

# wetwheels FOUNDATION

Patron – HRH Princess Royal

**Wetwheels Foundation Appeal**  
2021.2026



[www.wetwheelsfoundation.org](http://www.wetwheelsfoundation.org)

**“Never have there been more possibilities – but nor have I sensed more challenges”**

Hello and thank you for taking the time to read our Wetwheels Foundation Appeal. After an extremely challenging year, we have weathered the COVID 19 storm with some fantastic support from our small staff team, trustees, volunteers, key donors and funding partners.

But why are we sharing this document? Well after navigating this year of all years with professionalism, due care and whilst still making progress with our development plans, there are dark clouds ahead.



For many disabled people - myself included - the impact of the pandemic will last longer and be more profound than for most. We believe, more than ever, that Wetwheels will play an important part in the health and wellbeing of our participants, as well as their families and carers.

There is something very special about being on the water. For someone with a disability, being at sea offers unparalleled freedoms. Your mind and imagination fill with things that once didn't seem possible. Paralysed from the neck down in an accident at the age of 18, I have maintained the passionate belief that anything can be achieved given a positive approach and the support to help make that dream a reality. That passion remains undimmed.

In our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year, The Foundation is at an important crossroads. Having created a solid infrastructure, with carefully targeted resourcing to reflect the pressures on funders and donors, we have realised this infrastructure is fundamental to not only our plans to grow and innovate, but the overall sustainability of Wetwheels.

This includes true UK coverage - with a new base in Scotland being planned as I write, through to a boat for the beautiful coastline of Wales, we have a number of conversations taking place. This also includes ways to limit our carbon footprint and explore new technologies with our partners, retaining the protection of our natural environment as a core Value.

As we get back on the water and look ahead with optimism, we maintain our ambition to do more. You will see just what we have achieved over the past 12 months - and what we aspire to achieve. Wetwheels provides the opportunity where none had previously existed for many thousands of disabled people to access the sea, often for the first time.

Our past and current donors continue to be magnificent. But we are seeking those who share our passion for the water and our objectives of true barrier free experiences for everyone in our society. To give hope, aspiration and true enjoyment please support us and ensure the progress we have made is not put at risk. If you would like to part of our journey, we would be delighted to hear from you.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Geoff Holt'.

*Geoff Holt MBE DL, Founder and Trustee, Wetwheels Foundation*

## 1. Our Vision

To ensure everyone can access the water with a safe, barrier free, enriching experience.

## 2. What we do

- Wetwheels operates fully adapted boats across a network of 6 coastal communities around England. Nearly half of those who come onboard are disabled people with profound and complex, often life-limiting, disabilities. This often-invisible subset of disabled people have had a greater vulnerability because of COVID 19 and they are a priority group for re-engagement to support wellbeing, physical and mental health.

The range of disabilities of those accessing Wetwheels included, but was not limited to:

- Wheelchair users;
  - People affected by stroke;
  - People with sensory impairments;
  - People with mobility impairments;
  - Those living with dementia;
  - Behavioural disabilities including autism;
  - People with neurological conditions, Parkinson's or Alzheimer's;
  - People with learning difficulties;
  - People with acquired brain injuries;
  - People with multiple, profound and complex conditions;
  - Former service personnel and veterans.
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- Providing high-value life experiences is what makes us unique. Wetwheels both inspires and sparks curiosity. Participants can leave their disability on the dock and become members of the Wetwheels crew. Those coming onboard are active participants, rather than simply passengers. And sharing these experiences with friends, family and carers makes it even more special.

### **3. Mission Statement**

- Wetwheels offers a unique barrier free opportunity for disabled and disadvantaged people of all ages - including those with multiple, profound and complex impairments - to access the water.
- Central to our experience is active participation and empowerment - helping to broaden aspirations, increase confidence and directly impact on health and wellbeing.
- We continually innovate through new technologies, improving our experiences through the excellence of our teams and feedback from participants.
- We are working to ensure a sustainable operation through a range of income streams and funding. By 2026, we aim to support 12,000 people every year to participate in a Wetwheels experience across the UK, with the widest reach and awareness possible.

