities?
- Does your club seek and achieve good publicity?
- Is the average age under 26?
- Are younger members encouraged to take on roles of responsibility within the club?
- Are members encouraged to have a lower profile when they reach 30?
- Does a member of your sponsoring Rotary club(s) attend the majority of meetings?
- Is your club invited to sponsoring Rotary club(s) and Inner Wheel club events, and do you invite Rotarians and members of Inner Wheel to yours?
- Are members invited to join Rotary at 30?

Answering no to any of these questions should start alarm bells ringing, and it would be a good idea to start addressing the areas identified. A bit of work now is much easier than trying to repair bigger damage further down the line.

3 Retaining your existing members

Retaining your Rotaract club's members is important. When we lose a Rotaractor, we do not just lose a member, but also all the contacts they have. It is well known in the advertising field that it is far easier to get business from an existing customer than to try and find a new one.

The ideas that follow should help your club to retain members, and of course, they will make your club more attractive to new members too.

3.1 Examining membership losses

Members leave for a number of reasons; some of these cannot be prevented, but many can: boredom, lack of commitment, little involvement, no real knowledge of Rotaract programmes, arguments that have got out of hand. If you have a member who has left recently, try to find out why by phoning them or meeting up.

If this isn't possible, consider what happened in the weeks before they left:

- What did your club do when this member stopped attending social events?
- What did your club do when this member's attendance fell?
- What concern was shown?
- What responsibility was given to the member to show them how valuable they were?

Think about the answers and try to avoid the same thing happening again.

3.2 Finding out what members want from your club

Is your Rotaract club programme boring? Are you doing the same old things? Have events become nothing more than an opportunity for a few members to sit around and drink? Do members dash into meetings and rush off at the end, not seeming to wish to spend time with each other (i.e. the joy has gone)?

Events that make your Rotaract club's programme more interesting are limited only by your members' imagination. But how do you get them to look beyond the existing club at what you could be doing?

To focus everyone's minds you could convene a special meeting to discuss this; ask all members, and some useful Rotarians, to make a special effort to attend. It is better not to hold this exercise if there are visitors attending the meeting as there might be some dirty laundry to be aired, although this can be minimised and spun by skilful chairing! A flip chart pad is useful, along with paper and pens for all.

Ask everyone to spend five minutes writing down:

- Three reasons why they joined Rotaract
- Three reasons why they stay in Rotaract
- Three reasons that would make them leave Rotaract

Use the results as a focus for subsequent discussions, and make sure that everyone's reasons are shared – including those of both quieter and newer members. Try not to let older and more vocal members dominate. Negative reasons for belonging may emerge – a common one is “because this club will fold without me being here”. Discuss these negative points first, to get them out of the way and allow the club to focus on more positive reasons for belonging, and for taking things forward.

Hopefully your discussions will make members realise the reasons for joining and staying that we all have in common, and also the different things that we get out of Rotaract. Use the reasons to plan some new activities or ditch some old activities that no-one enjoys. Ask those who suggest new events to organise them – don't let all the work fall on one member. Set a date to revisit the outcomes in a few weeks' time.

Another way to focus future activities is to go 'back to basics'. Reread the Rotaract Constitution (downloadable from the RI website – see Section 8.5) to remind yourself why Rotaract was set up in the first place.

The goals of Rotaract are:

1. To develop professional and leadership skills;
2. To emphasise respect for the rights of others, and to promote ethical standards and the dignity of all useful occupations;
3. To provide opportunities for young people to address the needs and concerns of the community and our world;
4. To provide opportunities for working in co-operation with sponsoring Rotary clubs;
5. To motivate young people for eventual membership in Rotary.

What could your club be doing to meet these goals? Remember that hands-on activities have a feel-good factor and foster a healthy club environment.

You could also consider what the RGBI brand statement 'Rotaract is an opportunity to...' (see Section 8.2) means for your club. How could you use it to influence your club's activities?

3.3 Easy events for small clubs

It can be difficult to have a busy calendar of events when a club has only two or three active members. Here are some suggestions for small clubs:

- **Compulsory (!!)** celebration of birthdays
If the birthday girl or boy does not have any specific plans to celebrate their birthday, organise a social outing to help them celebrate, and try to do something different each time. Ask someone other than the member celebrating their birthday to organise the event (make the bookings, accept the RSVPs), and ask for another volunteer from the club to organise a birthday cake (they can make or buy it) for either the meeting closest to the member's birthday or the social function. This has many benefits: it's an excuse to hold a social event, each member gets the opportunity to suggest an activity they would like to do, and to organise an event without it being a big task, no matter how new they are to the club, if they would like to take the opportunity.
- **Recycling projects**
Small ongoing recycling projects, perhaps already organised by Rotary, are an easy way for new members to contribute right from the time they join. There are a variety of items they can bring in for recycling, including stamps, ring pulls from aluminium cans, toner and printer ink cartridges, old mobile phones, and old clothes. Keep a tally of how many items each member brings in, and have prizes for those who collect the most in a given timeframe. You could list the tallies in a newsletter, as the friendly competition adds an element of fun to it.
- **Activities with neighbouring clubs**
Socialising or carrying out joint projects with neighbouring clubs is another good way to improve enthusiasm in a smaller club and increase the variety of activities and faces. Don't forget that this includes clubs in other districts, which may well be geographically closer than some clubs in your own district. It can be good to spend time with other clubs to hear what is working for them. Ask them for their events diary and combine them all to make an extended club programme: then they've done the hard work for you!

3.4 Club meetings

Your club's fortnightly meetings are not the only aspect of your club to look at; it is the other activities that define who we are and why we exist. Just holding meetings fortnightly does not achieve anything and is boring. However, meetings are still an important part of Rotaract – they are often a visitor's first face-to-face contact with the club, and a boring, unprofessional meeting ensures they never come back.

Meetings should be fun, stimulating and entertaining, with a good, well-balanced programme which attracts regular attendance. A meeting should include an opportunity for fellowship. Perhaps it's worth adopting Rotary's model of meeting 30–45 minutes earlier to have a drink, catch up with each other and chat with guests. This counteracts the effect of members being too tired to hang around after the meeting.

3.4.1 Chairing meetings

All Rotaractors are volunteers who give their most precious commodity – time. Do not waste it! Chairing a meeting means following an agenda, sticking to the point, keeping cross-talk to a minimum, extracting contributions from those attending, and running to a promised time. Good chairmen are active listeners who allow difference of opinion but not arguments, and allow discussion but not endless waffling. Good chairmen give members prior knowledge in good time to ensure effective contributions in return. As a club President, be a good chairman and help retain your members.

3.4.2 Meeting venue

Consider your club's meeting location. Ideally the venue should have the facilities to conduct your regular meetings without interference or interruption, and should be *attractive* to members and visitors (a good image amongst young people is particularly important). Remember that first impressions count, if the venue is not appealing it is less likely that potential members will return. Ask Rotarians if they have any contacts. Depending on your location, things to consider are:

- Well lit
- Easy to find
- Ample parking
- Guaranteed exclusive use of a room
- Free of charge or at a cost that can be met through members' subs
- Able to buy drinks and food if necessary

3.4.3 Speaker programme

An interesting speaker programme retains and attracts members. There are many free-of-charge speakers out there, as well as charities which will speak for a small donation. Examples of speakers for Rotaract clubs (again, limited only by your imagination) include:

- Charities – both local, and local branches of national and international
- Rotaract Overseas Project
- Crime prevention and safety from your local police station's crime reduction officer
- Constituency MP
- Solicitor on making a will, co-habiting, or other issues relevant to 18-30 year olds
- Magistrates court on becoming a magistrate
- Local historians
- Rotarians – often they can provide advice and give amusing talks about their career and past experiences.

