

November 2016

Wellington Friendship Force President's Report November 2016

The past year has been a little gentler for our club and I trust we are now ready to go for 2017.

In February I attended the friendship force of New Zealand National conference in New Plymouth. This was a very well run event and was attended by (and addressed by) Jeremy Snook the new CEO of friendship force International based in Atlanta USA. I have submitted my report on this conference to the committee and it was made available to all members on line via our newsletter.

Later in February we hosted a domestic inbound from Whangarei. This was at a very busy time for members as it clashed with several high profile events in the city and ambassador numbers were unusually high. This turned out to be a logistical nightmare for ED Lynnda and all praise to her for coping with such a stressful situation.

In late March early April we had a 2 stage exchange to Japan. This was a "late notice" exchange because initially we were given no outbound exchange for 2016. Naturally the committee raised concerns about this to Atlanta and we were eventually given the Japan exchange. 15 ambassadors (the Maximum that could be hosted by the Japanese clubs) visited the Tokyo and Nagoya clubs. Although it was spring time and quite cold, it was cherry blossom time in both regions and our hosts very proudly highlighted the blossom at every occasion.

The "Show "n" Tell (Japan) afternoon held in August was an informative event. We were treated to a very detailed, interesting and at times surprising summary of our members outbound experiences. These events are always fascinating and are good events to bring prospective members to. The afternoon ended with refreshments and time to chat and catch up.

In August we had an outbound domestic exchange to the Manawatu club, based in both Fielding and Palmerston North. Whilst many of us have been to the region before – there's nothing like a friendship force exchange for hospitality and seeing more. Well done to the Manawatu. Special thanks to exchange director Jaye on her first ED mission – a job well done. Members thoroughly enjoyed the visit and it was unfortunate that more of our members did not take up the opportunity.

Following on from the Manawatu exchange nine members attended the "Nuts 'n ' Bolts day in Fielding on August 20. Again, this one was much improved on previous years and we were pleased with the day and trust that even more of our members will attend in 2017.

Coffee mornings continue as a once a month social event. These are informal functions where members come along, just for a chat, catch-up and socialise, and often bring prospective new members. Each month a different venue is selected which makes the occasion more interesting.

The coffee mornings have been a great success and many thanks to Lynnda and Ngaire for taking the time to organise these events.

Our social committee is to be commended for the functions they have organised. This is a commitment for which I am very grateful and many club members have enjoyed. If you haven't attended one of these functions, make a resolution now to attend a few in 2017.

Members of the social committee are often called upon during exchanges as well. Whilst we are all committed to the principles of friendship force, we are indeed a social organisation, and the success of the club is largely due to the input of the members of our social committee.

At the time of writing (this report) we are expecting an inbound exchange from Calgary Canada. This is a small exchange with only 12 ambassadors. This reduces our opportunities to get economies of scale and ED Kate has done a great job in trying to involve as many members as possible.

The ageing membership of our club is not unique. It is a situation that is evolving world wide. Therefore, due to an ageing membership and bereavements our hosting capacity has reduced and our website has been adjusted to reflect this. Our advertised maximum number of ambassadors is now 16 with a minimum of 10. We could host more but that would depend on how the numbers were made up ie, couples or singles.

Your committee has met 6 times during the year and dealt with all those routine matters that go into the infrastructure of running a friendship force club. The work of the secretary is the most involved committee job and is the nucleus of the club. Jenny has taken on this work and has done a great job in coming to terms with the detail of the task.

The committee has authorised the design and purchase of a new club badge. The new badge better reflects Wellington as a destination and includes a Wellington scene and our unique cable car. The badge should be available for purchase at the AGM. The cost per badge (to members) is \$3 and includes GST.

Treasurer John continues to produce excellent reports to the committee and keeps meticulous records on our behalf. His experience and advice has been invaluable.

Judith does excellent work as our almoner and her efforts are welcomed by both the recipients and the club

Sue continues to produce a great newsletter and Lynnda keeps our Face Book pages active as well organising many club outings. These communications and social events help members to keep in touch especially as it is not possible for all members to be involved in all activities.

As president and on behalf of all members, a big thank you to all the committee for your support and efforts during the year.

Rhys Morris
President.
Nov. 2016