WEEKLY RECAP | THU 29 OCT 2026

GoldenWagon



Remember Why You Joined:

Rekindling the Rotary Fire from Within

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The UK Stores Initiative

Takes Off in Colour, Splendor & Success!



A first edition that filled the room, lifted the glasses and lit the way for the children of Naguru Remand Home



It started with one month of preparation and a bold idea. By the evening of Friday, 23 October 2026, the Fairway Hotel was alive with colour: stalls glowing with creativity, cocktails clinking, cameras rolling and a room full of Rotarians and friends of Rotary doing what we do best, which is coming together for a cause. The inaugural **UK Stores: Shop & Sip** was a celebration. But it was also something much bigger: the first step toward operationalizing the Virtual Courts at the Naguru Remand Home.

The evening's collections schedule recorded UGX 5.6 million. Then came the auction, led with great flair by PDG Ken Mugisha, which raised a further UGX 13 million for the Naguru Remand Home, bringing the evening's combined total to UGX 18.6 million. To everyone who raised a paddle, bid generously and cheered a rival bidder on, thank you. You turned an exciting auction into real hope.

For a first-time event, that is a remarkable start. It is the foundation on which the Virtual Courts at our signature Naguru Remand Home project will be anchored.

For children and young people on remand, time matters. Every delay in having a case heard is time away from family, school and a fresh start. Virtual courts bring the courtroom to the Remand Home through technology, so that hearings can move more smoothly and young people are not left waiting. It is justice made more accessible, and it is a natural home for Rotary's "Service Above Self."

This is also consistent with the work our Club has already championed for young people, giving them a second chance and a pathway to renewal. UK Stores has now given that work a powerful new engine: a fun, repeatable, community-powered way to raise the funds that turn plans into action.

The business showcase brought together the best of our Rotary circles and beyond, and it showed. Vendors brought variety, creativity and energy, and shoppers discovered talents they did not know were so close to home.

We were honoured to welcome DG Gerald Obai, our Chief Shopper, alongside DGE Jane Kabugo, PDG Stephen Mwanje and IPDG Geofrey Kitakule, whose GK Foods also took a stall as a vendor.

NBS Television walked the floor stall by stall, giving every vendor a live moment in the television spotlight. Every business got its moment, and the exposure will keep working long after the cameras left.

The raffle added its own sparkle: President Wella of the Rotaract Club of Upper Kololo walked away with a handmade bracelet of pure crocodile leather from Equator Crocs. And when the shopping eased up, the renowned Upper Kololo *Kimeza* took over. The after-party filled the dance floor and the networking carried on well into the night. Nobody was in a hurry to leave!

Our deepest thanks go to Fairway Hotel for the venue and for sponsoring the sipping experience with over 50% off cocktails. You truly put the "Sip" into Shop & Sip.

We also warmly thank our sponsors and partners: **Rotary District 9213, the Rotary Club of Najjera, NBS, MTN TV by AfroMobile, UVTAB, Coca-Cola, AMEX Gas and VAAL Real Estate.**

To President Beth and the Finance Team of Brian Odong and Daphine Ashemere, to the organising team, our vendors, visiting Rotarians, Club members, shoppers and every contributor: you made this beginning possible.

The first edition has taught us plenty, and every lesson points forward. With earlier preparation, wider publicity, stronger media partnerships and more time to engage vendors and sponsors, the next UK Stores can reach more people, host more stalls and raise more for the Virtual Courts at Naguru. Feedback from exhibitors and guests will help shape an even more rewarding experience.