### **4. How we are structured**

The Wetwheels Foundation is a registered charity that delivers services through our network of Wetwheels Operators, constituted by way of Trust Deed. The Trustees play a central role and have regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit in planning the activities of The Wetwheels Foundation. The Foundation provides stewardship, management, guidance, support and information for our network:

- Wetwheels Solent based in Portsmouth
- Wetwheels Jersey
- Wetwheels Hamble
- Wetwheels South East based in Dover
- Wetwheels Yorkshire based in Whitby
- Wetwheels South West based in Falmouth

## 5. COVID 19 – impact and response

### **Activity and participation**

- Across the fleet we took c. 1,000 people out on the water in 2020 - a significant achievement during the pandemic.
- We were able to get out on the water, at a time when many of the most vulnerable in our society were and are, experiencing serious mental health problems, depression, anxiety and physical impact through not being able to access outdoor settings safely. Even as lockdown eases there are still many unknowns and health implications.
- We have received powerful and often moving feedback on the impact of coming onboard - getting into the open air with such a sense of freedom can often, in many cases, be life-changing.
- This incredibly challenging period has demonstrated our responsiveness and robust operability across a diverse range of locations and communities.

### **Wetwheels South West**

- Wetwheels South West, based in Falmouth, is the 6th boat in our fleet and was delivered on time and to budget, mid-pandemic.
- We are already embracing many of the hardest to reach and most impacted by COVID 19, often in isolated communities, as well as those visiting the area.



### ***Innovation and building for the future***

- Our visit to **Port Edgar, Edinburgh** at the end of May this year was a huge success. With our Yorkshire boat we spent a wonderful few days taking some inspiring people out on the water and developing new networks, with the aim of creating a base in this iconic location.



- Creation of the first **virtual reality** experience on a Wetwheels boat - so if someone cannot come to Wetwheels, we can come to them, and no one is excluded. To view please visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YIur5A5IMWw>



Geoff visiting a local College for disabled young people enjoying the wonders of virtual reality!

## *A letter to Wetwheels*

*"We went onboard Wetwheels with our daughter, aged 10 who has profound cerebral palsy and is affected cognitively and physically, her brother aged 14 (who is having therapy for extreme anxiety), Mum, Grandpa (with limited mobility) and Granny.*



*Everyone had an amazing time and thought it was one of the best experiences of their lives. The team were absolutely fantastic. I can't praise them enough.*

*We were full of positivity afterwards - an incredible uplifting experience which improved everyone's wellbeing."*

## **6. Huge progress with strong headwinds**

In combination with the challenges of the past year and ongoing stewardship of The Foundation - and as the organisation has grown - we have created a professional structure to reflect the needs and demands of our work.

This infrastructure is fundamental to the management of our charitable governance. It enables us to innovate and crucially, growing the fleet, to achieve our Mission.

Our Chief Executive and Company Secretary (both part-time and targeted on key tasks) have made an enormous difference improving communication with trustees, Operators and partners.

With this infrastructure in place the following outlines our journey, achievements and future areas of priority:

- CEO role of The Wetwheels Foundation appointed.
- Review all key policies to ensure the most up-to-date compliance e.g. health and safety, data, skills and training.
- Review and sign-off of new Licensing agreements for Operators, reflecting best practice in all areas of operation and delivery.
- Full system of robust Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in place. These ensure all Wetwheels experiences are delivered to the same exacting standards.
- Registered as members of the Fundraising Regulator and development of associated policy bespoke for Wetwheels.
- Completion of both office based and boat based audits across the fleet.
- Recruitment of 2 trustees successfully completed - offering additional experience and expertise.
- Implementation of Quarterly reporting process to ensure licensing adherence and updates for agreed KPIs e.g. numbers of trips, range of participants, continuous improvement.
- Review of servicing and maintenance supplier relationships completed, after the most recent boat build and delivery ensuring best value for money and co-ordination of data and learning.

- Adaptation of our bespoke online feedback process enabling reaction to symbols, video clip usage, sound, written comment and 'snapshots' of reaction from both participants and those who support them. Whether someone has autism, dementia or is a non-verbal disabled participant, we believe that everyone should have their own way to express themselves.
- Co-ordination of central fundraising Trust and grant applications and activity. New database and funding targets with focus on the role of The Foundation as a driver for expansion, innovation, research and governance.
- Planning to raise the national awareness of Wetwheels - linked in part to future expansion but also existing locations, helping ensure a broad range of participants continue to access our activities and our model is sustainable.
- Commenced initial approaches and scoping for new Wetwheels locations – our Scotland outreach visit was a huge success.