Send a list round among your members to find out what they'd like to hear, and ask them to list the contacts they have.

3.5 Club website

Does your Rotaract club have a website? If not, why not?

Club websites are an excellent way to keep existing members up to date, as well as attracting new members. For guidelines on setting up a club website, a simple one being the work of just a few hours, see Section 8.3.1.

Each year RGBI holds a competition for the best club or district website in GB&I. Details of the competition are e-mailed to all clubs approximately six weeks before the annual RGBI Conference. The best website is decided by vote by Rotaractors in GB&I and the award presented at the annual RGBI conference.

3.6 Club newsletter

A Rotaract club newsletter is a great way to keep members informed of what is happening in the club, particularly those who have missed one or two meetings. Encourage contributions from members. The newsletter can be kept simple, and is easy enough to produce and distribute with access to a computer and e-mail. Remember to send hard copies to those without e-mail.

Each year RGBI holds a competition for the best club or district newsletter/magazine in GB&I. Bring the last few issues to the annual RGBI conference to enter the competition; the best magazine is voted by the RGBI Council.

4 Attracting new members to your Rotaract club

New members are the life blood for a healthy future, since they are full of enthusiasm, have new ideas, and may well introduce new members themselves. All Rotaractors should want to share Rotaract, and it should not just be left to the club's Membership & Publicity Officer.

4.1 Publicity ideas

There are many methods of publicising your Rotaract club in order to attract new members. However, more recently, we note that the most successful new membership gains have occurred when people have seen Rotaract in action (e.g. see Volunteering, below), rather than being attracted by publicity material on display or that has been given or sent to them.

This section lists ideas tried by other Rotaract clubs and districts which have met with success (although sadly there is no guaranteed sure-fire method that will bring new members flooding through your door). The list is not exhaustive and is intended to show how many ways there are to publicise Rotaract. If you come up with more ideas, please tell us so they can be added to the list.

It is important to track the progress of any publicity campaigns to find out what works and what doesn't; this will help you in the future if you do it again. PR should be constantly reviewed.

Word of mouth

Despite all of the poster campaigns, leaflet drops, adverts, etc, the most successful way of attracting members to Rotaract is by telling them about it. Tell people about the activities they can enjoy, the difference they can make in their local community, the money that they can raise, and most of all the fun that they will have doing it!

Talk to everyone you know, ask them if they have children, grandchildren, friends, neighbours etc, who are aged 18–30. Ensure that they are aware of Rotaract and its many qualities. RIBI sells credit card-sized “What is Rotaract?” cards that can easily be carried in wallets and given out to back the message up and provide contact details for the nearest Rotaract club.

Don't forget all those young people whose lives have been “touched by Rotary”:

- RYLA (Rotary Youth Leadership Awards) candidates
- GSE (Group Study Exchange) candidates
- Ambassadorial Scholars
- Peace Scholars
- Interactors
- Youth Exchange candidates
- Anyone your sponsoring Rotary club(s) has given money to
- Schools/colleges that have taken part in any of Rotary's youth activities programmes (target the school leavers who are coming up to 18, and remember that they have older brothers and sisters)

Ask Rotary for help to get contact details or if you can give a presentation to these people at their next meeting or event. RGBI have a ready made PowerPoint Presentation you can use (contact the RGBI Chairman).

Volunteering

If you're reading this in 2005 in the UK, then remember that this year is the government's year of the volunteer and there is a big push on volunteering. You can advertise Rotaract and your activities through websites such as do-it.org. Bournemouth Rotaract Club found volunteers to help at a fund raising event through Bournemouth University's volunteering portal, The Hub. Five of the volunteers who helped at the event went on to become members of the club at the next meeting.

If you do advertise on such websites, use your www.rotaract.org.uk/anytown website and e-mail address as this avoids links becoming out of date. (Even if your club closes, e-mail sent to this address will still get to RGBI, and visitors to a closed website with this address will be taken to the RGBI website.)

Websites

Any Rotaract club that strives to be successful should have a website of some sort, be it a one-page poster, or a full blown interactive service. See Sections 3.5 and 8.3 for more details.

There are various community websites designed to connect people who are either planning to move, or have just arrived in the city, and need help getting started with accommodation, employment and social opportunities. One these is gumtree.com, which has sites for the following cities (at the time of going to press):

- | | | |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| ▪ London | ▪ Guildford | ▪ Edinburgh |
| ▪ Birmingham | ▪ Manchester | ▪ Cardiff |
| ▪ Brighton | ▪ Reading | ▪ Dublin |
| ▪ Bristol | ▪ Glasgow | |

Posters in public places

Posters catch the eye of many people. There are, however, certain things to remember such as current contact names and numbers on posters (see Section 4.2).

Consider placing posters in the following areas:

- Leisure centres and gyms
- Dentists/doctors/medical centres
- Libraries
- Community centres and village halls
- Universities
- Takeaways
- Sixth forms and colleges
- Shops and supermarkets
- Adult education centres
- Places of worship
- Driving schools
- Rotaractors', members of Inner Wheel and Rotarians' workplaces

Flyers/leaflets

These can work, when used in the correct environment, but the rate of return is usually low.

- Delivering door-to-door will probably result in a lot of wastage, as it is always hit and miss as to whether or not the area selected is of the appropriate age range. Consider targeting new estates for those people new to the area. To give an idea of the rate of return, a door-to-door delivery of 10,000 leaflets in Chippenham in October 2004 has had a response rate of four
- Pay for insertion in local free paper
- Hand out at rush hour in commuter town rail/bus stations
- Leave in various waiting rooms (doctors/dentists etc)
- Use in direct targeting campaigns as mentioned above (writing to individuals)
- Use at events that you are part of, e.g. large Rotary club events that attract thousands of members of the public
- Give to Rotarians to hand out at their workplaces or to their neighbours

Local newspapers and radio

A good source of free advertising for your new Rotaract club. Hopefully the local press and radio stations will willingly run a piece about the formation of a new club as it is good, interesting news. For advice on writing press releases, see Section 8.1. Local press could also be invited along to the interest meeting to find out more. One of the members recently recruited to a new Rotaract club was the local newspaper reporter who came along to cover the club's interest evening!

Get your club listed in as many free publications as possible, they are out there and people do read them.

You can also pay to advertise, but try for reduced rates by highlighting the various causes that the club stands for. If a publication covers a wider area of several Rotaract clubs/districts, why not combine and each pay a share.

Local employers

Letters/approach to local employers (see sample letter in Section 8.4) may bring members. Obtain possible names from:

- Directories such as yellow pages and Thomson
- The *D&B Business Register*: this book has 34 volumes which cover GB&I by county or groups of counties. Businesses with more than 5 employees are listed by town, industry and alphabetically. The D&B website (www.dnb.co.uk/uk/) contains a business directory listing names and addresses if you know the name of the business or product and location
- Chambers of commerce/business clubs.

