

wetwheels

SOLENT



PARTICIPANT STORY: JESSICA FUSTER

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A year of unforgettable moments, inspiring partnerships and life changing experiences, across an extraordinary year of adventure.

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INTERVIEW

Charting a course for impact

Hear from Impact Match founder, Leigh Smyth, about what drew her to support Wetwheels Solent.

A year of Wetwheels Solent

TOTAL EXPERIENCES

260

TOTAL PARTICIPANTS

2060

TOTAL WHEEL
CHAIR USERS

366

TOTAL AMBULANT DISABLED

704

FIRST TIMERS

1091

AGED UNDER 18

350

AGED 18-65

1423

AGED 65+

287



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WELCOME



Geoff Holt MBE DL
Founder, Wetwheels

There is something about being at sea that never leaves you. Only offshore can you truly understand the magnificence of the ocean: the wildlife, the infinite skies, the sensory overload of a breaking wave. That's what sits at the heart of Wetwheels Solent for me.

What began as a single boat with a big idea has grown into a charity that enables thousands of people to experience the freedom, confidence and wellbeing that time on the water can bring. Here on the Solent, our dedicated crews, volunteers and supporters work tirelessly to ensure that people of all ages and abilities can access the unique benefits of blue space, often for the very first time.

Over the years, as thousands of participants have come onboard, both new and returning, Wetwheels Solent has become a vital part of the wellbeing of many individuals, their families, friends and caregivers. For people who are often told what they cannot do, the sea offers a powerful counter narrative. At sea, possibilities feel different. Your mind opens, your imagination expands, and things that once felt out of reach begin to feel achievable.

Recently, I undertook a personal challenge to revisit a journey I first completed many years ago, circumnavigating Great Britain onboard Wetwheels as part of the 'Finish the Dream' campaign. It was demanding in ways I had not anticipated, but deeply rewarding. Along the way, I was reminded just how far the Wetwheels movement has come and how much further it can go with continued support.

My dream to ensure no one is excluded from being on the water is yet to be fully realised – and this is why the aspiration to reach more people, remains one of our key ambitions. While the growth of Wetwheels nationally is incredibly important, it is the local impact of our operators that I enjoy hearing about the most. Wetwheels Solent remains a place where lives are changed quietly, daily and often unexpectedly, through moments of connection, confidence and joy on the water. We have come so far in a relatively short space of time and been very fortunate to work with some truly incredible crews, volunteers, partners, sponsors, friends and supporters.

I hope this edition gives you a sense of the people, stories and spirit that make this charity what it is and I look forward to seeing many of you out on the waves next year.

Geoff Holt MBE DL



Emma Wilson
Editor-in-chief

A note from the editor.

Last year's first edition was about introducing Wetwheels Solent and the people behind it. What has struck me most over the past year is how consistently people describe their time onboard. The language changes, but the feeling doesn't. Every time someone comes off a Wetwheels Solent catamaran, they use words like "free", "calm", "confident", and "inspired" to describe the way it made them feel. Whether it is a participant, a volunteer, a family member or a supporter, the sea leaves its mark.

This edition continues to shine a light on the people who make Wetwheels Solent what it is, those who give their time, their expertise and their belief to ensure that no one is excluded from experiencing life on the water. I am incredibly proud of the team behind this magazine and grateful to everyone who has shared their stories so openly.

Thank you for reading, for supporting and for being part of the Wetwheels Solent journey, please share this with your friends and family, as the team take a well-earned rest before starting work on the next edition!

Emma Wilson

EVENTS

Key highlights from 2025



PORTSMOUTH: LORD MAYOR'S VOLUNTEER GARDEN PARTY

The Lord Mayor of Portsmouth's Volunteer Garden Party provided a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the individuals who give their time and energy to strengthen the city. Volunteers Andy Poulton, Dave Wright and Luke Reynolds attended alongside founder Geoff Holt MBE, proudly representing Wetwheels Solent. The event brought together volunteers and community leaders from across Portsmouth, creating space to share stories, laughter and a shared commitment to inclusion.



GOSPORT MARINE FESTIVAL

Wetwheels Solent had a fantastic presence at the Gosport Marine Festival, where 50 people, including disabled participants and their families, were able to experience the thrill of being out on the water. Organised by Portsmouth Harbour Marine CIC, the festival celebrated Gosport's rich maritime heritage. We were proud to play our part in breaking down barriers, building confidence and creating memorable experiences on the Solent.



