

## Rotary and WheelPower Guidelines for working together

### **Introduction**

This guidance document outlines how Rotary clubs and WheelPower can work together with the aim of delivering suitable activities to the benefit of people with spinal injuries in communities. This document is intended as a useful guide for WheelPower representatives and Rotary clubs to enable a positive working relationship which will grow and develop.

### **Why is this partnership in place?**

The official partnership was created in 2015, although many Rotary clubs have been supporting WheelPower for a few years informally. This national partnership encourages more collaboration and skill sharing across the country. The partnership has the support of the RIBI Vocational Committee and WheelPower.

WheelPower is committed to providing sporting opportunities, facilities and equipment to enable disabled people to play sport and lead healthy active lives. Rotary is equally committed to improving the lives of others.

This partnership opens up a new avenue of opportunity for both organisations to expand their reach and achieve great success. Both parties will benefit from a new group of volunteers with new skills which will increase the success rate and open up doors for new ventures.

Both organisations are well-established and trustworthy organisations with opportunities for personal growth. WheelPower may discover the many Rotary opportunities such as international projects, local initiatives and working with young people whilst Rotarians will find out about the impressive array of activities on offer through WheelPower.

### **Who to contact**

The Rotary District Vocational Officers will be the main points of contact for WheelPower counterparts in the area and should encourage local clubs and groups to step forward if interested in working with WheelPower. WheelPower can also contact the Projects Manager at Rotary GBI headquarters in Alcester via [cds@rotarygbi.org](mailto:cds@rotarygbi.org) or call 01789 765 411 for advice.

The WheelPower contact is Emma Lau, Events Officer for WheelPower. You can contact her at [rotary@wheelpower.org.uk](mailto:rotary@wheelpower.org.uk) or at the WheelPower office on 01296 395 995.

## Project areas

There are many project areas where all parties can work together. The following list is not exhaustive:

### 1. Fundraising

WheelPower has placed a Physical Activity Advisor into a number of spinal injury centres to have an active presence within the unit and provide expertise in regards to sport and physical activity to support all patients to lead healthy active lives after injury. Alongside providing general advice and information on sport and physical activity, the advisor acts as a buddy to patients and supports them to attend their rehabilitation sessions. Rotarians can help by raising funds for the one or more of the following, this list is not exhaustive:

- A week of sport for one participant to attend the Inter Spinal Unit Games £700
- A weekend of sport for one participant at a Sports Training Camp £100
- A day of sport for one young participant at a primary or Junior Sports Camp £50

There are other fundraising options which will further help the spinal injuries units, information for which is available from WheelPower. These range in targets of £500 for a spinal unit equipment box to £5,200 to fund a much needed physical activity adviser in a spinal injury unit for a year. WheelPower currently have four advisors and are looking to place advisors in all 12 units to better support the rehabilitation of recently paralysed people.

There may also be Rotary projects which WheelPower colleagues may wish to fundraise for through sponsored activities.

### 2. Volunteering

Rotary volunteers are invited to support local and national events with WheelPower, in particular:

#### **a. The Inter Spinal Unit Games**

The Inter Spinal Unit Games is an introduction to sport and a friendly competition between the Spinal Injury Centres which takes place at Stoke Mandeville Stadium, birthplace of the Paralympic movement. The Games supports patients' rehabilitation, and for many this is their first experience away from the hospital since their injury. Rotarians could offer their expert event management skills to help set-up the event, support athletes at meal times and help with other duties with agreement of the organisers and clubs/district.

#### **b. Junior Programme**

WheelPower's junior programme enables disabled children to participate in a range of disability sports in a fun, non-competitive and fully inclusive environment. The programme is designed to give participants the chance to see what sports are on offer to them and to create a central hub through which participants can be signposted to local clubs where they can participate regularly. Rotarians can offer assistance, which would be greatly appreciated, with setting up the event, helping attendees, support athletes and offer advice to them and their families. There may be other event elements which can be agreed upon between participating clubs/districts.