Try banks, schools, supermarkets, larger shops, council offices, insurance companies and hospitals.

Write to individuals

Write directly to local individuals within the Rotaract age range. Use the electoral role as a source (although recent legislation changes mean people may now choose not to appear on the electoral role that is available to the public, so it is no longer a full listing of voters), or alternatively many web-based market research companies will sell lists of people within an area that meet certain criteria, thus enabling targeted mailing. A sample letter is available on the RGBI website (see Section 8.4).

Other ideas

There are so many good ideas out there, here are some of the others that have been suggested:

- Link with like-minded organisations to position Rotaract in the minds of their members (e.g. scouts, guides, cadets, Timebank, etc)
- Business cards – easy to hand out, leave on shop counters
- Coasters – as beer mats in pubs or coffee mats in the office
- PowerPoint presentations or screensavers that run continuously in the window of a shop selling PCs (RGBI has a general freestanding presentation that can be adapted for club and district use)
- Postcards (send to groups/individuals or use to advertise in shop windows)
- Display boards in leisure centres, libraries, empty shop windows, sixth forms, colleges and universities
- Bookmarks – ask libraries and book shops to distribute
- Presentations to interested groups such as venture scouts, ranger guides, students, junior chambers of commerce (RGBI has a general freestanding presentation that can be adapted for club and district use)
- Intranet/message boards at Rotaractors' and Rotarians' work places
- 'Welcome packs' to the area to be given out by employers and estate/letting agents
- Adverts on buses
- Sponsor a roundabout
- Rotaract leaflets specifically tailored to youths involved in Rotary projects: RYLA, GSE, Youth Exchange, Interact, Youth Speaks/Makes Music/Chef
- Banners
- Contact personal adverts from people saying they're looking for friends

4.2 Publicity materials and contact details

There is nothing worse than losing a potential member because contact details on publicity materials have changed.

Many clubs and districts have purchased mobile phones that are looked after by the Membership & Publicity Officer. This means that all publicity materials contain one number and do not become outdated every year as the phone can be given to the next Membership & Publicity Officer at the start of the new year.

To assist you in continuity of information, and to make printing of publicity materials easier, every fully chartered RGBI club in good standing is entitled to use the RGBI redirection service.

Website redirection: If your club has a website, we can set up a redirection from rotaract.org.uk, where the URL will look like <http://www.rotaract.org.uk/anytown...where> anytown is the name of your club.

E-mail redirection: Similarly each club qualifies for e-mail redirection from rotaract.org.uk, where the e-mail address will look like anytown@rotaract.org.uk...where anytown is the name of your club. When e-mail arrives at this address, it is automatically forwarded on to an address of your choice.

Contact the RGBI Internet Officer via www.rotaract.org.uk to set these redirections up or amend them.

4.3 Publicity materials available from RGBI

RGBI can supply publicity materials for the cost of just postage and packing. These include posters, leaflets and pens with the Rotaract name and contact details printed, and PowerPoint presentations.

To obtain these, please contact the RGBI Publicity Officer (details on the RGBI website), providing details such as how you intend to use the material. Please report back afterwards as to the success or not of your distribution method.

5 Planning to kickstart your Rotaract club

If membership falls to scarily low levels – two or three active members – your club probably needs to discuss a make-or-break plan of action. Set a deadline – usually six months – to make a concerted effort to kickstart the club or terminate it. All members need to agree to give it their best shot, and you should seek extra help from Rotary and Rotaract sources (see Section 6).

Kickstarting your Rotaract club will be a collective effort, requiring the talent of many people to ensure success. Using the diverse skills of your existing Rotaractors, and sponsoring Rotarians, and your contacts throughout your community (think of all the charities and organisations you have come into contact with over the past few years), you should be able to identify a core of potential new members within a matter of weeks, bring them together, show them the benefits of belonging to Rotaract, and set them on their way as Rotaractors in your club.

It is important to set realistic goals and action points that have “owners” and deadlines. This gives you all something to work towards in manageable chunks.

5.1 A simple five-point action plan

A basic five-point plan is:

1. Combine the events diaries of surrounding clubs to make your club diary.
2. Get your club website up to date.
3. Get posters and leaflets out in the public eye (see Section 4.1).
4. Send letters out to local schools, dentists, doctors, employers, etc.
5. Release a press article about the club and an upcoming event – invite the public along.

This is expanded in much more detail in the next section.

5.2 A more detailed action plan

The Rotaract club action plan described below is a combination of suggestions. It is briefly listed in the table below, and then expanded on subsequent pages. We suggest you avoid using the term 'relaunch' as this suggests failure in the first place; keep all language positive, upbeat, and looking forward to the future.

ROTARACT CLUB ACTION PLAN

What?	Who?	By when?
Existing members should meet and vote to support the effort to kickstart the club (remember to invite your sponsoring Rotary club(s))		
Inform and involve your sponsoring Rotary club(s)		
Review progress weekly		
Involve your Rotaract district team at an early stage and gain support of neighbouring Rotaract clubs		
Visit local non-sponsoring Rotary clubs and ask what they can do to help		
Review your club's current operations		
Plan a 'big bang' event		
Establish marketing tools and where they will be used		
Organise the fundamentals of the event		
Maintain Rotary support and interest		
Plan to maintain the interest of the new members you will attract		
Hold a great club social to motivate your existing members		
Spend the last week giving one last push to promote the event		
Hold the event		
Follow up with those who attended or showed interest		

- Existing members should meet and vote to support the effort to kickstart the club.
Ensure commitment from all current members. Emphasis should be placed on the need for ALL club members to be integrally involved in kickstarting the club. If the commitment and willingness aren't there, you may need to think again about whether you want to do this. Ask your sponsoring Rotary club to join you and get them to agree to help out too.
- Inform and involve your sponsoring Rotary club(s).
Establish their commitment to support you. How many new members will they find? What contacts do they have, what doors can they open?...if they are vague, identify specific tasks and ask if they can do these.
- Review progress with the action plan on a weekly basis – it's pointless having one if it's not going to be used!
- Involve your Rotaract district team at an early stage and gain support of neighbouring Rotaract clubs.
Your Rotaract district team (if you have one) and neighbouring Rotaract clubs should be willing to help and provide advice and manpower to help you. Neighbouring Rotaract clubs may initially perceive your plans as a threat to their own membership, so make sure you visit them and assure them that's not the case (see Section 6.3). Work as a team and use their ideas to help you.
- Visit local non-sponsoring Rotary clubs and ask what they can do to help.
There are probably a number of Rotary clubs in your local area which are not actively involved in Rotaract. But that doesn't stop them being an excellent source of support, ideas, and contacts for new members (see Section 8.1). It is polite to advise your

sponsoring Rotary club(s) if you do make contact with other clubs, and to reassure them that they will not be superseded in your affections! Put together a “Who What Why When Where” (W5) pack to be distributed to every Rotarian in your town and surrounding area – for them to take to their workplace and display prominently.

