

In this episode, Mel Watson from Hornsea and District Lions talks about how the club has financially supported their primary schools by purchasing defibrillators and providing training for teachers on their use. Next we hear from Michael Gardiner of Bungay Lions about organising and planning their Classic Vehicle Rally and Country Fayre in the grounds of Earsham Hall.

Be uplifted, be inspired. This is Step Forward and Volunteer.

Welcome to the latest episode of the popular Step Forward and Volunteer podcast brought to you by Lions Clubs British Isles.

My name is Samantha Boffin and I'd like to thank you for tuning in.

If you haven't listened before, our aim is simple. We want to celebrate the positive difference volunteering makes to communities across the British Isles and beyond. To do that, we'll be speaking to those who give up their time to help others, inspiring more people to step forward and volunteer.

This month on the podcast, I'd like to welcome Mel Watson from Hornsea and District Lions. Mel joins us to talk about how the club have financially supported their primary schools by purchasing defibrillators and providing training for teachers on their use.

We also feature Michael Gardiner of Bungay Lions who tells us about the organisation and planning of their annual eleventh Classic Vehicle Rally and Country Fayre held the grounds of Earsham Hall, a fun day out for all the family.

But first, I have a favour to ask. We'd like your help in getting the word out about Step Forward and Volunteer. Tell your family, tell your friends - and if you're a Lions member, why not let other members of your club know about the podcast - and how easy it is to listen. All you need to do is either go on the website www.lionsclubs.co where you will see a

link to the podcast, or you can search for Step Forward and Volunteer on apps like Spotify, Podbean, Apple podcasts and Google podcasts.

You can listen on-demand or subscribe so that you never miss an episode. We publish a new programme on the second Wednesday of each month, and we're really keen to spread the positivity and get as many people listening as we can.

We are all aware that defibrillators does have the potential to save lives. In fact, according to the gov.uk website, accessing these devices within three to five minutes of a cardiac arrest, increases the chances of survival by over 40%.

So today, we caught up with Mel Watson of Hornsea and District Lions Club. Hello, Mel. Hello, hello Sam. Hornsey and District Lions Club have donated five defibrillators to local primary schools within Hornsey. Can you tell us well, how this defibrillator project has come about?

Yes, certainly. Well, in fact, it was the idea and the prime mover was Jenny Eldred, who is one of our members. It was actually a couple of years ago that a young teenager collapsed whilst playing football in the local area. He was fortunately saved. But that sparked an idea in her thoughts, you know, defibrillators are a good thing, especially having grandchildren of her own. She came up thought about, and because of the various problems with COVID, etc, she wasn't able to move forward with the plan. And that's hence the reason we're only doing it within this last, last six months. So she came up with the idea of, well, I'll make some investigations and see if the local schools need them, or if they would want them. So she approached the club first and, we all said yes. So she went ahead and she approached all the schools, and out of them I think one already had one, and another one said that they didn't want one at that time, but certainly five of them thought it was an excellent idea. So we went ahead with that, and the club fortunately, as I'm gonna be explaining later, the club, we are a wealthy club, we're fortunate in that respect. So one of our other members, John Briggs, he took it upon himself then to investigate to see where we could get the best deal

and we ended up getting a good deal we paid just over 4000 pounds for all five defibrillators, because, of course, there are different types of the smaller, portable ones, not the large ones that you see on the walls, outside public buildings, etc.

I've seen some of the pictures, actually, with the children holding them on your website, that's fantastic for primary schools, because then they're very flexible, and they can, you know, kind of grab them quickly. That's amazing. Yeah.

So, Mel, as well as these five distributors that you you've, donated to the schools. Have you ever done anything like that in the past?

Yes. Again, we're fortunate I don't know about other towns, but certainly we have a small volunteer force, referred to as First Responders. We gave them two defibrillators some time ago and they found them to be very, very useful. We paid and had installed the full size one at the Village Hall in a little village, which is just outside again, that was a couple of years ago.

So as a Lions club, do you have an ongoing relationship with your primary schools?

Certainly not only in the primary schools, secondary schools as well. But certainly in the case of the primary schools, we have, within the last couple of years, we've bought them some of the interactive whiteboards I thought they're absolutely amazing things. I hadn't really realized just how much they cost. But certainly we, we bought a couple of those and went to see how they were. We also for a number of schools in the area, on a regular annual basis, we help finance there they have weekend coach trips, sometimes a sort of four or five day camping, but we generally speaking, certainly put 1000 pounds or more towards the cost of the coach trip. And also certainly in the case of the Hornsea Community Primary School, they wanted to have a garden, an activity garden, if you'd like for the children to get involved with. And we help finance setting that up. Yeah.

I hear that you're also do something special at Easter locally. Is that right?

