

# No book sale, no Art in the Park but lots of fish and chips

by Chris Cooke



Service Clubs are being hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic and are looking for “different ways” to raise funds and attract the support of the public. Those words from Jean Cowper, a member of the community services committee of the Rotary Club of Sarnia Bluewaterland.

The finances of the Rotary Club have been seriously diminished since the pandemic hit Sarnia Lambton last March.

The Club’s Art in the Park at Mike Weir Park which would normally be held this month has been cancelled along with the annual Book Sale, previously held at Bayside Mall in January.

The two events generated more than \$50,000.00 annually creating what Cowper describes as a “problem with the trickle down of support to local community charities”.

Last year she says the Club “substantially expanded its footprint in the community increasing both the number and amount of donations”. The number of donations increased to 12 of which more than half were new to the Club with “total donations or commitments exceeding

\$41,000.00”.

But that was then and this is now and President Marie Watson says while the Club is sustainable and has a bright future large fundraising events are on hold.

Since March the Club paid off its \$41,000.00 financial obligation to the City for the Centennial Park playground and has seen a serious decline in its finances.

However, she remains optimistic pointing to a fish dinner fundraiser in partnership with the Sarnia Golf and Curling Club later this month. For seven and half hours on September 18 the Golf and Curling Club restaurant will prepare dinner for two with curbside pick-up.

Watson says the fundraiser has potential describing it as “innovative” and an opportunity to restore the Club’s coffers.

While Rotary has been meeting via Zoom during the pandemic Watson says it is transitioning back to regular Wednesday morning meetings at the Golf Club. Face masks, social distancing and hand washing are all part of the protocol says Watson as members return from meeting on line.

While the Community Services Committee allocated \$41,000.00 last year only \$7,500.00 has been set aside this year. “We will allocate as we see fit” says Watson and that will depend on the success of smaller fundraisers like the fish dinner this month.

Orders for the Fish and Chips Dinner for Two will be taken until September 15. Visit “[rotarysarniabwl.org](http://rotarysarniabwl.org)”.

