

# DIDCOT ROTARY CLUB

## COVID CHRONICLE

*Keeping us connected*

### WELL DONE ROTARY!



It's official: the WHO region of Africa has been declared wild polio-free

On 25<sup>th</sup> August, the World Health Organisation's Africa region was officially certified free from wild poliovirus, signifying a major milestone in the battle to eradicate the disease worldwide. Initial TV coverage didn't mention Rotary, or any of the other organisations involved, but later media coverage, both print and online, did mention Rotary International.

This certification has come four years after Nigeria, the last polio-endemic country in Africa, recorded its final case of wild polio and is an incredible public health achievement for Rotary members, the African region, and Rotary's partners in the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI).

This progress is the result of a decades-long effort across the 47 countries in the WHO's African region and now means that five of the six WHO regions, which represent 90% of the world's population, will be free of polio.

Millions of health workers have travelled by foot, boat, bike and bus to reach children, and innovative strategies have been developed to vaccinate those living among conflict

and insecurity, plus a huge disease surveillance network created to test cases of paralysis and check sewage for the virus.

In 1996, Rotary and our partners joined with Nelson Mandela to jumpstart Africa's commitment to polio eradication. Since then, 9 billion doses of oral polio vaccine have been provided, averting an estimated 1.8 million cases of wild poliovirus on the continent.

By raising funds for polio eradication, advocating with world governments and national and local leaders, and raising awareness, Rotarians have contributed nearly US \$890 million to conquer polio in the region.