RELAY YOUR WAY EVENT

Participation in the Cerebra Charity Relay Your Way event brought some truly memorable moments. A highlight came from Harry, the baton bearer for the Wetwheels Solent leg, whose mum shared how he completely lit up when given the chance to drive the boat. For Harry, who is autistic and profoundly deaf, the experience was both empowering and joyful. We are grateful to Fieldfisher Personal Injury and Medical Negligence for sponsoring the leg, and to Toucan Diversity and Paul Smith OBE for receiving the baton as it continued through Gunwharf Quays to the Mary Rose Academy.

«We had the most fabulous experience on the water with Wetwheels. Harry is autistic and profoundly deaf and he often finds it difficult to express himself. He completely lit up when he had the chance to drive the boat! It was wonderful to see him so happy and engaged. Thanks again for a truly memorable experience!»



EASTBOURNE OUTREACH

Each year, we partner with Wetwheels South East at Sovereign Harbour in Eastbourne to deliver something truly special. The arrival of both boats brings joy, laughter and unforgettable moments for participants of all abilities. A highlight of the outreach programme is Pirate Day, where Wetwheels boats, the RNLI and members of Sovereign Harbour Yacht Club take part in an energetic on water celebration complete with water fights, treasure hunts and pirate shouts. These days create lasting memories for everyone involved.



RVYC DISABLED OPEN DAY

A fantastic day was enjoyed at the Royal Victoria Yacht Club Disabled Open Day in Fishbourne. In excellent weather, the skipper and crew delivered four consecutive trips, enabling 40 participants with a range of abilities to experience the empowerment and freedom of being onboard. Each trip included the opportunity to take the helm and enjoy time out on the Solent.



COWES WEEK

Cowes Week 2025 was another standout moment in the Wetwheels Solent calendar. Partnering with Cowes Sailability, we welcomed over 200 disabled participants and their families onboard Wetwheels Solent. Together, we shared the excitement of racing and the unique experience of being out on the water during one of the most iconic sailing events in the world.

YARMOUTH WEEK

Our annual visit to Yarmouth once again delivered unforgettable experiences. Over 200 participants joined trips departing from one of the UK's prettiest harbours, travelling across the Solent to see Alum Bay's multicoloured sands and the world famous Needles. These much anticipated trips continue to sell out within days, made possible by the support of Yarmouth Harbour and an outstanding volunteer crew.





SOUTHAMPTON INTERNATIONAL BOAT SHOW

Wetwheels Solent enjoyed another highly successful year at the Southampton International Boat Show. Across the event, we welcomed 473 visitors of all ages and abilities onboard for Wetwheels experiences. The show continues to be an important opportunity to showcase our work and engage new audiences with accessible boating.

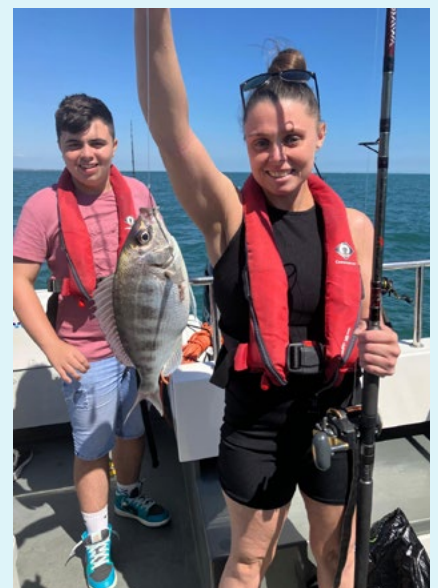


GEOFF HOLT MBE ANNUAL GOLF DAY

The annual Wetwheels Solent Golf Day raised £3,067.43, funding eight 90 minute accessible boating experiences for disabled children and adults. Congratulations go to Callum Kendall as individual winner and to Carrington West as the winning team, with PSP Logistics named as runners up captained by their MD, Frank Dixie. Heartfelt thanks go to all sponsors, players, donors and volunteers who supported the day, especially Mediabase Direct for sponsoring the Longest Drive, EMARI Group for sponsoring Best Individual, American Golf for sponsoring Best Team, and Solent Sky Services for providing drone footage that captured the event from above.