6. Review your club’s current operations – see Section 3.

7. Plan a ‘big bang’ event.

Consider holding a ‘big bang’ event to recruit a mass of new members in one go. This can be a social event such as ten-pin bowling, or an evening in a local pub which includes a short presentation on Rotaract. List some ideas and carry out a pro and con analysis to decide what best suits your club and the area you live in. Choose the event’s venue with care: look at suitability, accessibility and its image amongst young people.

To counter the ‘Oh but I can’t make this coming Tuesday’ reaction, you could hold an event on every evening of a week and both days at the weekend. Obviously this requires a considerable time investment by all members, but the results can make it worthwhile, and everyone’s had a great time doing it!

Anytown Rotaract Club

Sunday: 2pm in Ringtown. Help us win the treasure in a Rotaract car treasure hunt
 Sunday: 8pm. Why not test your knowledge with a quiz at the Wig & Quill?
 Monday: 8pm at the Leisure Centre. Join in the sporting action with a game of badminton
 Tuesday: 8pm. Try out your bowling skills at Strikers
 Wednesday: 7pm. Paint your own piece of pottery at the Splash of Colour Café, then join us for a drink at Chicago Rock
 Thursday: 8pm. Come and join in one of our meetings at The Red Lion Hotel
 Friday: 7pm. Want to be scared? Join our ghost walk in Anytown town centre. Meet on the Guildhall Steps
 Saturday: 7pm. Fancy yourself as a wine connoisseur? Then our wine tasting evening at The Red Lion Hotel is for you

8. Establish marketing tools and where they will be used.

- What marketing tools can you use for your event? As well as the conventional posters, flyers and press releases, take a look at the list in Section 4.1.
- Establish a full list of places and possibilities where you can use the marketing tools – where and how?
- Allocate responsibilities to your members and Rotarians for the marketing and promotion of the event.
- How can you include like-minded organisations from within the local area? Think of all the organisations, charities and groups that you have come into contact with over the years. Even if the people you’ve met might not be of Rotaract age, they will know people who are. Allocate responsibility to invite them.

9. Allocate responsibilities for organising the fundamentals of the event.

These require different skills to promoting the event, so all can contribute.

10. Maintain Rotary support and interest.

This applies to your own sponsoring Rotary club(s) and the other local clubs you may have contacted for help. Ensure that you follow up on commitment from them, and demonstrate your enthusiasm for success. You could hold a joint event or attend their meetings.

11. Plan to maintain the interest of the new members you will attract.
 - Allocate someone to plan a diary of events to follow your initial event to keep the interest of new members. Make the programme busy and varied, with something for everyone. Use your neighbouring clubs' event diaries to help create yours.
 - It is easier to entice new members along when you can not only show them what we are doing but give them something they can get involved with quickly. Neither community projects nor social activities need to be big events – even going 10-pin bowling together or going out for dinner is fine. A quiz night is a good example of a successful event that requires minimal organisation. And you would be amazed at what clubs of a few members have achieved overseas – if you put your minds to it, you can carry out amazing projects.
 - Activities and projects should not be postponed or cancelled unless absolutely necessary as this is demoralising for all and suggests failure without even trying.
 - Endeavour to select events and projects that the whole club is enthusiastic about, and that at least 60% are committed to attending. And above all, all activities should be FUN!
 - Liaise closely with Rotary and neighbouring Rotary clubs, notifying them of your events as early as possible to try to minimise events clashing. Remember to be proactive in reminding them about events and encouraging them to support you.
 - Choose community projects carefully, so that you enjoy them and feel that you have made a difference. Although it can be an easy way out, consider avoiding “volunteering” for other organisations and being used as a slave labour force; instead, select a small number of projects that are yours to work on. If this does involve working with other organisations, it should be an equal partnership, and acknowledged as such.
 - Select some causes that you are passionate about. What do you as a club want to stand for?
12. During the week running up to the event hold a great club social to motivate your current members so that they're ready to attend and enthuse visitors.
13. Spend the last week giving one last push to promote the event, for example try to get on local radio and in the newspapers.
14. Hold the event
Have an entry list of visitors' details and find out what marketing activity or tool worked best.
15. Follow up those who attended or showed interest. They made the effort so do not let them down!

If you've reached this point, well done! But don't rest on your laurels just yet...remember that the 'new' Rotaract club that emerges from this kickstart process will be significantly different to the existing club in many ways. New members come to Rotaract without preconceived ideas. Existing members should be careful to avoid dampening the enthusiasm of new members, for example by telling stories of the 'glory days' of Rotaract compared with what they perceive now. Move forward with your new members' enthusiasm.

Also, please spread the word of your success to Rotaractors in other clubs and districts. Why not come along to the annual RGBI conference and give a presentation explaining how you did it?

6 Who can you ask for help?

6.1 Rotary and the Rotary family

Sponsoring Rotary club(s)

Your sponsoring Rotary club(s) is there to help you. Your primary contact is probably the club's Rotaract Officer or President. But remember that sponsorship of a Rotaract club means the continued personal and active support of all Rotarians from the sponsoring club – not just the club's Rotaract Officer. The club's committees which might be able help, in particular the youth activities committee may be able to provide you with prospective members' names from the participants in their projects.

RIBI produces 'Rotary and Rotaract Care & Counselling' and 'Rotary and Rotaract: Partners in Service' information sheets, giving advice on the sponsoring Rotary club's responsibilities, what it can do to help Rotaract, and thoughts on 'life after Rotaract'. These are available from the RIBI Secretariat or the information sheet section of www.ribi-rotary.org.

Neighbouring clubs in the Rotary family

In GB&I, about one in ten Rotary clubs sponsors a Rotaract club, so there are probably quite a few Rotary clubs in your local area which are not actively involved in Rotaract. But that doesn't stop them being an excellent source of support, ideas, and contacts for new members. Ask if you can attend a meeting to give a presentation on Rotaract and your club's plans for the future. You can find out more about Rotary clubs in your area by asking your sponsoring club(s) or your District Rotaract Officer.

It is polite to advise your sponsoring club(s) if you do make contact with other clubs, and to reassure them that they will not be superseded in your affections! Once your recruitment drive has been successful, perhaps you can encourage and help neighbouring Rotary clubs to set up their own Rotaract clubs.

Remember too that there are Inner Wheel and maybe Interact clubs nearby who you could ask for help. Ask your District Rotaract Officer for a directory or contact details for these clubs.

6.2 Rotaract district team

Not all districts in RGBI have a district exec team to support Rotaract clubs in the district; maybe you have only a District Chairman, or perhaps you manage district affairs between the club(s). If you have a district exec team, they should be able to help advise you and provide support (e.g. ask them to help with your 'big bang' event). Unless you tell them, they might not know that your club is struggling, or about your plans to kickstart the club.

District Chairmen could also consider holding regular meetings with a membership focus for clubs. These could be held as well as district meetings; some districts hold such meetings every two months. Attended by Presidents and Membership & Publicity Officers, the meetings are used to share ideas and support each other.

6.3 Neighbouring Rotaract clubs

It is a false perception in Rotaract that neighbouring clubs are competing for members. Let's face it, with only 110 or so clubs in RGBI, and around 1300 members, there are more than enough potential members out there to go round!

If your neighbouring clubs are thriving, ask if you can hold some joint events and spend some time with their members. Try and discover what's working for them. And remember that Rotaract district boundaries artificially separate clubs, and you should not forget that your nearest clubs may well be in another district – use this as an opportunity to get to know them.