Yes with the primary school children, we get as many of the schools involved as we can, and encouraged them to do a painting with an Easter theme. In conjunction with Tesco's, because they then allow us to display all the paintings which know that I'm sure delights the children and the parents in our local Tesco's. And in fact, we asked the manager of Tesco's to choose a winner. And they then give a nice large chocolate Easter egg to the winners.

Gosh what a brilliant initiative.

How do you go about purchasing and installing them?

Well, again, I should say the purchasing was all done through John Briggs. But then the actual defibrillators. They're kept in the school. And as I say they are portable, so they need a charging point, but they don't need to be permanently fixed on the wall they're there. So they can be at a moment's notice taken anywhere around the school?

Yeah. Yes, no, it's really important. And teachers had training in how to use them. So how did that work? Were all the teachers trained?

I think there's a selected few initially, one would like to think that obviously, the more people that know, do know how to use them, the better it will be?

Yes, absolutely. Do they need refresher training? Is that something you guys get involved with as well?

Not personally No, but we do it here in Hornsea, we're lucky we do have a First Aid Centre, which is located on the Tesco's car park. They very kindly allow it, it's a portacabin, and then the people that run that do first aid training, and one or two of our people have done the first aid training there. And I'm one of those that's gone and learned how to use the

defibrillator and gone through the resuscitation course, etc. Hopefully, hopefully, I'll never have to use it. But I'm now trained to do so.

Yeah, yeah, but that's amazing. Because yes, it's all very well having the equipment, but if you don't know how to use it, it's a problem. So obviously, you said there was quite a substantial cost involved in this. And so overall, did you have to raise all that money this year? And how did you raise that money, in fact?

Well, once again, I like to think that we're very fortunate that we have a Lions charity shop. I say fortunate because it raises a great deal of money. And it is very, very well supported. But on the other side it, it does perhaps, people don't realize that it involves a lot of staffing. We have a minimum of eight people a day work in the shop, it's open six days a week, we have a lion on the till and then we have at least two or three volunteers working in the sorting room. Because unlike some of the other charities literally the stuff that arrives at our shop door sometimes is left at the shop door when we arrive in the morning is just in bags and boxes. And until you open those bags and boxes. You have no idea what's, what's going to greet you and believe you me we have had some surprises over the years. But it's it means that we, we are very, very, very lucky that not only we're supported by donations but by customers. And that's not just local people. It's Hornsea being a holiday, holiday town. We have, you know, lots of caravanners and, and we've had people I've seen people that arrived in their cars, all the way from wherever, rather than take it to a local charity shop they bring it to the Lions. And I think that the reason the main reason probably that we're so well supported is they know that the majority of the money that we do raise is spent locally on various things, you know, not but obviously, like all the other clubs, we make regular donations to Lions Clubs International Foundation.

Yes, no, I think the shops are amazing, because there's nothing more that we love that as a family we always go to all the charity shops wherever we're on holiday. So you being a holiday destination, must, must really pay dividends actually.

And do you find that the income from the shop enables Hornsea lions to you know, to support other projects in the community?

Oh my goodness, yes it's it is amazing. So I mean, I certainly to celebrate our 50th anniversary which was what just over four years ago we had constructed and paid for a, a bandstand in the Memorial Gardens here in the town something we'd never had. So that's you know, a permanent reminder. Again, we purchased bed for the fitted kitchens in the New Town Hall. We also have some lighting there's a small park which crosses between one main road across towards the seafront and there was no lighting in there. And it was so again in this day and age to walk through a dark park. So we, we financed having some street lighting put through there so people could walk through there feeling a lot safer.

That's incredible, so you really keep your ear to the ground as to what needs to be done and you reach out to try and help.

Yeah, what we tend to do, the, the examples I've just given in fact it's something that we self-generated shall I say, but generally speaking, all of our other money goes as a result of financial requests we have proper documentation anyone can collect it from the shop, fill in explain what they want the money for what they have already, perhaps already done to help raise funds and then we reviews these applications.

Well, that's such a clever idea, though to use the shop as that kind of hub to collect all the ideas that you can you know, of how you can help the community?

It's just a good place for us to advertise, we have a big, large board and video screen in the shop showing what we've done various, current photographs will be from the defibrillator, photographs, presentations, and lets people know what we're doing. And the LION

magazine, we would put a little label on the front saying, basically, if you're reading this and you, you think you might be interested, please contact.

Amazing. Mel, thank you so much for coming to talk to the lion podcast. It's just an incredible and incredible lifesaving project, but also all that you do as well. That is a which is how you fund these incredible projects. So thank you so much.

Not at all. We have a we have a good active membership. And a good volunteer team of volunteers. They all do it with a smile.

