

Presidential Report Graham Newton March AGM 2026

It has been a joy and a privilege to serve as your president for a second term. It began inauspiciously with a bout of illness, but once that was under control I hope I have served the club as you would have hoped and expected. I am grateful to my colleagues on the committee for their commitment to their roles in the workings of the Club. Once again, your committee has served us very well.

I joined the club in 2012 and the committee in 2013. Since then, I have only had 6 months without a role on the Committee (This despite proclaiming to the churches congregations that I was leaving on retirement that after almost 50 years in church leadership that I would never sit on another committee!!) I know that I have one more year to go on the committee here, in the ex-officio role as Immediate Past President and then I can retire to “the back benches” – or here the back row – making room for fresh ideas. It is for that reason that sometimes it is as important to stand down as it is to continue to serve.

The positives for this presidential year are that we have had good meetings with interesting speakers and good food and also a rich variety of social events. We have continued to be well supported by you, the members, so thanks go to all of you. I believe that we sometimes under-sell ourselves, so I would like to affirm here that Christchurch Probus Club offers us a good way to meet and make friends and at least twice a month an entertaining day out sometimes just us men, and sometimes with our wives/partners. We have a good story to tell, though at the moment, maybe, we are not so good at telling it. So, thank you to all of you for making our Club something worth selling to our friends, family and neighbours.

But – and isn't there always a but in life?? – I regret that we remain in a vulnerable position. Once or twice this year we have got near to dropping below the minimum number of members attending the meeting (this is the agreement we have with the hotel for the minimum number of meals we will pay for each month). With the recent and sad demise of our friend Don, our membership stands at 39. We do have a couple of new members hopefully joining us next month, but to be in a comfortable and safe position our membership needs to be in the high forties or low fifties.

It is a disappointment to me that, in my presidential year, and despite banging on about it over the year, between us all we have only invited 3 or 4 guests to experience our Club. I hope, in David's year a President we can do far more to encourage new members. To that end, in the pack given to you this morning you have 2 copies of a new glossy leaflet for us to give to someone while sharing our enthusiasm for the club.