FISHING PAY AND PLAY EXPERIENCES

Wetwheels Solent continues to offer fully accessible sea angling experiences off the south coast. Using our Cheetah catamaran and supported by experienced skippers, participants of all abilities can enjoy the excitement of fishing, with electric reels available for those with limited hand movement. Feedback from families highlights not only the thrill of the experience but also the welcoming, supportive nature of our crew.





TRAVELLERS CHOICE AWARD

We're proud to share that Wetwheels Solent has been recognised with a Tripadvisor Travelers' Choice Award for 2025! This places us among the top 10% of experiences worldwide - based not on industry panels or paid entries, but on the real reviews and opinions of the people who matter most: our visitors.

Every smile, every story, every moment of confidence gained on the water has contributed to this recognition. It's further proof that accessibility and adventure can go hand in hand! Thank you to everyone who has joined us on board, left a review, or spread the word - this award means so much to us.

«What a journey! We went out on a beautiful sunny morning with 5 pupils from our school! The boat was superbly set up to be accessible in every way. The crew on board were all amazing and were so brilliant with the pupils and even helped convince one or two to experience driving the boat. An amazing trip run by amazing people!»

- The Cedar School

Sponsored Days:



EXXONMOBIL: SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

With support from ExxonMobil, Wetwheels Solent and Wetwheels Hamble delivered two days of trips from Ocean Village in Southampton. A total of 51 participants from local schools and organisations joined us on the water, with the ExxonMobil Fawley site providing a striking backdrop.

Alongside the trips, ExxonMobil provided branded goodie bags for all participants. Feedback from schools praised the accessibility of the vessel and the encouragement provided by the crew, particularly in supporting young people to build confidence and take control at the helm.



HILL ROBINSON AND VETERANS OUTREACH

Thanks to sponsorship from Hill Robinson, Wetwheels Solent was able to deliver a dedicated trip for Veterans Outreach Support members and their families. Participants described the experience as exhilarating and inclusive, with opportunities to helm the boat and enjoy fast paced runs on the Solent.

Founder Geoff Holt MBE emphasised how meaningful these trips are in allowing veterans to reconnect with the water and share memories alongside their families.



THE WIGHT BRAINY BUNCH

Families from The Wight Brainy Bunch were welcomed onboard for a 90 minute high speed trip on the Solent, generously sponsored by Hill Robinson Recruitment. Departing from Cowes, the group enjoyed views of Osborne House and the chance to take the helm, creating a joyful and empowering experience.



Paul Cook, COO, Hill Robinson:

«So far, we've sponsored four trips, involving eight boats, and have taken 80 people out on the water...we're thrilled with the impact it's had.»



MAJOR DONATION FROM GREEN DIAMOND CLUB

What does 20k do for Wetwheels Solent? 400 people on the water!

The Green Diamond Club - a pioneering force in accessible watersports - has donated an incredible £20,000 to Wetwheels Solent, helping to bring the thrill of the sea to up to 400 disabled people this year!

Founded by Peter Hammond in 1957, the Green Diamond Club was a non-profit organisation giving members and their friends opportunities to take part in skiing, waterskiing, sailing, windsurfing, canal cruising and many one off special events at cost.

«It seemed an obvious choice to us and we are delighted to be able to help to give disabled people the chance to have exhilarating experiences on the water.»

For decades, the club helped hundreds experience the joy of sailing, waterskiing, canal cruising and more at cost, with no paid staff, and fuelled by volunteer spirit. As the world evolved and leisure opportunities became more widely available, the club's mission felt complete.

In 2023, its members made the decision to wind down operations and pass the torch by donating their remaining funds to causes that reflect their founding values.

After voting for nominations, Wetwheels was selected as one of our two charities to support.



Geoff Holt MBE DL, Founder:

"We are absolutely delighted to have been chosen to receive this significant donation. Although it is in sad circumstances, we can give reassurance that every penny will be spent supporting disabled people so they can access our coastal waters on Wetwheels Solent and enjoy the freedom and independence of being afloat on a fully accessible boat with their friends and families. The money will enable us to support so many disabled people this season which is amazing. My heartfelt thanks go out to be Trustees and supporters of the Green Diamond organisations for choosing us to continue their legacy of getting disabled people onto the water".

A QUICK OVERVIEW OF THE

Wetwheels Foundation

The vision of the Wetwheels Foundation is to ensure everyone can access the water via a safe, barrier free, enriching experience.

