

PETER LUNN

CHAIRMAN OF LUNN'S THE JEWELLERS



What are your thoughts, in general, on charitable giving?

So many people simply want to 'put something back'. I was a founding Director of SOS Bus, the huge number of volunteers that work for the charity are amazing and dedicated folk and when asked why they do it, many say 'I just wanted to put something back'.

I believe we all have a moral duty to help others, financial giving where possible is great but many people contribute so much by giving very generously of themselves.

Is your giving personal or corporate or a combination of both?

A bit of both but unfortunately the size of giving has been impacted by the recession. Personally, amongst other charities, I support my church and as Convenor of the church Finance Committee I am acutely aware of how tough raising finance can be. Some years ago I established The Lunn's Charitable Trust and in addition we have a great staff charity team within Lunn's which has supported many worthwhile causes. Every couple of years our team votes for the cause they wish to support, currently our staff are raising money for the Alzheimer's Society.

How do you give to charity: monetarily, your own time as a volunteer or your specialist skills?

Monetarily, where I can and also using what business skills I might have, for example, my time spent as a Director of SOS Bus, helping on church committees and more recently as a Director of Giving Northern Ireland.

What types of causes do you favour and why?

It's often said that there are no bad charities, there is just such a huge amount of need everywhere. Having said that we, in Giving Northern Ireland we seek to guide people towards a targeted approach to their giving. People in this province are renowned for their wonderful generosity yet a scattergun approach to giving can be much less impactful than a well thought out targeted approach. My personal particular interests outside my church are locally based, trying to help people who have been hit by hard times and who may also be troubled by alcohol and drug abuse. That's why I set up the Lunn's Charitable Trust which seeks to help people who are often homeless and in need of specialist care and shelter. I wish we could do more in the Trust but as the economy improves so will our ability to do more in the Trust.

Do you believe that companies and individuals have a duty to help others? If yes, why?

Yes, I passionately believe this. What a selfish, horrible world it would be if we were not able to help others. 'Putting something back' refers to so many facets of giving, volunteering for charitable work, caring for others and financial support. The many thousands of carers in our society are unsung heroes and rarely get credit for all their unselfish endeavours.

From a corporate point of view I believe that the same moral code applies, business is there to make profit, to create wealth and to use that wealth wisely. Some of that wealth should be directed back into helping those who are less fortunate. Many companies

already subscribe to this philosophy and part of our remit in Giving Northern Ireland is to help those in our corporate world, who at present don't fully subscribe to the concept of targeted giving to fully join in the concept of 'putting something back'.

What is your message to business people who may be thinking about becoming more involved in strategic philanthropy?

Do! It's a joy for you personally as well as for your families and businesses to help make a difference by having a strategic approach to giving. At Giving Northern Ireland we are here to help, please start by giving us a call if you need advice, our Office Manager is Tracy Bell who can be reached at 028 9044 6407.

7. Giving Northern Ireland was set up last year to champion Philanthropy. Why do you think it is important that there is an organisation that helps

businesses and individuals think more strategically about giving?

As I have said earlier we are very generous people in Northern Ireland but we are also pretty busy and whilst many of us support a variety of charities perhaps we haven't really sat down and thought about how targeted giving can make a real difference to people's lives. There are many organisations within the province who can give useful advice but at Giving Northern Ireland we do not support any specific charity whether local or international. Our whole 'raison d'être' is to promote giving, the advantages of structured giving and the joy that this can bring to both the giver and the receiver.