

## **District Director Report**

Fellow Toastmasters

"It will fly by - enjoy it!!! I remember these words of a Past District Director spoken at the start of my first year on the DLT. That was in July 2018 and she was right! 5 years on and it's hard to believe that 5 years have passed since my first day on the District Leadership Team.

I'm thankful and very honoured to have been District 71 Director for the Toastmasters Year 2022-23.

The Theme for this year was "Growing our Community Together".

This year we began to see the green shoots of recovery from the pandemic with many clubs returning to their pre-pandemic venues or finding new venues for their meetings. Other clubs chose to remain online or hold hybrid meetings. Membership payments as a percentage of our base is at its highest since the last time the District was Distinguished in 2015-16. Many clubs decided for various reasons not to continue but members in these clubs have joined other clubs.

I would like to congratulate members and club officers for their resilience and commitment in supporting each other at their club meetings and continuing their journey of personal development and growth.

I would like to thank my colleagues on the District Leadership Team for their dedication, commitment and hard work to support our District during the year. I would also like to thank all the Division and Area Directors who diligently supported their clubs throughout the year. This year was a particularly difficult year when it came to finding leaders at area level. I would like to recognise in particular the Division Directors who didn't have full teams of Area Directors for their commitment and dedication to supporting the District Mission "We Build New Clubs and support all clubs in achieving excellence". I would like to thank the members of all the extended teams. Thank you for your service.

July – September of any program year is filled with formulating the District Success Plan, preparation of the District Budget and training of District and Club Officers. The Trio (District Director, Program Quality Director and Club Growth Director) also spend the months leading up to the International Convention in August interviewing candidates for International Officer and International Director roles. The first hybrid International Convention was held in Nashville, Tennessee in August 2023. This was the first opportunity since COVID restrictions were introduced to meet people in person.

2022-23 marked a special year for the members of District 71 as we celebrated our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. In September, 2022 we gathered in Dublin to launch Past International President Ted Corcoran's Book "A History of Toastmasters in Great Britain and Ireland". This was a very special occasion for me personally and I would like to thank Ted for his service to the District and indeed beyond.

This year we had a goal of 150-4-50 (150 Distinguished Clubs for our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary). Congratulations to the clubs who have achieved Distinguished or better status this year in the Distinguished Club Program.

Over the pandemic years when restrictions meant that we could only meet online, connections and friendships were formed with colleagues throughout Region 10. I am in awe of these inspirational leaders and would like to thank them for their friendship, support and kindness to me over the 3 years since we became Club Growth Directors.

To the incoming District Leadership Team I wish you all the very best. Enjoy your year. It will fly by!

Brenda Lannon

2022-23 District 71 Director