

FLEETWOOD BEACH WHEELCHAIRS

Newsletter 6 – December 2021

"Making Memories!"



Welcome to our sixth Newsletter.

We have seen the service that we provide grow and grow. There's much more to providing access to the beach than our specially designed wheelchairs as you will see in the 'Equipment' and 'Accessories' articles below.

A message from Mick Gray, Chair of Trustees

It gives me great pleasure to be able to give my report as Chair of Fleetwood Beach Wheelchairs. We are fast becoming the benchmark Service against which all other beach wheelchair services will be judged. We have been consulted for advice and help from areas across the Country and that is mainly due to the hard work of our volunteers and the comments and suggestions made by our users. As requests for additional equipment or improved practices are made, we attempt as far as possible to adopt them. This has added to the provision we offer and we are always keen to improve.

Our aim to achieve and operate three different chairs within three years has been exceeded to the extent that we have nine chairs and one more on order in a year of rather interrupted operations. Our chairs incorporate five different models with a variety of additional equipment. We have also upgraded our hoist to a Molift Mover 205 as a result of a generous grant from Fleetwood Town Council.

As we came out of "Lock-down" our users grew in number from far and wide and so did our volunteers. Whilst recruiting and retaining volunteers is a constant struggle, we do rely on a number of regulars who faithfully turn out to provide our Service. All our volunteers are mentored and undergo induction training and work in little groups of two or three. Our Wheel Base Headquarters provides a happy and welcoming centre to work from and we make it as comfortable as possible with a

sink, microwave, fridge and kettle. We have gazebos for the sun and a happy atmosphere.

Our efforts have not gone unnoticed. Earlier in the year I was happy to receive a Champions of Change Award from Rotary of Great Britain and Ireland in recognition for the work our volunteers do to change the lives of people with disabilities and we are also finalists in the Lancashire Tourism Awards for Accessibility and Inclusivity. The Winners will be announced in February. Fingers crossed for us please!

We have still not had a full year of operations, so it is difficult to forward-plan our next moves. So consolidating our current position is the priority for the present. Our position with opening at the moment is much as it was in the early stages of the “Lock-down” and we are opening by appointment only until the New Year when we will review the situation. It's fair to say the weather does not promote the desire to sit in the wet and wind hoping for “drop-ins”, but we will be at the end of the telephone if wanted!

You may rest assured that whatever Government guidance is, or becomes, we will maintain our strict sanitisation and mask procedures.

We are working hard to meet the needs of our users and our nine Trustees meet each month on the day after the monthly servicing of our chairs by our mechanical engineer, John Brimelow. We are soon to be approaching the second anniversary of our Registration as a charity and just about a year of sporadic operations.

The future looks good, we are getting known Nationally and we are enjoying offering our Service to all our visitors.

Thank you for your continued support!

Fundraising Highlights:

29/10/2021

Trustee Reece (pictured) did his own "Push The Lights" event where he pushed himself along the entire length of Blackpool Illuminations in his wheelchair. He raised a grand total of £986.24



26/09/2021

Matthew & Darren took part in the Blackpool Fun Run, raising £940 for Fleetwood Beach Wheelchairs

Zach wrote us a letter to let us know what he thought about our service...

Zachary James Simpson, aged: 13

This is my view of the Beach Wheelchair project in Fleetwood, Lancashire.

I think what they have done is excellent and has helped many people out and made very happy memories for their families.

The volunteers who work there are very kind and do everything they can to ensure that the person that has a disability (any disability) can have an excellent time on the beach.

They are equipped with all the equipment to help the disabled person (child, adult or elderly) get into their beach wheelchair safely and quickly. This includes a hoist and many other pieces of equipment. Best of all it is free but it is nice to put a couple of pounds in the collecting pot.

It is great that it is right next to a café where you can get ice creams. I am also impressed with the free car park that is right outside the venue for the beach wheelchairs. There are usually spaces available so you don't have to worry about parking your car.

It is lovely to see people who are less fortunate than you smiling, laughing and having so much fun. At the end they get a teddy bear which is handmade by the

volunteers at the Beach Wheelchairs and people in the local community.

Well done!

Lucy, one of our volunteers, wrote about what being a volunteer means to her...