Our mission is to offer a unique opportunity for disabled and disadvantaged people of all ages – including those with multiple, profound and complex impairments - to access the water.

Central to the Wetwheels 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, and improve our experience through the excellence of our teams and feedback from participants. We ensure a sustainable operation through a range of income streams, funding and support.

As of 2025, 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.

To date we had nearly 50,000 participants and have worked with more than 75 partners across the UK and Jersey (including Special Needs schools & colleges, hospices, charities and community groups).

The Wetwheels Family

Edinburgh

Jersey

Solent (Portsmouth & Southampton)

South East (Dover)

South West (Falmouth)

Torbay

Yorkshire (Whitby)



Q&A

Creating lasting memories

AN INTERVIEW WITH JO SYVRET

Emma Wilson chatted to Jo Syvret about her role as a volunteer with Wetwheels Solent spurred on by a passion to share her experiences and help other families navigate challenges.

Can you tell us a little about yourself and what you do outside of volunteering for Wetwheels Solent?

Before starting a family, I was a chartered accountant working for Ernst & Young in Southampton. Life took a very different direction when my middle child was diagnosed with cerebral palsy. I made the decision to step away from my career to focus on providing her with the very best care and opportunities possible. That journey has been intense and demanding, filled with surgeries, intensive therapies, and ongoing battles to access the right education and support. When you're suddenly catapulted into the world of disability, there's no guidebook.

We've been incredibly fortunate to live close to The Rainbow Centre in Fareham, which has been a huge source of support for our family. I've been a trustee there for the past six years, and I'm passionate about

sharing my experiences to help other families navigate similar challenges wherever I can.

How did you first get involved with Wetwheels Solent?

I've always loved being active, especially anything that gets me out on the water, whether that's boating or even paddleboarding. Having a child who uses a wheelchair inevitably placed limits on what we could do as a family, until we discovered Wetwheels. Finding a fully accessible way to enjoy being on the water together was genuinely lifechanging for us. It meant we could all share the experience, and we quickly became regular participants, every trip guaranteed a fantastic day out.

When I spotted an advert for volunteers in early 2025, I didn't hesitate. I had recently lost my husband after his battle with

MND, and I was in a period of huge transition. The idea of being back on the water while also supporting people with disabilities felt like exactly what I needed at that moment, a perfect tonic.

What does a typical volunteering day look like for you?

My day usually starts with greeting participants and helping them get ready for the trip, fitting life jackets, supporting boarding via the ramp, and making sure everyone feels comfortable. Some people arrive feeling nervous, so reassurance and a calm presence are really important. The crew are brilliant at offering subtle guidance, and our shared priority is always to make sure everyone feels safe and has a great time.

Once we're all onboard, I assist the skipper with ropes and fenders and keep an eye on the safety and wellbeing of everyone. When





«The experiences people have on the boat are often transformative. Out on the water, inclusion isn't just achieved, it's felt.»



conditions allow, we always head out of the harbour, and participants are given the opportunity to take the helm. Supporting and guiding them through that experience is incredibly rewarding. And of course, we always make sure to capture plenty of photos, evidence of the joy shared by everyone on board.

Are there any moments that really stand out for you?

Every trip creates lasting memories, not just for participants but for the crew too. Being part of something so immersive and joyful lifts me every single time I'm onboard. There's something about being out at sea that fundamentally changes people, mentally and physically. For firsttimers especially, the impact can be profound.

This season, one unforgettable moment was watching a child in a wheelchair feel sea spray on his

face for the first time, squealing with pure delight. But perhaps the most moving experience involved a gentleman with dementia. He arrived agitated and unable to recognise his partner. Over the course of the trip, he gradually settled, and when he had the chance to steer the boat, he became calm, engaged, and present with her, if only for a few precious moments. It was deeply emotional, and I felt incredibly privileged to be part of a team that made that possible.

How has volunteering shaped your perspective on disability and inclusion?

My understanding of disability has certainly broadened, but what's grown most is my appreciation of the impact Wetwheels can have. The experiences people have on the boat are often transformative. Out on the water, inclusion isn't just achieved,

it's felt. Horizons widen, confidence grows, and people become more willing to push their own boundaries. I've always encouraged my daughter to believe that anything is possible, that where there's a will, there's a way. By actively demonstrating inclusion and removing barriers, we're not just changing individual lives; the benefits spread outward, like ripples on the water.