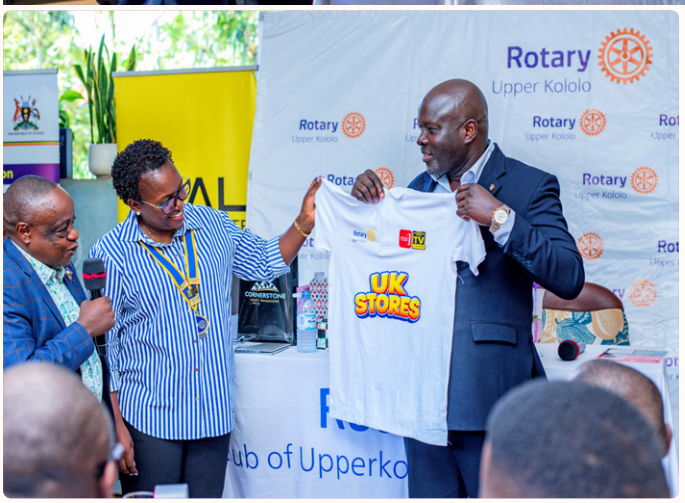
Imagine the day a young person at Naguru Remand Home has a case heard without unnecessary delay, in a courtroom made possible by a shopping-and-sipping evening that brought a community together. That is the future each stall, each bid and each cocktail is helping to build.

So keep your shopping bags ready, and your dancing shoes nearby. The next edition is coming, and Kimeza will find you!

Rtn Elizabeth Kyomugisha

The UK Stores Initiative







> If Rotary is to realize its proper destiny, it must be evolutionary at all times, revolutionary on occasion.” — **Paul P. Harris**

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An invitation to go back to that moment, not out of nostalgia but as a source of fuel. The fire that brought you into Rotary has not gone out. In most of us it is simply buried under routine.

Remember Why You Joined:

Rekindling the Rotary Fire from Within

How empathetic leaders and shared purpose keep Rotarians inspired for the long haul

Think back to the day you joined. You probably remember the energy: a new circle of friends, a cause that stirred something in you, a sense that your time was about to matter. Now ask yourself honestly where that feeling went.

This article is an invitation to go back to that moment, not out of nostalgia but as a source of fuel. The fire that brought you into Rotary has not gone out. In most of us it is simply buried under routine.

For many Rotarians it fades quietly. Nobody announces that they have lost the flame. They attend a little less, volunteer a little less, and one day they are gone. Globally, Rotary loses roughly 14.7% of its members every year, between 150,000 and 160,000 people. In Zone 33 the figure averages 16.1%, and in Zone 34 about 15.6%. Even more telling is when they leave: roughly 38% of departing members go within their first two years. These are not people who never cared. They are people who cared a great deal at the start.

The usual reasons given are club environment or internal conflict, the cost of dues and time, and a feeling that the work is not making a real difference. Look closely and none of these is a complaint about Rotary's mission. They are complaints about how it *feels* to belong. And feelings are something leaders can change.

Passion is not a possession. It is something we tend.

Researchers who study leadership describe passion as a strong inclination toward something we love, that matters to us, and in which we have invested time and energy. Kendall Cotton Bronk and Derrick McLean, writing on leader developmental readiness, add a distinction worth every club president's attention. *Harmonious* passion grows from genuine interest in the cause, and it brings engagement, meaning and better performance. *Obsessive* passion is driven by outside rewards such as status or recognition, and it narrows the mind and closes people to new ideas.

The lesson for Rotary is simple. Members who serve for the love of it burn brightly for a long time. Members who gradually come to serve for the sake of titles, ceremonies and checklists burn out. A leader's job is to keep the first kind of passion alive.

The same researchers note that a sense of purpose can be fostered through relationships, and that even a short, honest conversation about what matters most to someone can help it grow. In other words, purpose is not only found. It is cultivated, often by someone who simply asks and listens.

Empathy is the leader's first tool

In a message to incoming district governors, then Rotary International President-elect Jennifer Jones told of a 30-year Rotarian who understood what Rotary was really about only after joining a project that delivered coats to local children. More than 100 meetings had passed before it clicked. Her point was that the fault was not entirely his. If members are not engaged, she said, the responsibility lies with the club.

> Rotary's offer of hands-on service, personal growth, leadership development and lifelong friendships is what creates passion, and leaders must provide it with comfort and care.