Once you have decided to kickstart your club, it is important that you visit your neighbouring club(s) to tell them about your plans. Reassure them that you are not competing for members with them. In fact, your recruitment drive is likely to benefit them, because you are raising awareness of Rotaract in your area which may well be carried into their area by people who work in one and live in the other. The major factor that influences someone interested in joining Rotaract is often the club's meeting night. Someone who might not be able to make your meeting night may well find a neighbouring club's meeting night more convenient, and vice versa. Alternatively, maybe you and your neighbouring club(s) could get together and jointly kickstart your clubs.

6.4 RGBI team

RGBI has an exec team which is here to provide support and advice. If you lack a district exec team, or think you could do with some extra advice, don't hesitate to contact us. The Rotaractors on the RGBI exec team have a number of years of Rotaract experience under their belts, and are in touch with what's going on around RGBI and further afield. Contact details are available on the RGBI website (www.rotaract.org.uk).

7 Beyond kickstart: running your club for future success

7.1 Jargon (what does it all mean?)

Club meetings

Meetings vary from club to club, but most meetings take the following form: in the first half the president asks for reports from each club council member to establish the club's future activities. This will include future social, community and professional development events and any other business. The second half may be a speaker, project planning or simply a drink at the bar.

Club council

These are members of the club who have volunteered to be responsible for co-ordinating a certain element of Rotaract (e.g. social, community, professional development). They are voted in by the club in March/April each year for the year 1 July to 30 June. The council may meet prior to each club meeting or at other times to discuss the club activity in detail. This is not a closed shop, but enables the club meetings to remain as brief as possible. (See later descriptions of each position on club council.)

Sub-committees

Some larger clubs have sub-committees, made up of the remaining members of the club to give support to the club council members. This provides everyone with the opportunity to be involved.

Subscriptions

These are paid by each member of the club on an annual basis to cover the administration of operating the club. In GB&I, subscriptions tend to be £15–30 a year. Club subscriptions are then paid to districts (to cover administration of the district) and district subscriptions paid to RGBI (again, to cover administration, e.g. website hosting, expenses)

District

This is a designated area that includes several clubs. Rotaract in Great Britain & Ireland (RGBI) is made up of 29 districts.

District exec team

This is made up of Rotaractors who fulfil the same role as the club council but at a district level. It is chaired by the Rotaract District Chairman. The District Rotaract Officer (Rotarian) is also part of this team, as well as sitting on his/her Rotary Membership Services Committee.

District meetings

Most districts hold a bi-monthly or quarterly meeting. This is similar to a club meeting but for all members of the district or the club presidents, and a chance for everyone to meet.

Conferences (district or RGBI)

An opportunity to pull everything about Rotaract together. Usually takes the form of a long weekend. A fantastic opportunity to find out all about Rotaract in one weekend, with a selection of speakers, business sessions, professional development activities, entertainment and gala dinner. A weekend not to be missed.

Rotary family

This is a term used to unite all the organisations involved within Rotary International. They include Rotaract, Rotary, Interact (14–18 years), and Inner Wheel (female relatives of Rotarians and female ex-Rotaractors).

Club regalia (gongs!)

A piece of jewellery that is worn by the President/Vice President and usually includes the Rotaract logo. The President's regalia will include name bars of all the past club presidents, and thus regalia are the history of each club.

Trust/trustees

Sometimes reference is made to the above if the club has registered as a charity.

Club charter

This is awarded to each new club and is confirmation that the club is part of Rotary International.

'Sponsoring' Rotary club(s)

This is the Rotary club or clubs that have helped to form the charter of the Rotaract club and are responsible for overseeing the Rotaract club's activities. Sponsorship of a Rotaract club means the continued personal and active support of all Rotarians from the sponsoring club – not just the club's Rotaract Officer. A Rotarian should attend at least one Rotaract meeting a month (this could be by rota rather than the Rotaract Officer being the only Rotarian to ever attend). The sponsoring Rotary club receives minutes of all Rotaract club meetings.

Sponsoring Rotary clubs should consider inviting the Rotaract President to club council meetings to facilitate communications between the two clubs.

Sponsorship of a Rotaract club does not involve any ongoing financial obligation beyond start-up costs. Contacts are far more useful – e.g. for cheap/free meeting venues, or good deals for fund raising events.

Rotarians should help bring new members to Rotaract – all the young people aged 18–30 who they come into contact with. Sometimes Rotaractors are so involved in having a good time that they forget to recruit new people to replace them when their time comes to leave. The sponsoring Rotary club can play an important part in reminding Rotaractors that the club is not theirs forever – they have a duty to find new members to pass it on to.

Club council positions – what are they and what do they do?

President

Runs the club for a period of a year from 1 July to 30 June and ensures that the club council members are working to achieve their aims for the benefit of the club and its members. They coordinate the club's activities. The President should stimulate teamwork, good communication, enthusiasm and motivation, to encourage members to participate and further their own personal development, help the local community, and have FUN!

Vice President

Plays a supportive role to the President. This position is generally regarded as a valuable opportunity for someone to 'learn the ropes', prior to becoming President the following year.

Treasurer

Keeps a close check on the club accounts and ensures accounting practices are adhered to. Account balances are provided on a regular basis. They will also look after the income and expenditure that relate to any event, and will probably be responsible for getting floats. Each year the club accounts must be audited by a chartered accountant. (Tip – ask within your Rotaract and sponsoring Rotary club(s) if they have a chartered accountant amongst their members.)

Secretary

Plays a fundamental role in recording the club's activity and all decisions made in order to create minutes of each meeting. A copy of the minutes must go to the sponsoring Rotary club(s).

Community Officer

This club member organises the club's involvement with the community and is often responsible for the club's fund raising activities. This may involve organising the club to do some gardening, attendance at a car boot sale, organising an OAPs Christmas dinner or motivating the club to do a sponsored walk.

Sports & Social Officer

Co-ordinator of the club's entertainment diary, whether this is within the club or across the district. The list of social events is endless and varied: from meals out to quiz nights and barn dances, not to mention mountaineering and walking, to cinema trips and theatre visits. Not forgetting pub nights and day trips, scuba diving and go karting.

Professional Development/Vocational Officer

Principally the role focuses on our individual development and provides plenty of scope for interesting and thought-provoking events to be arranged. They are also responsible for finding speakers for club meetings on subjects of interest to club members.

International Officer

As an international organisation it is essential that someone provides the club with a broader look at our environment and the world in which we live. Whilst we strive to establish links abroad, this role provides the opportunity to co-ordinate the club's involvement with international projects.

Membership & Publicity Officer

Responsibilities involve the way in which the club communicates with you, or a target audience, and how effective the club is at attracting new members to join. This has become one of the most important roles in a Rotaract club. The role may include responsibility for producing various promotional literature, maintaining the club website or making a display board. They may also be responsible for getting the club local media publicity.

Rotaract Officer

Rotarians from the sponsoring Rotary club(s). Rotaract Officers are the main point of liaison between the Rotaract club and sponsoring Rotary club(s) and attend Rotaract meetings. RI requirements are one meeting per month but RGBI considers it good practice to have one or more Rotarians present at every meeting; this doesn't have to be the Rotaract Officer(s) as it could be done on a rota, allowing all Rotarians in the club to have the opportunity to visit Rotaract. It is essential to establish close links between Rotaract and Rotary clubs.

