



## Maintaining Member Engagement during the COVID-19 Pandemic

(Modified from D9800 messages and A Guide for Rotary by District 6690)

*In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we want to support the Rotary Clubs of District 9800 in their efforts to maintain engagement during times when many clubs have reduced face to face meetings, projects or social events. We have developed this guide with ideas and strategies for Club Leaders to consider. The following is an offering of support, not a requirement. Club Leaders are encouraged to consult with their boards to assess and determine which strategies will be useful on the local level.*

*None of these strategies is a replacement for timely, transparent and regular communication with your members about your plans to continue modified operations throughout this time. Be sure that all committee and office leaders in your club are equipped with consistent messaging to minimize confusion to your members and to streamline communications about changes as they arise. Consider sending brief weekly updates to your members or provide a timeline for when decisions will be reviewed and modified if necessary.*

*Have a great strategy that's working for your Club?*

**Remember the theme this year is Rotary Connects the World.**

*Stay healthy, support each other and your community.*

## Innovate

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### **Seize the opportunity to innovate and improve.**

There are things we can do to ensure our communication, meetings, actions and decisions continue.

- Now is a great time to enhance your electronic communications such as club bulletins, websites and social media such as Facebook.
- **Connect into the social media pages other community groups and organisations in your community. This is a great way to stay connected and even broaden your reach.**
- Connect with your communities by helping our less fortunate neighbours cope with the effects of isolation and fear, or by supporting our health authorities to address this situation.
- **Contact your local Council who may need help delivering Care Packs to people on their Vulnerable persons list.**
- Assist health authorities communicate best practices or provide needed equipment or support into your communities.

- Many people are familiar with **Video Conferencing** programs with the District and E-club using **Zoom** program successfully on a regular basis for many years. Only yesterday we had a PDG use it for the first time and they were amazed by the ease of use and the benefits of the program.
- There is an opportunity for cluster clubs to collaborate on a subscription to reduce the cost and share the access. Scheduling of meetings is available to ensure there are no clashes.
- **Look after fellow Rotarians who may also be doing it tough financially and socially.**
- Regular contact with club members (phone calls/email/zoom)-
- **Start a phone tree for those not using technology**
- Use this opportunity for ALL Club Members to go to <https://my.rotary.org/en> and register or sign into My Rotary and access the treasure trove of useful information about the history and organisation of Rotary and The Rotary Foundation, its programs and projects.

Perhaps try:

- **Exchange Ideas** - Joining a discussion group relating to a project or hobby close to your heart, such as cricket, whiskey or an Area of Focus
- **Take Action** - Getting inspiration for new projects from Rotary Ideas, or share your projects for others to be inspired by in Rotary Showcase
- **Learn** - Watching on demand webinars on courageous leadership and complete some short courses in the **Learning Centre** – starting with the "Getting Started With the Learning Centre" module
- **Manage** – For club officers, updating your club and member details in Club & District Administration and club goals in Rotary Club Central
- **Brand Centre** – Creating refreshed and correctly branded club publicity materials, including club and "People of Action" brochures, business cards, Facebook and pull up banners.

**Both the Rotary E-Club of Melbourne and Rotaract E-Club of Melbourne would like to offer any assistance they can to help Rotary clubs and committees **avoid cancelling meetings and instead adapt** and continue to meet as per normal – by online rather than physically – [connectwithus@rotaryclubofmelbourne.org.au](mailto:connectwithus@rotaryclubofmelbourne.org.au).**

## Walking Group



Most Rotarians would know that this is a personal favorite of mine. Walking is good for you and a great way to maintain your social connections.

Just follow the current rules -i.e. don't shake hands, stay 1.5 m apart, don't turn up if you have a cough or cold symptoms.

This doesn't mean that you can enjoy conversation whilst staying fit and enjoying some fresh air. It is also great to maintain your mental health. It can be short or long, quick or slow paced, but whatever you do or wherever you walk it is a great way to maintain contact with both Rotarians and members of your community.

Start a group and use social media and/or emails to update on times and locations for walks.

**Look out for Walking with the DG opportunities on weekends in your communities.**

Check out the ideas and details on the Woodend Rotary Walking Group Facebook page.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/795089553844781/>

## Twice weekly District Zoom meetings

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As a measure to ensure we stay connected at this difficult time DG Grant has organised a twice weekly get together on Zoom which is an open invitation for any Rotarian in D9800 who wishes to join.

**The meetings will occur every Monday and Wednesday evenings at 6pm, commencing 18th March.**

To join the D9800 Zoom Meeting:

Your computer or phone can be used with a camera and microphone.

Zoom video conferencing works best if

You restart your Computer immediately before the meeting

There are no other programs running at the same time e.g. email

You use a headset such as earbuds used with your smartphone

You mute your microphone unless speaking to other Zoom participants

**Use this link <https://zoom.us/j/103410322> to open the Zoom window**

You will soon see everyone who has joined the meeting

## Tips for hosting a “Virtual Meeting”

Consider shortening the length of the virtual meeting to make it more feasible for members to “tune in.”