I bet they do. I bet they do. And there's such a lovely community feel about that, you know, coming together. Yeah. Thank you so much. Bye. Bye, bye.

So, Mel, as well as these five distributors that you you've, donated to the schools. Have you ever done anything like that in the past?

Yes, again, we're fortunate I don't know about other towns, but certainly we have a small volunteer force, referred to as First Responders. We gave them two defibrillators some time ago and they found them to be very, very useful. We actually paid and had installed the full size one at the Village Hall in a little village, which is just outside that again, that was a couple of years ago.

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It's time now for a short break, we'll be back after this ...

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So today we're talking to Michael Gardiner from the Bungay Area Lions Club in Suffolk. Hello, Michael, hi there. Bungay Lions are holding their Annual Classic Vehicle Rally and Country Fayre, on Sunday, the 30th of April. Can you tell me about how the idea for the event came about and what makes it such a special event?

Yes. Well, we are very pleased to be starting the event again, because there had to be a lot of work done on the field where the event is held. So it's really great to be doing it again. And about 11 years ago, one of our Bungay Lions club members had the idea he had lots of contacts, and everyone in the club was in agreement that we would actually do the event. What makes it special is thanks to the support of Rupert and Annabel Derham who own the Earsham Hall where the event is in a beautiful countryside setting. There are lots of different types of vehicles which are displayed in the grounds to give the whole family a great day out with crafts stalls, children's entertainment, and food and drink stalls. The event helps the club to raise money to support local good causes throughout the year.

Yeah, so it's really aimed at families. Is it.

Yes a family day.

Where exactly is Earsham Hall?

Earsham Hall is actually just into Norfolk, outside the town of Bungay which is in Suffolk. And the car rally has signposted off the A143. And we already have booked in 430 vehicles, coming from all over East Anglia and even further afield.

Wow, that's incredible. That's amazing. And is that the most you've ever had? Or have you had that many in the past

We have, that's about the number because there we obviously do have a limit to what we can take because of the size of the field. But we have 430. And I've already turning other vehicles away as of as of a week or two weeks ago, because we're already full up like six weeks before the event, which is brilliant. It's amazing isn't that people want to exhibit their vehicles.

It must be really exciting, actually. So what sort of vehicles come along to the events.

We have vehicles in five categories. We have cars, motorcycles, tractors, military vehicles, buses, and lorries and American vehicles as well. And it's free to enter. And forms are sent to those who have booked previously, we send them out via email, like booking forms from the previous year, for the following year. And we promote it online. Everyone is sent a vehicle sticker and details of where to go on arrival. Some car clubs they like to attend on block as it were. So what they normally do is they meet up at a point somewhere a few miles away from Earsham Hall, then they all arrive together so they get parked together. So it makes a really nice sort of club event as well. There's only one type of vehicle we can't take them that some vehicles that have tracked vehicles, because obviously it would cut the field up. So the owners would not be happy if we did that. But yeah, it's really good. We've got lots and lots of various cars coming and vehicles.

That must look incredible if they meet up beforehand, and then all drive down in a convoy, that must be amazing.

I mean, some of the clubs maybe have 20 members arrive at the same time. And we would have things like say a BMW club or a Porsche club, and they will arrive all their cars together. And their cars of varying ages, because they're obviously not new cars. So there are some brilliant examples of cars and vehicles.

What's the oldest car that you've got? Do you know how old the oldest one is?

I don't actually know the oldest for this year. But we quite regularly have cars that are approaching sometimes there could be at least a half a dozen cars or more that are approaching 100 years old. The average is probably around sort of 40s 50s and 60s. So you know it's a brilliant event. And it's a wonderful family day out.

So you get these American cars are they the big the kind of, you know.

Chevrolets and all sorts. We've got probably about 30 American cars entered. But that's the limit we put on because they take up a lot of space American cars because their doors open and they use a lot of width. Yeah, some of them are spectacular.

For all of these things. There's lots of photo opportunities.

Absolutely, yeah. Yeah.

Do people dress up in vintage gear and things?

Some of them do. Not generally, but there are some people that do like to get really in the swing of it.

So it sounds like a lot of planning. How does it all work?

There is a lot of planning. What happens is the club starts planning the event about six months even in advance, with different members taking on different responsibilities for

certain areas. One person normally looks after the stallholder bookings, another person arranges the children's entertainment, and then I actually manage all the bookings for the cars and vehicles and also any queries that come back which are obviously are a few along the road as you can imagine and also as well as involving nearly all the members of our club in the run up, other local organisations for example: scouts and first aiders and lions members from other clubs do help us as well with car parking and things like that. So it's an event that involves lots of people already.

Gosh it must be vast, actually your right parking is an enormous thing. It must be in a huge area.