7.2 Membership ceremonies

Most Rotaract clubs have a requirement to be fulfilled before a visitor can become a member. For some it is attendance at a couple of meetings, a social event and a community event. Others ask visitors to apply for membership and it is discussed and approved or rejected by the club council.

Whatever a club decides, it is nice to make a 'ceremony' of making a new member, rather than just saying 'you're in'. You could, for example, present them with a certificate (an example is given on the RGBI website (see Section 8.4) and a Rotaract pin.

Asking new members to complete an application form is a good idea. This helps the club to collect data on how the person heard about Rotaract, and can also be used to help track down former members for the club's future big anniversaries.

Each time a new member joins, the club members should be issued with an updated member list containing members' addresses, telephone numbers, e-mail addresses and birthdays.

7.3 Data protection

The Data Protection Act 1998 and the Data Protection Acts 1998 and 2003 set out data protection responsibilities in the UK and Ireland, respectively. Under these Acts, organisations that process personal data (i.e. obtain, record, hold or carry out operations upon data which relate to a living individual who can be identified by that data) must comply with certain provisions, including registering as a Data Controller with the Information Commissioner (UK) or Data Protection Commissioner (Ireland) in certain cases.

7.3.1 Data protection and Rotaract in the United Kingdom

RGBI has established that it does not need to notify [register] as a Data Controller with the Information Commissioner in the UK under the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 as it is exempt as a not-for-profit organisation. This exemption applies if:

Your processing is only:

- For the purposes of establishing or maintaining membership or support for a body or association not established or conducted for profit, or providing or administering activities for individuals who are either members of the body or association or have regular contact with it.

Your data subjects are restricted to:

- Any person the processing of whose personal data is necessary for this exempt purpose (examples are: past, existing or prospective members or those who have regular contact with the organisation).

Your data classes are restricted to:

- Data which are necessary for this exempt purpose (examples are: names, addresses, identifiers or eligibility for membership).

Your disclosures other than those made with the consent of the data subjects are restricted to:

- Those third parties which are necessary for this exempt purpose.

Retention of the data:

- The personal data are not kept after the relationship between you and the data subject ends, unless and for so long as it is necessary to do so for the exempt purpose.

All Rotaract districts in GB&I and all Rotaract clubs in the UK are legal entities and therefore must establish for themselves if they need to register as a Data Controller under the Act. A self-assessment guide is available in the Data Protection section at www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk.

Even if districts and clubs in the UK do not need to notify as a Data Controller, they, along with RGBI, still need to comply with the eight data protection principles:

Data must be:

1. Fairly and lawfully processed;
2. Processed for limited purposes;
3. Adequate, relevant and not excessive;
4. Accurate;
5. Not kept for longer than is necessary;
6. Processed in line with your rights;
7. Secure; and,
8. Not transferred to countries without adequate protection.

7.3.2 Data protection and Rotaract in the Republic of Ireland

RGBI has established that it does not need to register as a Data Controller with the Data Protection Commissioner in Ireland under the provisions of the Data Protection Acts 1998 and 2003.

District 1160 and Rotaract clubs in the Irish Republic part of D1160 are legal entities and therefore must establish for themselves if they need to register as a Data Controller under the Acts. Looking at the provisions this is unlikely, but the district and clubs should confirm this for themselves (go to www.dataprivacy.ie for more details).

However, RGBI, District 1160 and Rotaract clubs in the Republic of Ireland still have eight legal responsibilities under the Acts, as follows:

You must:

1. Obtain and process the information fairly.
2. Keep it only for one or more specified and lawful purposes.
3. Process it only in ways compatible with the purposes for which it was given to you initially.
4. Keep it safe and secure.
5. Keep it accurate and up-to-date.
6. Ensure that it is adequate, relevant and not excessive.
7. Retain it no longer than is necessary for the specified purpose or purposes.
8. Give a copy of his/her personal data to any individual, on request.

7.4 Insurance

RIBI arranges a public liability insurance policy each year to indemnify Rotary, Rotaract and Interact clubs, their members and helpers in respect of their legal liability for claims made against them for injury to persons or damage to property arising out of their activities. More details of this are available in a booklet called *Insurance and the Rotary Club*, which may be obtained from the RIBI Secretariat (see Section 8.6) for a small charge or via the downloads section of the RIBI website (<http://www.rotary-ribi.org>). There is also a policy covering loss, damage or theft of regalia. Note that there is no personal accident cover.

7.5 Protection of children and vulnerable adults

Legislation and regulations require organisations working with children and vulnerable adults to have a formal protection policy. RGBI is currently (April 2005) working on a policy that will be suitable for Rotaract clubs to adopt. It is recommended that you approach the Rotary District Protection Officer for advice if your new Rotaract club will be working with children and/or vulnerable adults in service projects. Contact details for Rotary District Protection Officers are available from the RIBI Secretariat (see Section 8.6).

7.6 Being part of RGBI

All Rotaract clubs are part of their district, and each of the 29 districts in GB&I is part of the "Multi-District Information Organisation" Rotaract in Great Britain & Ireland. The RGBI Council comprises the District Chairman of the 29 districts together with RGBI Officers (RGBI Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary, etc). The Council meets five times a year and is in regular touch by e-mail so that information is communicated throughout the organisation to benefit all members. The RGBI Guidelines [Constitution] are available via the RGBI website (www.rotaract.org.uk).

RIBI produces a Rotaract Directory of all clubs, which is sent to all Rotaract clubs, District Chairmen, District Rotaract Officers and Rotary District Governors each year. It is very important that clubs return their details each year when asked so that the Directory is up to date. A complete list of all Rotaract clubs is also kept on the RGBI website (www.rotaract.org.uk).

The RGBI website contains a directory of all clubs, news and events, a library of publicity materials and many other features.

RGBI also has a mobile enquiry line (07780 840686/+44 7780 840686 in IRE) which you can put on publicity material for people who want to know about Rotaract outside your area. Enquiries to this number are forwarded on to clubs.

RGBI mailing list

The RGBI mailing list is used for distributing information of interest to Rotaractors across GB&I. Your e-mail address is not revealed to any of the other members of the list unless you send a message, and you are not made susceptible to spam or junk mail by joining the list. Applications to join and messages posted are moderated, and attachments are not allowed to avoid the spread of viruses. You can join this mailing list via the RGBI website.

Acceptable use of the RGBI mailing list

The following terms and conditions of use of the mailing list apply:

1. The list is intended for communication of events, announcements and ideas relating to Rotaract in Great Britain & Ireland. It is legitimate for subscribers to post questions on Rotaract to the list, but responses from other subscribers should be made offline, directly to the person who submitted the question.
2. The list is not to be used for personal campaigns, nor for circulation of jokes, and subscribers are reminded not to submit any abusive emails.
3. The list is open to all Rotaractors in GB&I. Abusers will be removed by the list owner, the RGBI Internet Officer or other nominated persons.
4. All subscribers can change their preferences to Daily Digest or Web Only if they so choose.

