Dear Lion Ian,

To begin I would like to wish all Lions and their families a truly happy and healthy New Year.

By now you should all be aware of our Centenary Guide Dogs Project which has been running in our District since PDG Marion Conneely’s year. This project is our contribution to the celebration of our founding in 1917. It will continue until the end of 2017.

Cabinet has asked that every club in the District would contribute €1,500 or it’s Stg equivalent to this wonderful project. Any funds raised in Northern Ireland will go to Guide Dogs Northern Ireland and any funds raised in the rest of the District will go to the Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind in Cork. They will use the money to fund their breeding programme and Guide Dogs Northern Ireland will use their money to help train dogs. Please also note that these dogs will not only serve people who are blind but will also work as assistant dogs for children with autism.

We have always boasted, and are entitled to boast that we are Knights for the Blind. Once again the call is being sent out to the Lions of Ireland.

What do I need you to do?

Firstly, to those Clubs who have already contributed the full €1500, thank you most sincerely. You have fulfilled your commitment.

If your Club decided to pay in three payments of €500 and have already sent the first payment, thank you too, but I would ask that if possible you send the second €500 now.

There are a number of Clubs who have not taken part so far. I hope that you will reconsider and join your fellow Lions in this District Fundraiser. It can really only reach it’s full potential if EVERY club plays their part.

All of the money raised will be used directly for the project. Both the Irish Guide Dogs Association and Guide Dogs Northern Ireland have undertaken not to take any part of this money for their administration.

We presented €34,000 to the Irish Guide Dogs Association in June and sent them a further €16,600 just before Christmas. That is a total of €50,600, a huge amount of money but still only a drop in the ocean of what they need. We have 2680Stg on deposit for Guide Dogs Northern Ireland.

We need to reach €1500 per Club. The more we can raise the more people whose lives will be improved in a massive way. Please make sure your Club is part of that effort.

Yours in Lionism,

Pat

Pat McCoole

Centenary Guide Dog Project Leader