3. Shared projects

a. Rotary in Great Britain & Ireland and WheelPower Relays

WheelPower could help Rotary clubs and districts to organise wheelchair relays which increase access to sport for disabled people and provide exciting activities in communities. These events would be called Rotary GBI and WheelPower Relays and offer great opportunities for people to become involved with wheelchair sports as well as showcase this great partnership.

The events would require guidelines from WheelPower to ensure success and safety. This guidance would include:

1. Finding or suggesting a suitable venue.
2. Equipment requirements.
3. Health and safety guidelines.
4. Understanding budget requirements.
5. Understanding how many people would be required.
6. Signpost participants to other sports and physical activities.

b. Other events and projects

At the very least, the activities must meet the following criteria:

1. Reflect current skills of participants.
2. Offer a new opportunity to expand on current skills.
3. Develop additional proficiencies.
4. Support the local community.

**Finding the perfect match**

Rotarians and WheelPower will need to know the following information in order to match people to opportunities:

1. Number of participants needed.
2. Location.
3. Duties required.
4. Duration of activity.

### **About Rotary**

Rotary in Great Britain and Ireland is a volunteer-led organisation with thousands of members in hundreds of clubs. Rotarians are committed to improving the lives of others through great ideas, energy and the application of skills. Clubs may also have a particular focus on an area of interest such as health, education, international work or even youth opportunities. Each club is different and full of a mixture of skills.

There are 26 Rotary districts across Great Britain and Ireland with various district officers who have specific roles including youth service, community, vocational, international etc. They report to their national committee. Each district is led by a district governor. Within each district are several Rotary clubs.

Clubs will work collaboratively to achieve a goal. This collaboration can stretch across the world. A great example is the determination to eradicate polio. Since the 1980s, 125 endemic countries have been reduced to three, thanks to a very driven effort to fundraise and administer the polio vaccine to millions of children. Rotarians working all across the globe have worked very hard to achieve this, supported by WHO, UNICEF and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

The Rotary Global Swimarathon is a great example of a local activity which spread across the world, thanks to the social media skills of a new Rotarian who joined the Rotary Club of Grantham. A local sponsored swim transformed into a global campaign with thousands of swimmers all over the world. All took the plunge at the exactly same time, 12pm GMT, and earned a Guinness World Record as well as raised money to help End Polio Now.

Internationally, there are over a million Rotarians in all corners of the world who will welcome any Rotarian visitor making this a very big family.

### **About WheelPower**

#### **What we do**

Each year, many thousands of men, women and children become disabled due to an accident or illness. Many more are born with a disability which means they need to use a wheelchair.

WheelPower, the national charity for wheelchair sport, provides opportunities, facilities and equipment which enable disabled people to play sport and lead healthy active lives.

Through its member Sport Associations and links with other organisations WheelPower supports individuals to find a sport which they are passionate about.

#### **Who we help**

WheelPower delivers a comprehensive programme of sporting opportunities for disabled people of all abilities which include:

- Introduction to wheelchair sport for children
- Opportunities for recently disabled people to play sport during their rehabilitation
- Training and competitions for adults and juniors
- Education and training for officials and volunteers
- Provision of sporting facilities at Stoke Mandeville Stadium
- Sports wheelchairs for young and newly disabled people
- Support for British Teams home and abroad

### **Origins of WheelPower**

Over 65 years ago, Dr. Ludwig Guttmann began using sport as part of the rehabilitation of spinal cord injured patients from World War II at Stoke Mandeville Hospital. Guttmann established a competition for patients which coincided with the 1948 London Olympic Games. Since then the Paralympics, or “Parallel Olympics”, have become the pinnacle of international competition for athletes.

Today, Stoke Mandeville Stadium is the national disability sports centre and home of wheelchair sport providing accessible facilities for training and events for disabled men, women and children from all over the country.

### **Conclusion**

It is hoped that all involved parties will enjoy this rewarding expanded relationship and explore new projects. Positive relationships with organisations which share the same ethics and values can help all to further enjoy the inspirational activities undertaken on a daily basis.

The Rotary in Great Britain & Ireland and WheelPower partnership opens the doors to new friends, new ideas and new energy. We look forward to working together.