Empathetic leadership is the practical form of that care. Drawing on the Volunteer Management material, and the experience of veteran Rotarians, here is what it looks like.

1. Ask members why they came. Conduct a "first love" conversation, informal and unhurried. Ask what drew each person to Rotary, then compare that with what they are doing today. When the two have drifted apart, the flame is usually the first thing to go.

2. Match people to their gifts. Stop filling vacancies with whoever is available. Match projects to a member's professional skills or to a skill they want to build. A retired nurse running a health camp or an engineer leading a water project will give more, and for longer, than a reluctant treasurer-by-default.

3. Give ownership, not just tasks. A stalled member often needs a small, time-bound project that is truly theirs. Ownership restores a sense of control and impact, and it is one of the fastest ways to relight someone.

4. Be clear, organised and respectful of time. Volunteers have careers, families and busy lives. Spell out roles and expectations, share agendas in advance, keep meetings on task and spread the workload across committees so that no one feels either overburdened or left out.

5. Offer flexibility without making people feel guilty. Hybrid attendance, WhatsApp updates, and service projects that count in place of a meeting all help. Tiered levels of involvement let members step back during a demanding season of life without leaving entirely. Leaders who respond with support rather than disapproval often find that people return when they are ready.

6. Invest in their growth. Training makes people feel they matter. Clubs that send members to leadership institutes and zone training sessions describe those members as transformed. One membership chair called her training a life-changing experience that connected her to Rotary's larger purpose. Pair newcomers with mentors in their first year, since people who do not know their role or have someone to learn from easily drift away.

7. Make the impact visible, and go and see it. Show members the outcomes of their work with numbers, photographs and stories. Better still, take them to meet the people they serve.

8. Lead from the front. When the president is stacking chairs, packing parcels and digging alongside everyone else, trust and inspiration follow. Members rarely copy what leaders say. They copy what leaders do.

9. Thank people sincerely, and often. Volunteers who feel appreciated stay committed. Thank them in public and in private, with a note, a shout-out or a small token. Give feedback kindly, and watch out for the phrases that kill enthusiasm: "We've always done it that way" and "We tried that years ago."

10. Keep fellowship and fun at the centre. One Rotarian said she stays for the work but joined for the friendships. Leave time for people to talk before the agenda begins, and welcome spouses and children too.

The fire was never lost. It is waiting.

A flame that has dimmed has not died. Bronk and McLean describe purpose as a lasting, personally meaningful aim that reaches beyond ourselves, and they note that it can be nurtured through conversation. That is good news for every club in our district: the reason you joined is still yours. It only needs to be remembered, named and given somewhere to go.

Try three steps, personally and as a club:

Name your reason. Write one or two sentences on why you joined. Was it service, friendship, a profession you wanted to give back through, a community or a child who moved you? Keep it where you will see it.

Compare it with what you do now. Does your current role in the club touch that reason? If not, tell your president or a fellow member. A small change of role can reconnect the two.

Say it aloud to someone. Pair up at a meeting or a fellowship event and tell each other your story. Hearing why another member joined is often how we remember our own.

Rotary Club Leaders across the district can turn this into a club evening: each member takes two minutes to answer *Why did I join, and what would bring that feeling back?* Write the answers down, and let them shape the year's projects and roles.

Who tends the leader's flame?

Leaders are volunteers too, and they are the most exposed to exhaustion. Presidents and committee chairs who carry everything alone soon lose their own spark. Share the load, rotate responsibilities, and remind them that leadership is a season. A leader who is rested and cared for finds it far easier to care for others.

Rotary's strength has never been its size but the conviction of ordinary people that they can do extraordinary good. Members of Upper Kololo and of clubs across District 9213 already carry that conviction. It is what brought each of us through the door. It does not have to be manufactured, only remembered.

So this week, do two things. Ask yourself, *Why did I join?* Then ask a fellow Rotarian the same question, and listen. Leaders, ask three members. The fire that started in each of us is still there, and it needs only a little attention to burn again from within.



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