Want to talk about your experience with Wetwheels Solent?

Get in touch with Emma@Emari.co.uk

EXPERIENCES

Sea angling adventures with Wetwheels Solent



Ever wondered what lurks beneath the waves of the Solent and English Channel? Right on our doorstep lies an incredible diversity of fish species - some you can eat, some you wouldn't want to, and some absolute monsters hiding in the depths.

At Wetwheels Solent, we offer an inclusive sea fishing experience for everyone, including wheelchair users. Our large, stable catamaran, powered by 650 HP Suzuki engines, is fully accessible and designed to get you to the best fishing spots quickly and comfortably. With skilled skippers who know the secret marks and the best times to catch, you'll spend less time travelling and more time fishing!

WHY CHOOSE WETWHEELS FOR YOUR FISHING TRIP?

- **Fully accessible platform:**
Designed for all abilities, including wheelchair users.
- **Expert skippers:**
Years of experience and knowledge of the best fishing grounds.
- **Top-quality equipment:**
Rods, reels, hooks, weights - and even bait if needed.
- **Electric reel available:**
Perfect for anyone with limited hand movement.
- **Fast and efficient travel:**
Reach distant fishing spots faster with powerful engines.

WHAT CAN WE CATCH?

Every fishing trip is different, but you might reel in:

- Bass, Whiting, Plaice, Bream, and Rays!
- Conger Eels, Dogfish, and Mackerell
- If you're really lucky... a Cod or even a Turbot!

When everyone catches at the same time, especially big fish, things can get a bit lively on deck!

WHAT DO WE NEED BEFORE WE GO?

- **Trip duration:**
Fishing trips range from 3 to 8 hours - they can be more challenging than regular Wetwheels trips.
- **Limited capacity:**
Maximum 6 anglers, with 4 rods in the water at one time for the best experience.
- **Facilities:**
There's no toilet on board, so participants will need to plan accordingly.
- **What to bring:**
Plenty of warm, waterproof clothing, your own food and drinks, and a sense of adventure!

Every fishing trip with Wetwheels is unique, tailored to create an unforgettable experience on the water, because of this pricing may vary.

As an example a 3-hour Mackerel trip for up to 4 anglers costs £350.

BOOK NOW!
office@wetwheelssolent.co.uk

Ashes at sea

A dignified farewell to celebrate a loved one's life

More and more families are choosing to honour their loved ones with a memorable and meaningful farewell on the water.

For many, the sea symbolises freedom, a return to nature, or a life-long connection to the water. Whether it's for a family member who loved the ocean or enjoyed a coastal lifestyle, a veteran connected to Portsmouth's naval legacy, or religious and cultural reasons scattering ashes at sea provides a fitting and serene farewell.

At **Wetwheels**, we offer a private, accessible, and dignified experience tailored to your wishes. Our professional and experienced team is here to ensure a smooth, respectful process and thoughtful planning while giving you the space to reflect and celebrate your loved one's life and love of the sea.

Our team is here to guide you through every step, ensuring your loved one's farewell is as unique as their life.

For more information or to book,
contact office@wetwheels.co.uk

A THOUGHTFUL, PERSONAL CEREMONY

Your journey begins as you board Wetwheels and make your way out of the harbour. At the chosen location, the ceremony can be tailored to your preferences:

- A prayer, poem, or music to mark the moment.
- Quiet reflection as the ashes are respectfully scattered.
- Biodegradable flower petals, allowing everyone to participate.
- A small portion of ashes can be kept for keepsake jewellery or urns.

To help you commemorate the day, we provide the exact GPS coordinates, including a screenshot from our chart plotter, of the scattering location so you can always revisit or remember this meaningful spot in the future.

Afterwards, many families choose to continue their time on the water with a short cruise on the Solent - a chance to reflect, reminisce, and create positive memories on this poignant day.

- **Duration:** Approx. 90 minutes
- **Cost:** Starting from £350
- **Includes:** All safety equipment and a supportive crew

Honour their memory and set them free on the
open sea - a timeless and heartfelt tribute

INTERVIEW

Charting a course for impact

IMPACT MATCH.

Helping organisations scale their social impact.

Are you serious about scaling your impact and need the partnerships, people, and plan to make it happen?