I mean, we have had sort of between three and 4000 members of the public there on a good day.

Yes. Wow. Gosh, and it's a lovely time of year as well that sort of Spring.

We'll pray for good weather we don't want rain but you know, fingers crossed.

What can you tell us about the country fayre part of the event so what does it feel like?

We have an average of between 20 and 25 craft stalls booked in at the moment. And then we have about 10 catering stalls and there's lots of things, we have a vegan stall, we have all sorts of different foods stalls, some fish and chips and burgers and ice cream we have a wide range of catering. We also have entertainment being put on for the day as well for children. We have a company that's called Little Jumpers. They do bouncy castles for us which the children always love. And we have somebody that hasn't been before they're called Go Awesome that are coming to us this year. They do magical shows for us and balloon, balloon modelling and that kind of thing as well all through the day. And we also have for the first time have a local person who's bringing alpacas along, showing it off to take for a walk so that's going to be really popular we think, the alpacas are lovely.

They are, my children when they were little would have absolutely been all over this we would have definitely come, alpacas are just gorgeous.

And they are so gentle and the children love them, really. We haven't had those before, but we think that's really going to be a winner.

Also as well as the children's we have an entertainment stage where we've got one or two acts performing. We've got a signing choir, which performs for us which they come from Lowestoft not too far away.

Do they sing and sign? Is that the idea?

Yes they do. Yeah, we have had them before and they're really always very, very popular. Fantastic, really. And it's brilliant to watch them. They're really good. And also we have Miss Kitty. And she sings lots of the older wartime songs which goes in very well with the theme of vintage vehicles. So she comes along. So we've got those doing performances throughout the day. So that's sort of on the main stage as it works. So that works. Well.

Miss Kitty, so she presumably dresses up in wartime.

Yes, she does. Yeah. And people love the old songs, especially when she does things like 'We'll meet again', that goes down really well.

Yeah, it sounds like an amazing event. I've heard that there is usually a surprise on the day. Is that right?

Quite often, yes I mean, last time we did the event, we had a group of red Ferraris that came along. And the visitors could look at them close up, talk to the owners who are thrilled to obviously start up their engines. This is just the icing on the cake, as there are always many other interesting vehicles. And also people start to recall their childhoods and it evokes

another era almost Yeah. And we have also had old ambulances and the big trucks and obviously they're popular with children, they love to get behind the wheel. So we always have what we call a special car sort of area, as it were, and it's for something we might get sometimes like umm I'd say a group of like, really nice Porsches or Ferraris, or even Lamborghinis we've had before. So there's always some. It's always a nice sort of thing that goes on above the normal. So yeah, it's very, very, good event.

Is that surprise, am I right is that surprise called George's secret?

Yeah, George is one of our guys that does a lot of the organisation. And we obviously don't always know what's actually going to happen until we get sort of closer to the event.

That's fantastic. So if people want to come along, if they're listening to this, and they'd like to get involved, is there anything that they need to know?

The event takes place on Sunday, the 30 of April, and it goes from 10am till 4pm. It costs five pounds per adult, and cash only as our mobile signal is poor on the venue, and accompanying children under 16 years of age are free of charge. There is no charge for any vehicles that are booked in. Our general public parking is free as well. But we always appreciate donations on the day. We also welcome well behaved dogs on leads, at all times. And people also should head to our Facebook page or the website. Just search Bungay Lions by Facebook or Google so obviously there's lots of information people can find out what's going.

That's amazing.

We have got a card reader which we're going to have in operation but we obviously you've got to see how it works.

But as I said, we're very good at keeping a very reasonable price. We think that five pounds for adults because people can bring a family out for the day.

Which is absolutely brilliant, as you rightly say.

And that's one of the reasons why we get lots of people there because people know that it's a reasonable cost day out.

It sounds like you've got so much going on. It's just brilliant for families.

Yeah, it's Yeah, yeah, we're looking forward.

Thank you so much for coming to talk to, to the Lion podcast all about the Classic Vehicle Rally and Country Fayre. And I hope you and all the Bungay Lions have a lot of fun.

Thank you. Bye. Thank you.

That is all we have time for on this month's podcast. Don't forget you can also listen to past editions of the Step Forward and Volunteer podcast any time via www.lionsclubs.co or on Spotify, Podbean, Apple podcasts or Google podcasts.

Thanks once again to our special guests Mel Watson and Michael Gardiner. If you would like to find out more about Hornsea Lions defibrillator project please visit www.hornsealions.co.uk and for those of you wishing to go along to the Classic Vehicle Rally and Country Fayre take a look at Bungay Area Lions Club on Facebook, and a big thank you to you our listeners as well. Take care and goodbye.