Hi, I am Lucy and I am a university student. I first got in touch with Fleetwood Beach Wheelchairs when I was looking for a meaningful way to spend my free time last summer. As a beach lover myself, this turned out to be the perfect opportunity!

Every morning or afternoon at FBW is totally different and every person coming to visit the beach has a unique story. Each group always has lot of excitement for a day out at the beach, especially with the shiny windmills for sandcastles and sheets to identify all the shells. And when people are coming back in from the beach, there are even bigger smiles.

To get to play such a part in making sure that everyone can be included and access the beautiful beach means so much. FBW is also such a local and dedicated charity, really always looking for new solutions and ways to make a beach day go smoothly and be a fantastic memory.

For me, volunteering with FBW started as a casual way to help out in the local area, but now there's no going back! A few hours spent at the beach with other volunteers makes such a difference. When everyone can truly be included in an unmissable day at the beach, you can totally share the joy in the air, even if it is the windy seaside air!

You can see this and other Volunteers' stories at the bottom of our ['Volunteer Info' page](#)



When we opened in September 2020 we had just 1 beach wheelchair & our plan was to have 3 chairs within three years. We passed that target in less than a year & currently there are 9 in the fleet with a 10th on order:-

2 x Sandpiper, 2 x Sandcruiser, 1 x Hippocampe,
1 x Hippocampe XL (& one on order) , 2 x De-bug, 1 x EZ-Roller.

We also have a range of accessories, cushions, games and activities for families to take onto the beach to add more to their day out. We will soon be getting some beach-friendly trolleys to allow families to take all that they need for a great day out onto the beach

Equipment

As well as the wheelchairs, we have other equipment to help make days spent on the beach a joy rather than a struggle...

Hoist - a brand new Molift Partner with 4-point sling attachment

Rotunda, Zimmer Frame & Slide Board - aides for those with limited mobility

Trolleys - to allow extra items such as oxygen bottles and picnics to be transported onto the beach

See photos below...





Accessories

We also provide a whole range of accessories to make family days out complete including:-

GoTo Firefly Seat inserts - to provide support for smaller children in the wheelchairs

Splashy Seats - to allow younger children to be supported whilst playing on the beach or in the sea

Lateral Support, Lumbar Support & Pommel Cushions - for a comfortable ride

Rotunda Cushions - these rotate to allow people to swing into position more easily

Assorted other cushions - some of which are waterproof so can be taken into the sea

Chest Harnesses - all of our chairs can be fitted with a 4-point chest harness

Neck Support, Inflatable pillows - for comfort

Changing mats - though sadly we do not have a Changing Places toilet on site at the moment

Fun Accessories to keep (for all ages!):-

Windmills - to catch the breeze

Bubbles

Activity Sheets - things to look out for on the beach

Knitted Teddies - as a souvenir of the visit

Loan Accessories

Bucket & Spade

Boules

Footballs

Quoits

Rounders set

Binoculars



Our online booking form has proved to be quite popular – since it's launch in August 2021, we have had 23 online bookings & the service has been rated 4.86 (out of 5).

The booking service is not fully automated – we will get in touch to confirm the booking or discuss further if necessary. Click [here](#) to have a look – but please don't hit submit unless you really want to book!

Spread the word!

We have posters and leaflets available and these are being distributed in Fleetwood and Wyre to promote us.

If you're further afield but can display a poster for Fleetwood Beach Wheelchairs a copy can be [downloaded and printed from our website](#).

Any services or venues who would like to work with us as a partner, please use the contact details at the foot of the page to get in touch.



FLEETWOOD BEACH WHEELCHAIRS Registered Charity No: 1187870
Central Promenade, opp' the New Boston Hotel
Making Memories!

Chairs are FREE to hire, your donations are welcome!

Wish you were here?
t: 03000 111 003
w: fleetwoodbeachwheelchairs.co.uk



If you can help ... we'd love to hear from you!
We are a registered charity run entirely by volunteers.

Please email volunteer4fbw@outlook.com, fill in the form on the [Volunteer page](#) of our website or call us on 03000 111 003 to get involved.
Thank you.

Keeping in touch ...

A reminder you can contact us by the links below for our email, website and social media pages.

Thank you for your support and helping us to keep Making Memories!