Chat with us:



Follow us:



#ImpactMatch



Impact Strategy & Advice



Impact Search



Impact Accelerator Campaigns

Enabled by a community of #impactMakers



IMPACT MATCH™

Action Able™

Inspiring leaders to build disability inclusive cultures for colleagues and customers

Commit to act



Find out more:



#ActionAble

www.saraweller.com

LEIGH SMYTH, FOUNDER, IMPACT MATCH

As founder of Impact Match, Leigh Smyth works with organisations across the UK and beyond to embed social impact into business strategy, leadership and culture. Emma Wilson spoke with Leigh about her approach to turning intent into impact, and what drew her to support Wetwheels Solent.

Can you tell us a bit about yourself and Impact Match?

I'm the founder of Impact Match, co-founder of ActionAble with Sara Weller CBE, and a trustee of AbilityNet. I've spent over 20 years working in social impact, helping organisations move beyond good intentions to deliver meaningful, measurable change. I've worked with FTSE 100 companies, global NGOs and public sector organisations, supporting boards and executive teams to bring social impact out of the margins and into the centre of business strategy because too often, purpose is treated as a side initiative that's disconnected from talent, performance and growth.

and has experienced the magic of Wetwheels Solent first-hand. What immediately stood out to me was how tangible and human the impact is. Wetwheels removes barriers in a very real way and creates experiences that people might otherwise never have access to and I love that it's inclusive by design, not as an afterthought - that authenticity really matters to me. What also attracted me was the focus on the wider ecosystem around the participant because Wetwheels truly understands that impact doesn't stop with the individual. Families, carers and communities are all part of the story, and that systems-level thinking aligns very closely with how I approach social impact more broadly too.

out about Wetwheels is that it understands disability in its broadest sense. It supports people of all ages and with all kinds of needs, whether related to physical access, learning differences, neurodiversity or cognitive change to name but a few. What matters is not the label, but that the experience is designed to be accessible, dignified and shared - that inclusive approach matters deeply to me.

Too often, services are designed for one type of disability and unintentionally exclude others whereas Wetwheels removes those boundaries and creates experiences where everyone is welcome and valued. Wetwheels is also about enabling experiences that genuinely change how people feel about themselves and their possibilities and those moments stay with people for life. From a business perspective, it's also incredibly powerful - it connects teams to purpose in a way no internal campaign ever could and it builds empathy, pride and perspective. If you want your values to mean something, you have to put them into action and Wetwheels gives you a very real way to do that.

«If you want your values to mean something, you have to put them into action and Wetwheels gives you a very real way to do that.»

Organisations care deeply about doing the right thing, but struggle to turn intent into action that lasts. My focus has always been on integration, making sure values, people and action reinforce one another - I want to help businesses do well by doing good. Impact Match is the next evolution of that mission. We exist to close the gap between ambition and action by matching purpose-driven talent with values-aligned organisations and provide the impact strategy, communications and delivery support needed to turn intent into impact, at speed and at scale. Our work sits at the intersection of impact strategy, talent and leadership, helping organisations define what they stand for, position it credibly, and embed it into how the business actually operates.

How did you first hear about Wetwheels, and what attracted you to become a sponsor?

Wetwheels came onto my radar through my friend and colleague Emma Wilson, who has been a long-time supporter of Geoff Holt's work

How does supporting Wetwheels align with your company's values and corporate social responsibility goals?

At Impact Match, we believe social impact is no longer a side initiative, it's a strategic priority and supporting Wetwheels reflects that belief in action. Our values are rooted in inclusion, equity and delivery. We're not interested in doing the right thing for show, we're interested in supporting organisations that are creating real change, in ways that are sustainable and scalable.

Wetwheels embodies that - it delivers impact that you can see and feel. It creates dignity, joy and connection, and it does so in a way that brings people together rather than separating them into labels or categories which is exactly the kind of work we want to stand behind.

What would you say to companies that are thinking of sponsoring Wetwheels?

If you're serious about delivering impact, support the organisations that deliver it. What really stands

What impact do you believe your sponsorship has had on Wetwheels and its beneficiaries?

The impact is felt at multiple levels. For participants and their families, it's about access, joy and shared experiences that might otherwise be out of reach. For Wetwheels as an organisation, sponsorship provides stability and the ability to plan, grow and reach more people and that sustainability is crucial.