Rotaractnet mailing list

Rotaractors interested in international Rotaract matters might be interested in joining the rotaractnet mailing list. This mailing list has over 3000 members in over 80 countries. The list receives up to 25 e-mails a day, so members may prefer to subscribe to the Daily Digest option (sends all messages for that day in a single e-mail). To join this list, go to: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/rotaractnet/>

8 Appendix

8.1 How to write a press release

For any publicity campaign, the media – in all its forms – is your biggest target. It can be your biggest ally but journalists can't make news where no news exists. Nor can you prevent them from covering unwelcome stories or writing negative pieces, although considering Rotaract's public profile we can rarely say that there is such a thing as bad publicity.

Before you write a press release (or telephone a journalist) ask yourself the following questions:

- Is this news?
- Is this a story?
- Why would a journalist be interested?
- Is this a news story in the sense that it says something new, different or controversial?
- Is it an informational piece and of interest as background?
- Is it a feature?
- Is there a famous or infamous person or group involved?
- Is it about children, animals or the elderly?
- Is it about a general mainstream issue or is it about a minority issue which will have popular appeal?

Once you are clear about these questions, you are ready to compose your press release.

Writing a press release

1. When outlining your press release bear the following points in mind:
 - Keep to less than two pages.
 - Keep paragraphs together on the same sheet.
 - Use punchy titles which describe what's in the press release.
 - Always date the press release.
 - Use quotes to give opinions and impressions and always attribute them to a specific person.
 - Only use adjectives such as 'marvellous', 'exciting' and 'fantastic' within a quote.
 - Do not overuse the word 'exclusive' and remember that things are rarely unique.
2. A press release should be:
 - Typed.
 - On Rotaract headed paper.
 - On a single side (unless absolutely necessary).
 - In a 'sensible' font, such as Arial, Times New Roman or Courier.
 - Set with wide margins and large white space between paragraphs.
3. Should you need to use a second page ensure you put:
 - "...more" at the bottom of the first page.
 - "– Ends –" at the end of the release.
 - Page numbers on each sheet.
4. Press releases should:
 - Give details of the 5 Ws: **Who, What, Where, When, Why.**
 - Be clearly written using short sentences and paragraphs.
 - Use easy language.
 - Be concise, specific and factual.
 - Be checked for grammar and spelling mistakes especially any names.

It is not advisable to use jargon or abbreviations in the press release. Should you have no alternative, ensure that the terms are explained to the reader at their first occurrence.

5. Whilst the main body of the press release will tell the story, the provision of additional information can be very helpful to the receiving journalist. Such additional information could include:
 - Details about each subject (position, age).
 - Background information on each subject (telephone number, occupation).
 - Outline address (i.e. regional area where events took place).
 - Rotaract club name.
- Caution:
- Check with your subjects to see if they mind their details being divulged, especially their telephone number.
 - Remind your subjects that there may be a possibility for the press to want an interview.
6. If you are supplying photos in electronic format, check with the newspaper for the requirements e.g. format of files, resolution (usually at least 300 dpi). Avoid photos of cheque presentations; try action shots or shots that show the money being raised rather than simply handed over.
 7. If your press release is inviting the media to an event, ensure that the following details are supplied:
 - The location of the event.
 - The date and time of the event.
 - Whether or not photograph or interview opportunities will be available.
 - Contact number (especially a mobile phone number) by which they could confirm details nearer the time.

Hints and Tips

1. It is advisable to research the following points before inundating the local papers with press releases:
 - The name of the person you need to contact at your local paper (e.g. features editor, community events editor, etc).
 - The type of articles (content, length and layout) that would interest the particular newspaper.
 - The deadlines (dates) by which articles must be received to ensure consideration/publication.
2. If possible, make personal contact with the papers by visiting their offices and introducing yourself and your club.
3. Invite the editor or a representative of the paper to speak at your club.
4. Send an events list press release regularly to your contact at the papers. On a slow news day, they might call you and ask for more information.
5. Always follow up the press release with a courtesy telephone call to the paper.
6. Take your own photographs of the event – especially if a newspaper photographer doesn't show up.
7. Remember, if an article is sent in, it might get printed but if it isn't sent, it definitely won't be!

Example press release

Double Celebration for Tropicannibal Anytown Rotaract Club

Anytown Rotaract Club had a double celebration at Anytown Carnival when members welcomed their new president and the club's float won first prize in the Club section. The float, called *Tropicannibal*, was a lush tropical forest complete with smoking volcano, two hunters boiling in a cauldron, and native carrying shrunken heads on sticks and spears.

Handing over to new president, Joe Smith, outgoing president Nicki Brown said, "I have had an amazing year being president of Anytown Rotaract Club. During the year we've all had loads of fun together, whilst making a difference to our local community through events such as today's carnival. Winning first prize is icing on the cake"

New president Joe said, "We are always looking for new members to join us. Anyone aged 18–29 is welcome to visit us and find out more. Rotaract is open to everyone, and is not associated with any political or religious movement; we're part of Rotary International, one of the largest groups of volunteers in the world. Most people come along without knowing anyone in the club, and you can be sure of a warm welcome."

Anytown Rotaract Club is involved in a huge range of activities, from pub nights and meals out to fund raising events and helping with the local talking newspaper. If you are aged 18–29 and would like to find out more, call Nicki on 07786 100677 or visit www.rotaract.org.uk/anytown

Anytown Rotaract Club would like to thank Anytown Van & Truck Hire, and the Joke Shop in North Town for their support with the *Tropicannibal!* float.

****END****

Pictured are Nicki Brown (left) and Joe Smith on the prize-winning float

For questions concerning this press release contact:

Nicki Brown
Anytown Rotaract Club
5 Big Gardens, Anytown AT11 1AA
Tel 07786 100677
E-mail: anytown@rotaract.org.uk

Lack of news

What should you do if your club has nothing it considers newsworthy? **Remind yourself that simply being in Rotaract is important.**

1. Write an article about the club
 - Where you meet.
 - When you meet.
 - What goes on at meetings.
 - Details about speakers or post-meeting events.
2. Improvise with an article about an event in the past with an updated flavour.
3. Write articles on the activities of each section of the club, e.g. community, social, fundraising, professional development, etc.

If you follow these guidelines, you should be able to compose a press release at least once a fortnight. If you get into a routine, it may only take 5–10 minutes each time.

8.2 Brand statement and uses

Rotaract is an opportunity to...

...be part of a fun, dynamic and unique international organisation for people aged 18–30, offering a wide range of activities that will enable you to try something new, whilst having a great time and meeting others.

Rotaract offers a wide choice of social activities, actively supports your local community, raises money for charity and gives you the opportunity to develop your personal skills and gain new life experiences in Great Britain & Ireland, and abroad.

The above brand statement was developed by RGBI in 2001. There are many misconceptions of Rotaract both internally and externally. It is the aim of the statement to create a vision that can be aimed for and achieved by members; a statement to which personal experiences can be added. It is hoped that use of the statement will aid in establishing a common understanding amongst Rotaractors, and will help to improve awareness and understanding by the public. RGBI asks all members to use this statement as a consistent message of what Rotaract represents for its members and the communities it supports.

Why use this brand statement?

