

# DISTRICT DIRECTOR'S REPORT

April 2024

**Introduction:** As the District 71 Director, I am pleased to present a summary of challenges, successes, and strategies for the program year 2023-2024.

**Was it Worth it?** This was a question posed recently by a member regarding my role as District Director (DD). I replied without hesitation. "It is an honour to serve the members of District 71. Yes - there are challenges and I have had to make some sacrifices, but the rewards are many. For example, I have access to a global network of fellow Toastmasters. I have loved seeing the growth in members I have worked closely with, and also seeing the growth in myself."

## District Leadership Team (DLT)



The year kicked off with a focus on building a cohesive and effective District Leadership Team. We started with a facilitated workshop entitled "Getting to know each other" where we identified and embraced our diverse leadership and communication styles. Together with our theme for the year 'Pulling together with purpose', the DLT worked collaboratively on the District Success Plan, the District Communications Plan and the District Marketing Plan which provided directions throughout the year. Our weekly DLT meetings ensured efficient and effective management of district affairs.

## District Challenges

The District has faced many challenges including low take-up of leadership roles (only 10/45 Area Directors and 6/12 Division Directors at start of July); rebuilding clubs and club culture following the pandemic and continued resistance to adopting the Pathways education program in some quarters.

Despite these challenges, the DLT set an ambitious goal for the District to reach distinguished status by the end of the program year on 30th June 2024, a feat not achieved since 2014-15.

## Key Successes

District 71 Performance								
-3.11% Growth		-0.31% Growth		38.86% of Clubs				
<b>Paid Clubs</b>			<b>Payments</b>			<b>Distinguished Clubs</b>		
Base	To Date	Base	To Date	Base	To Date			
<b>193</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>8,450</b>	<b>8,424</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>75</b>			
<b>Goals</b>			<b>Goals</b>			<b>Goals</b>		
Distinguished			Distinguished			Distinguished		
<b>193</b>			<b>8,535</b>			<b>78</b>		
Select Distinguished			Select Distinguished			Select Distinguished		
<b>194</b>			<b>8,704</b>			<b>87</b>		
President's Distinguished			President's Distinguished			President's Distinguished		
<b>199</b>			<b>8,873</b>			<b>97</b>		
Smedley Distinguished			Smedley Distinguished			Smedley Distinguished		
<b>203</b>			<b>9,126</b>			<b>107</b>		

### 1 - Snapshot of Toastmasters Dashboard on 24 April 2024

- The 3 key metrics are trending towards distinguished status for the first time in 10 years.
- The extended DLT -Division Director monthly team meetings have improved communication between the District and the Area Directors and Clubs.
- Quality face-to-face District Officer Training (DOT1) in Birmingham and Dublin with input from the Region 10 Advisor, Piotr Chimko.
- 1,261 Education Awards at 24 April 2024. Quarterly Awards ceremony recognising members, clubs, areas and divisions has been well received.
- Sunday webinars have attracted global thought leaders including the current International President, Morag Mathieson, DTM.
- 'Your District! Your Voice!' Quarterly Town Hall meetings have provided a forum for members to meet the District Leaders and ask questions.
- Appointment of diverse Committees to support the District, including a Conflict Resolution Lead, a DTM Chair, District Recognition and Awards Co-Chairs and more.
- Podium finish for the District at the International Convention in Aug 2023 for the Excellence in Program Management Award.
- DLT members attended Division contests and milestone events across the District e.g. CGD Mairead attended the 50th Anniversary of Ennis club.
- The Alignment Committee's recommendation to reduce the number of Divisions from 12 to 9 will strengthen the Divisions and the Areas.
- Smooth operations and governance were upheld by mandatory committees such as the District Leadership Committee, Audit Committee and Alignment committee.

### Winning Strategies

Here are some of the winning strategies adopted this year:

- Built a strong DLT-Division Director team to improve and accelerate the communication across the District.
- Focused on building new corporate clubs by end June and creating a pipeline of both corporate and community clubs for the next DLT.
- Offered Quality training throughout the year via COT and DOT, weekly webinars and monthly leadership webinars.

- Celebrated success through a quarterly award and recognition ceremony.
- Listened to the Voice of the Members via regular surveys and responded to their needs via training.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, we are cautiously optimistic that the hard work by our members will pay off and earn our District Distinguished status.

As District Director, I am proud of the strides we have made, and the foundation laid for continued progress in the future.

Elizabeth Jordan, District 71 Director (2023-24)