For sponsors, it creates that sense of connection - it's a good reminder for leaders and teams about why social impact work matters in the first place. I've seen how experiences like this cut through the noise and re-anchor people in what really counts.

For me I see Wetwheels as impact in motion. Supporting it feels like a very natural extension of everything Impact Match stands for.

PARTICIPANT STORY

«Wetwheels gave us something priceless. A day where we could all be together, laughing, sharing the same experience, and for a moment we could just forget Alex has cancer. Those memories matter more than anything.»

AN INTERVIEW WITH JESSICA FUSTER



Tell me a little bit about yourself?

Alex and I have been together for about 15 years. We're originally from London, Alex was from Battersea and I'm from Chelsea, and we moved to Newport on the Isle of Wight in 2021 as his mother is based in Ryde. I wanted to get out of London before the kids went to secondary school and I remember saying after one of our visits, wouldn't it be nice to live by Carisbrooke Castle? We put an offer in and went for it!

Not long after the move, Alex started showing symptoms of a brain tumour. By April 2022 they found a mass, and by July it had covered one side of his brain. He was diagnosed with stage 4 brain cancer. It all happened so fast and I'm Alex's full-time carer now. He has weakness down his left side and visual impairment on the left side, so he uses a white stick. He doesn't really get to do very much unless I take him somewhere, and the kids have become carers too.

We have two boys - 14 and 12. Alex's diagnosis has had a dramatic effect on all of us...Brain cancer is a horrible disease, it's completely life-altering.

Alex has had two surgeries and two rounds of chemotherapy and he's doing very well, but life is very different now.

How did you get involved in Wetwheels?

We were invited on a Wetwheels trip by a small charity called The Wight Brainy Bunch. It was set up by Mark and his wife Kathryn after Mark's diagnosis of a brain tumour to support people on the Isle of Wight dealing with this devastating disease. They organised a day out on Wetwheels Solent from Cowes, giving families like ours the chance to have a shared experience together.

That first trip went from Cowes round to Newtown Creek and back again. Every single one of us thoroughly enjoyed it - the kids were amazed being able to go out on the water as a family and we all got to have a little go driving the boat which was just incredible. Our kids love nature - they're happiest when they're outdoors, wallowing in mud and exploring, being on the water in Wetwheels just lit something up in them.

What does Wetwheels mean to you personally?

It means everything. Wetwheels gave us a fantastic opportunity that none of us would ever have done otherwise. It gave us a big, joyful memory, a proper fun memory. It was a day where we all managed to do something together and experience it at the same time. When you're living with cancer, every happy memory feels critical and crucial. You can get stuck in the day-to-day grind of appointments, medications, side effects, and worry then suddenly you're on a boat, you see Alex chatting with someone about their shared memories of London, the kids are laughing and having so much fun, everyone's smiling and for a moment you can forget what's going on. Those moments matter so much more than people realise.

Can you share a memorable moment from your Wetwheels experiences?

Watching Alex drive the boat in his Captain's hat was one of my favourite moments. It was such an amazing



thing to see him doing something like that. Having a go at driving was incredible for him. Cancer has taken so much of his movement and his independence so to be able to do that was so special. The kids loved it too, especially when the boat was going really fast! When we did the trip in Southampton, we saw another boat dressed up as pirates, and we were exchanging jokes and blowing horns at each other. It was silly and joyful and exactly what we all needed.

What do you think makes Wetwheels so special?

Everyone's so friendly and welcoming. You instantly feel like you know everyone already - there's no awkwardness, no pity, no sense of being treated differently. The boat itself is designed so thoughtfully as well. Anyone with any kind of challenge can access it and have an incredible day out. That matters so much. What really struck me was how the team treat Alex. They don't look at him and think, "Oh, he's got cancer." They just treat him like a normal person. That's incredibly powerful when so much of life



becomes about managing the illness. The community here is absolutely incredible. Meeting people like the skippers, the volunteers, everyone involved with Wetwheels and the The Wight Brainsy Bunch, you realise who's really there for you when life changes.

How has Wetwheels influenced your life and goals?

It's given us lifelong happy memories and it's given the kids ideas too. They're now talking about wanting to sail and spend more time on the water - they're even looking at doing a fishing trip. It's opened something up for them and it's given us something we can all

share. When so much gets taken away, having a shared experience becomes incredibly important. We tell everyone about how great Wetwheels is now!