- Provides consistency across RGBI in terms of what Rotaract offers and delivers.
- Provides a clear sense of who/what Rotaract is, what Rotaract does and how Rotaractors go about doing it.
- Builds a greater awareness of Rotaract, that makes it a choice out of other organisations for membership and as a community partner.
- Reinforces the sense of added value from being a member – both emotional (feel good factor) and tangible (physical, skill/life development) benefits.
- Creates positive associations with the organisation without knowing too much.
- Nurtures loyalty, so relationships in our communities flourish.
- Encourages members to think of the bigger picture and drives innovative improvements that meet the changing demands/needs of our communities.
- As RGBI (districts or clubs) has limited resources, marketing and expenditure should be focused on effectiveness in terms of cost and consistency. A repeated message in neighbouring towns is far better than individual non-associated mixed messages.

The brand identity is the way in which an organisation is presented. This means having a clear logo, meaningful strap line, a package and a promotional activity that identifies a strong brand. Rotaract has an effective logo and using an overall message in the form of the brand statement 'Rotaract is an opportunity to...' (whether continued with the rest of the statement or on its own) ensures that people know what we represent.

Use of this brand statement is gradually making a greater impact.

Emblem/logo

Over the past few years, a few non-standard logos have appeared. The preferred formats are:



Flat logo (preferably in red)
– for all printed literature



Red 3D logo
– IT promotions e.g. websites,
screensavers

Further specifications of the Rotaract emblem can be found in the *Rotaract Handbook*. The licensed suppliers of Rotaract emblem merchandise are AW Matthews and Toye, Kenning & Spencer Ltd.

8.3 Website and e-mailing list guidance

For more information, contact the RGBI Internet Officer (internet@rotaract.org.uk).

8.3.1 Guidelines for club websites

Why have a club website?

- Membership, membership, membership!

Register a web domain

- Register a web domain for your club. This can cost as little as £16 per year, a small price to pay for a great PR tool (e.g. www.supanames.co.uk for web domain and hosting space)
- UK domains are cheapest, we would advise www.clubname-rotaract.org.uk (e.g. www.bagshot-rotaract.org.uk if there was such a club). This will also give you personalised e-mail addresses.
- If you really can't afford to register a domain, another option is to register a club e-mail address on a web account, e.g. clubname-rotaract@yahoo.com. This is still preferable to fred.bloggs@bloggs36.fsnet.co.uk which is not easy to remember

Essential content for your website!

- A brief paragraph or two saying what Rotaract is
- An obvious title at the top of the page giving the name of the club
- Club meeting details
- A map of your venue, or a postcode and link to a map website is especially important for people who have just moved to the area. If your venue is especially hard to find and tucked away in a corner, include useful directions.
- A method of contacting the club, either e-mail, or via a feedback form
- Links to the following:
 - The district website, if there is one
 - All other Rotaract club sites in the same district
 - The RGBI website at <http://www.rotaract.org.uk/>
 - Links to local Rotary, Inner Wheel and Interact club and district websites
 - Links to local town information websites, as this makes it more likely they'll link back
- Make sure your club website is linked from as many local sites as possible, e.g. council sites, other town sites. Type your town name into Google and get listed on the sites which are in the top 10. Ask for links to your club's website from other useful/relevant/interesting websites, and use keywords that will direct surfing traffic to the website.

Other recommended website content

- Photos of club events, preferably with write-ups
- Information on the type of events Rotaract does
- A diary that updates automatically

Do not!

- Don't have content on your website which can date (e.g. diary) unless you update it regularly
- Don't steal content, graphics or photos from other sites without asking
- Don't post photos of your members on the web without their permission
- Avoid mug shots of your members – do you want to put people off?
- Don't make your website too cluttered: a pleasing appearance makes a good impression on the casual surfer
- Don't list your members' names – it invades privacy and if your club is small it looks rubbish
- Don't publish personal information or e-mail addresses of your members
- Don't say things like "Rotaract is losing members". Only say good things!

8.3.2 Guidelines for Rotaract mailing lists (RGI, district, club)

Why have a mailing list?

- To improve communication between your members
- To improve and aid the publicity of forthcoming events
- So that only those people who want to be included are included, i.e. if someone leaves Rotaract, they can leave the list and not get unwanted e-mail messages
- Good for when a new member joins (if a list of addresses is relied upon, these people will typically be left out)

What mailing lists should be used for

- Publicising forthcoming events and meetings
- News announcements from the exec/council
- Requesting information from members
- Keep your list membership restricted to your district (for a district mailing list) or your club (for a club mailing list)
- Place instructions to join on your website. Set the list properties so that you approve all applications

What mailing lists should not be used for

- Junk mail, jokes
- Virus warnings
- Debate or opinions
- Profanity, slander or obscenities

Generally, you should ensure that messages sent to your mailing list are relevant, and that the quantity is no higher than 1–2 messages per day, otherwise people will start resigning from the list due to the amount of 'junk' being sent to it.

Mailing list providers

Yahoo Groups – <http://groups.yahoo.com/> (note that you cannot send a yahoo group e-mail to another yahoo group, e.g. if you sign your club yahoo group e-mail address to the RGI yahoo group, e-mails will not get through)

8.4 Sample letters and forms

The following sample letters and forms are available on the RGBI website, in the Resources section. These are Word documents that can be tailored to meet your club's requirements:

- Sample letter to potential member
- Sample letter to employers of potential members
- Rotaract needs new members form (that Rotarians etc can give out)
- Rotaract Friendship Form – a double-sided form designed for people who are moving and would like to be put in touch with a Rotaract club near their new home)
- New member certificate

8.5 Downloads available on RI and RGBI websites

Rotary Insite website

(www.rotary.org/newsroom/downloadcenter/programs/rotaract.html)

- Guide for District Rotaract Leaders
- Rotaract Presidential Citation
- *Rotaract Handbook*
- Rotaract Statement of Policy (contained in *Rotaract Handbook*)
- Rotaract Constitution and Byelaws (contained in *Rotaract Handbook*)
- Rotaract Brochure (a three-fold leaflet about Rotaract)
- Rotaract Club Organisation List (contained in *Rotaract Handbook*)
- Rotaract Outstanding Projects Recognition Form
- World Rotaract Week Celebration Recognition Entry Form
- Rotaract contact information update form
- District Rotaract Representative Form
- Rotaract Public Relations Kit
- Rotaract Advert Kit
- Rotaract Sample Flyer (a two-sided information sheet about Rotaract)
- Rotaract PowerPoint Presentation
- Photos of various Rotaract activities
- Cyber Rotaract clubs pilot project – various forms/plans

Rotaract and Rotary graphics in various formats are available for download from www.rotary.org/newsroom/downloadcenter/graphics/index.html

Rotaract in Great Britain & Ireland website (www.rotaract.org.uk)

This website has an area for downloadable materials. This is regularly updated and includes:

- Publicity materials
- Extension Manual
- This Kickstart your Rotaract Club guide
- Sample letters and forms (see Section 8.4)
- RGBI Constitution
- RGBI Conference Procedures
- Information on Data Protection
- Frequently Asked Questions about Rotaract, for Rotarians

8.6 Contact details for the RIBI Secretariat

Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland

Kinwarton Road

Alcester

Warks B49 6PB

Tel: 01789 765411; E-mail: secretary@ribi.org; Website: www.rotary-ribi.org