## 7. Funding – it's time to talk

- Our long-term sustainability is something we are confident of achieving after our funding plans and events were significantly hampered in 2020 and early 2021.
- We have now recommenced our National Development Board, which is a small group of volunteers who help guide our fundraising activities and connect us to new donors and supporters.



Sir Ben Ainslie launches a new Wetwheels Solent after a successful fundraising campaign

- The following table explains how income targets meet our annual running costs and the purchase of 4 boats over the next 5 years:

<b>INCOME</b>	<b>2021.22</b>	<b>2022.23</b>	<b>2023.24</b>	<b>2024.25</b>	<b>2025.26</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Boats 7 - 10 funding	£115,000	£345,000	£230,000	£115,000	£115,000	<b>£920,000</b>
Grants	£25,500	£27,500	£35,000	£38,500	£40,000	<b>£166,500</b>
Donations	£29,500	£40,000	£50,000	£60,000	£65,000	<b>£244,500</b>
Fundraising events	£10,000	£17,500	£25,000	£32,500	£35,000	<b>£120,000</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£180,000</b>	<b>£430,000</b>	<b>£340,000</b>	<b>£246,000</b>	<b>£255,000</b>	<b>£1,451,000</b>

<b>COSTS</b>						
Boats 7 – 10 capital cost	£115,000	£345,000	£230,000	£115,000	£115,000	<b>£920,000</b>
Grants to Operators	£3,000	£10,500	£16,000	£18,000	£30,000	<b>£77,500</b>
PT CEO & Company Secretary (including fundraising & stewardship)	£45,600	£57,600	£57,600	£69,600	£69,600	<b>£300,000</b>
Boat audits	£3,000	£800	£4,000	£900	£5,000	<b>£13,700</b>
Fundraising events	£1,500	£3,500	£5,000	£7,000	£8,500	<b>£25,500</b>
Finance Governance	£11,500	£11,615	£11,731	£11,848	£11,967	<b>£58,662</b>
Insurance Legal						
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£179,600</b>	<b>£429,015</b>	<b>£324,331</b>	<b>£222,348</b>	<b>£240,067</b>	<b>£1,395,362</b>

This funding will lead to the following outcomes:

<b>On the water</b>	<b>Key Driver</b>
1. Ensure our boats continue to be <b>COVID 19 safe</b> and secure in the face of emerging variants and subsequent impact.	COVID 19 safety
2. By 2026 have a fleet of up to 10 boats, with up to <b>12,000 participants</b> per year many of whom will be those with profound and complex disabilities.	Increased participation
3. Widen participation amongst the <b>hardest to reach groups</b> (c. 1,200 per boat per year) who are receiving limited support and who are often excluded.	Enhanced reach
4. Aim to identify a minimum of up to <b>20% new participants per annum</b> to benefit from being on the water.	Blue Health and impact

<b>Governance and sustainability</b>	<b>Key Driver</b>
1. Deliver new pathways to <b>develop fundraising</b> via the National Development Board.	New income & sustainability
2. Ensure our charity management complies with charitable, legal and fiscal obligations with a <b>resilience and core strength</b> in the face of any future challenges.	Excel in charity Governance
3. Embed the latest finance and cost management processes to ensure best <b>value for money</b> .	Value for money
4. Retain, enhance and <b>share skills and knowledge</b> via our core team and Trustees - embedding our position as the Maritime & Coastguard Agency Subject Matter Expert in taking disabled people to sea.	Enhanced capability & shared learning
5. Build on new links with Defra and other government and community networks to drive the agenda forwards for <b>equality of access and opportunity for all</b> .	Building partnerships for the future

## 8. A message from our Chair

After such a challenging year for everyone, can we truly thank all those who have continued to support us and take an interest in our work.

Since we were formed in 2011 we have retained a firm belief in keeping The Foundation as a tightly focussed and highly professional organisation. This brings out the best in our people and those who place their trust with us when coming onboard - and who then create their own journey on Wetwheels.

With my fellow trustees, I would be delighted to welcome you onboard one of our boats to see first-hand, just what we do and how it makes a difference - please do get in touch.

We hope you feel inspired to support us so that many more thousands of people can experience the magic of Wetwheels.

*Andy Fell*

Andy Fell - Chair of Trustees



Please see the following contact details if you would like to support our Appeal:

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Geoff Holt MBE DL, Founder and Trustee

Read our latest Annual Report:

<https://wetwheelsfoundation.org/about-us/>



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