What would you say to anyone thinking about going on a Wetwheels trip?

Go for it! Say yes. Honestly, just say yes. When life changes in the way ours has, you can become very cautious and you start to weigh everything up in terms of how hard it might be and whether it's worth it. Our New Year's resolution last year was to say yes to everything we could, because otherwise you realise how much you stop living. Wetwheels was one of those yeses, and it's been one of the best things we've ever done. It gave us something priceless. A day where we could all be together, laughing, sharing the same experience, and for a moment forgetting that Alex has cancer.

Those memories matter more than anything. You don't know how much you need days like that until you have one, and then they help carry you through the harder times. It reminds you joy is still possible, even when life feels incredibly heavy and for families like ours, those memories matter more than anything.

Empowering lives, building community, and elevating your business

Wetwheels Solent takes individuals with disabilities, along with their families and carers, out on the water - many for the first time in their lives.

For businesses across Hampshire, collaboration with Wetwheels is more than corporate sponsorship - it's a statement of purpose. It demonstrates commitment to making a tangible impact in the local community, while also aligning your brand with an initiative that embodies innovation, inclusion, and resilience. It's about rewriting possibilities, removing barriers and building your reputation as a purpose-driven business.

Now, here's your chance to get involved.

Make a difference today

Contact Wetwheels Solent today to sponsor a day on the water from just £1,000 and help us chart a brighter, more inclusive future:

M: +44(0)790 4997 622

E: office@wetwheelssolent.co.uk



Why partner with Wetwheels Solent?

TRANSFORM 20 LIVES

Give 20 disabled participants, families, and carers an unforgettable day on the water. *Did you know 80% of participants have never had this opportunity before?*

BOOST YOUR CSR AND ESG STRATEGY:

Align with Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) goals while championing inclusivity and empowerment. Wetwheels Solent is a tangible way to show your commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and making a difference.

GAIN VISIBILITY AND ENGAGEMENT

- Average social media reach: c.30,000 followers on Wetwheels channels and shared by our engaged community on personal profiles across Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube.
- Professional photos and co-branded content to amplify your story both internally and externally.
- Opportunities to share your partnership on your channels, with support from Wetwheels.

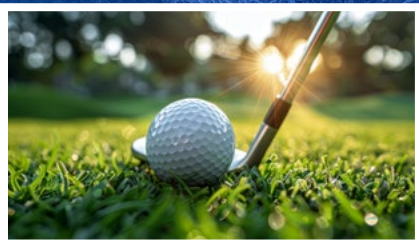
REWARD AND INSPIRE YOUR TEAM

Enjoy a Sundowner trip from Gunwharf Quays - a perfect team-building event that fosters pride and connection through meaningful community involvement.

Join an elite network of regional and national companies who have already recognised the value of this partnership and are making a difference with Wetwheels Solent



Forthcoming Events 2026



2 JUNE CHARITY GOLF DAY

Join us for our annual fundraising golf day at Cams Hall Golf Club, up to 18 teams competing for the coveted trophy in support of Wetwheels Solent and Wetwheels Hamble.



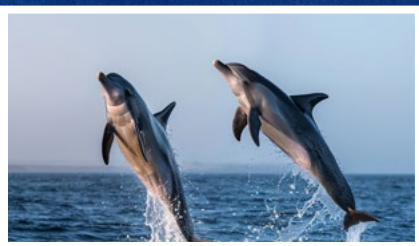
13 - 19 JULY EASTBOURNE

Join us for our annual visit to Eastbourne with our sister ship Wetwheels South-East for a week of fun including our now infamous Pirate Day.



1 - 7 AUG COWES WEEK

20 trips over five days watching the yacht racing at the world-famous Cowes Week in conjunction with our friends from Cowes Sailability.



17 - 21 AUG YARMOUTH WEEK

20 trips over five days dolphin spotting and running experiences to the world famous site at The Needles, on everyone's bucket list.



18 - 27 SEPT SOUTHAMPTON BOAT SHOW

Several trips a day for 10 days of the show, this will be our 14th year in association with British Marine and Suzuki Marine, a fantastic day out.



«Absolutely amazing time for the **WHOLE family, it could not have been any more inclusive and the wonderful wetwheels team went above and beyond to make sure it was a special and memorable day for us all. Would definitely recommend for a fully accessible experience.»**

KEELEY BURRISS

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