

International guest joins Neepawa Rotary meeting

Rotarian from England gives update on UK clubs and COVID-19

By Kira Paterson

NEEPAWA BANNER & PRESS

The Neepawa Rotary Club was able to have a Rotarian from England join their meeting last Wednesday, Jan. 27. Because the meetings can only be online now, there are fewer barriers restricting how far away those in attendance can be, so John Sayer, member of the Blythe Brydge & District club in England, was invited to make a presentation to give local Rotarians some insight into the goings on across the pond.

Neepawa Rotary member Dave Bennet noted that Sayer is a prominent member of the international club, being a past District Governor, the current District Secretary, named a Paul Harris Fellow, as well as having been a District Chair for the Group Study Exchange (GSE) program.

Bennet knew Sayer from taking a GSE trip to England in 2011. He noted that they hit it off quite quickly and have kept in touch since. Bennet asked Sayer to speak to the Neepawa club and give them an update on the COVID-19 situation in the UK, as well as how their club has been operating throughout the pandemic.

"There were two main things I took from it," recalled Bennet. "One was that as far as cases go, they're still having high cases and it's still spreading a lot over there," he noted. "The good news is that they're ahead in their vaccinations," he



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John Sayer, of England, joined the Neepawa Rotary Club's meeting last week via Zoom.

stated, adding that their vaccination rollout seems to be going a lot quicker than it is in Canada.

Bennet added that Sayer's club has been keeping active in a similar fashion to how the Neepawa club has been. They've been able to continue some fundraising and are trying to keep their regular routine as much as COVID-19 will allow.

The Neepawa Rotary Club has been meeting online via Zoom since gatherings have been restricted. Bennet noted that while attendance has dropped, as some members don't have access to the technology or just want

to wait until in-person can occur again, they had more Rotarians at last week's meeting to listen in to Sayer's presentation. He explained that they've normally had around 10 people attend the Zoom meetings, but there were 15 tuned in to watch the international speaker.

This isn't the only international guest the Neepawa Rotary Club has asked to speak. Rotarian Ron Nordstrom invited a speaker from Guatemala for one of their February meetings, whom he met while on a Rotary Vocational Training Team trip a few years ago.