Do keep your fellowship activities if they can easily migrate online (for example, “getting to know you” activities, interesting speakers, and happy dollars)

Avoid taking up “video time” with elements of your meeting that would be better shared in writing such as basic announcements or upcoming dates to note - consider sending those in a follow up email once the virtual meeting concludes

Check out Rotary resources on virtual meetings

<https://www.rotary.org/en/how-take-your-club-online>

<https://my.rotary.org/en/learning-reference/learn-topic/online-club-meetings>

## Topics for Online Meetings

“Getting to know you” activities like Hot Seat or Member Profiles

Happy Dollars online (sample social assets are included in resources)

Mimic the fellowship your members enjoy during your meetings. Here are few examples:

What are you reading? / Picture Contest: Sunrises / Kindness is Contagious

Asks members or “guest speakers” to record video presentations to promote through social channels.

Have a member with an interesting hobb, or are passionate about particular service projects?

What about a music recital, quiz night, cooking demonstration.

Remember you can also have international guest speakers.

Any business owners getting creative during the pandemic?

Ask them to share a self-recorded video!

These can be recorded simply using a cell phone. Try to limit video recordings to 5-6 minutes maximum.

Remember to write engaging posts that encourage members and guests to interact with the content.

**Social Media Takeovers** - Allow various members to “take the reins” on your social channels and let them use pictures and stories to share how they’re dealing with the changes to daily living brought on by the pandemic. Here is a useful guide: <https://blog.hootsuite.com/social-media-takeovers/>

**\*\*Facebook Live** is a great tool for short presentations featuring your members with interesting hobbies, because the audience can ask questions in real-time that the presenter can answer on the spot.

# Use this opportunity for ALL Club Members to have a Facebook Account

## IF A MEMBER IS NOT A FACEBOOK MEMBER

- Go to Facebook using this link <https://www.facebook.com/> and create an account. Note: signup only requires your name, email and date of birth. (*birthday is published but not DOB*) You must sign-up to view unobstructed.
- Now, open your Web browser and log in to your Facebook page. (*you can do this on your desktop or phone if mobile via the Facebook App*)
- Start using Facebook. Explore other pages through the search function which is the little magnifying glass, Type in what you are looking for.
- Locate and “LIKE” your Club Facebook page and the D9800 People of Action Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/D9800discussion/>). This will keep you up to date of any posts.

## More Information on Engagement through other Social Media Tools

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*Social Media is a great tool for engaging members and the general community every day. Clubs can optimize and concentrate their social media channels as a resource to bolster engagement during the hiatus from in-person contact. Many of these strategies can be used once you return to business as usual, so this may prove to be a pilot for your club.*

**Highly Interactive Tools** - There are many free and paid options for hosting virtual meetings. Chances are *someone* in your club already has a pro version of one of these for their business, but there are also lots of great no-cost options that include basic features. Many of these programs are offering reduced fees and no-cost extended trials during this time.

- **Zoom** –There is a free version which provides unlimited time for 1 on 1 meetings or 40 minutes limit for group meetings up to 100 participants. There are other priced plans that allow larger groups and more time. Go to the Zoom website <https://zoom.us/> for details on pricing plans, features and resources including tutorials.
- **GoTo Meeting** – has similar planning and pricing options to Zoom.  
<https://www.gotomeeting.com/en-au>

**Less Interactive** - There are other tools that are still incredibly useful and may be the perfect fit, but don't require that everyone log in at a specific time, which could be the perfect level of flexibility for your club. The links below are to help guides on how to use some of these programs.

Facebook Live | <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/facebook-live-guide>

Instagram TV | <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EaRxgAW9mUY>

## Other Social Media Tools for Individuals or Committees

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**WHATSAPP** - WhatsApp is an idea Social Media tool for members of a Rotary Club to use. The App is a free download for both Android and Iphones and allows solo or Group chats via text, voice or video. It is easy to install and use and connects via your Contacts on your phone where you can easily locate Contacts who use WhatsApp



facebook Messenger

**Facebook Messenger** is another alternative is to communicate with others via text or phone, but members need to be Facebook friends.

## Engagement through Service (from Afar)

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*Of course, the BEST way to engage members is the same in-person or on-line! Get creative with ways to keep the spirit of service alive with your members!*

### Donate

As always, you can ask members to donate to The Rotary Foundation (hint: use the array of Rotary assets including videos to promote; all available on My Rotary). Other considerations include initiating “friendly competitions” with other clubs to see which can raise the most money for a particular focus area or fund to earn “bragging rights” (or maybe the “losing” club has to provide the manual labor for the winning club’s future project). Get creative and use this opportunity to bolster promotion of opportunities for Rotarians to give.

### Spread Good Will

Choose a **local charity** and ask all members to highlight it using their social channels.

Choose a **new charity each week!** This is a great way to leverage the influence of Rotarian leaders to elevate causes that matter to your local community (and it might even sprout a future project collaboration!).

Coordinate with local hospitals or nursing homes for members to **send cards or letters** to combat loneliness from isolation in facilities that have limited visitors.

Challenge members to look through their homes and sort items that can be donated to charity. Once it is safe to do so, hold a group donation day to a local charity thrift store (remember to take pictures!).

Ask members to record themselves reading children’s books and post through your club’s social channels for parents to share with their children for “alt-tv time” during school closures.

**Start a gift card drive.** Ask members to purchase gifts cards (bonus points if it’s a local small business) and then mail them along with a note from the Rotarian to organizations that would be able to put them to good use.