

Operations Report

DSUK Annual Review

As always it has been a busy and successful year at Disability Snowsport. We are constantly growing and with that growth comes new and uncharted waters for all of us. For DSUK to overcome the challenges that affront us we are constantly extending our boundaries to accommodate the needs of the charity.

2010/11 has been no different to previous years. When I started as a part time administrator 7yrs ago there was myself and 4 full time members of staff; 7yrs on we now have 11 full time and 3 part-time staff with a vacancy for another full time member about to be advertised. Last year it was identified that the organisation structure no longer fitted the charity needs to take us forward so our CEO instigated a much needed overhaul, not just of the policies and procedures but of the staff roles also.

Once the restructure was in place we needed to plan the way forward and the first thing we knew we had to invest in was a database that would capture every aspect of the charity in one place that each member of staff could access. Although each staff member has their own role within the charity we saw a new database as a way to bring us and our membership together with the touch of a button. The writing and building of the database has been a massive achievement, and, as I write is still ongoing. As I am sure you can imagine the amount of information we hold as a charity is enormous and each piece is being built into the database. I am not sure if you are aware of this but we have been working with a most antiquated version of an off the shelf database for many years which has not captured half of the information we have needed, therefore we have reams of paper information locked away in store, an arduous task to find anything.

The new database will assist all of us; the local groups can easily receive updates of member payments at the touch of a button, we can keep in touch with our event participants and convert them all to members, our ski schools can access all previous lesson information and our members will no longer receive reams of paper reminding them to renew memberships. We also aim to reduce the amount of paperwork 'fill in' for our activity weeks. There will still be paperwork; however most of the information will be completed for you electronically from previous years. You will just need to check it, add the new bits and sign it.

We identified a need to update our IT systems. Since I started with the then Uphill Ski Club we had always relied on friends of friends of friends to assist us with this. Due to the growing nature of the charity the need for an IT company to take this over became priority. We had to ensure we had the correct equipment in place and the security and support required to use it. It was expensive to get everything to where it should be and it will be an ongoing expense each month to ensure our servers are kept secure and our systems up to date.

As for the activities: Last year we delivered 8 weeks. We made the decision to cancel the trip to Breckenridge last December as the flight price had almost doubled from the year before taking the cost of the trip out of our benefactors reach. We ran a second successful school trip to La Plagne in March and supplied 3 instructors to private clients. Our family week goes from strength to strength; last year we took 8 families away, which, in total was 33 people.

The activity weeks were supported by Crystal this year with 23 of their staff volunteering on the European weeks. This resulted in five extremely successful weeks and I am pleased to say this will be repeated next season also. As you all know, we cannot do our work without the dedication of our volunteers.

We attended the Crystal Ski Fest in Sestriere. For those of you who aren't aware of it this is an event organised by Crystal where their clients can train for a week with some of the top instructors at BASI and the Snow Institute. We were invited along a few years ago with some of our disabled skiers and our instructors and it was so successful we have been back each year since. The week introduces the skier to race gates and of course the end of the week there are races to take part in. This was such a great spectacle both on and off the slopes. In the evenings the reps arranged a race night with the proceeds coming to DSUK and we arranged a raffle. Between us we raised over £1000.

Another racing event, the Villars GP24hr Race is something we have attended for many years in Switzerland. A few years ago we were one of the benefactors of the fundraising that went along with the race and have been invited back each year since. The race takes 24hrs and involves skiing under floodlight. The winning team is the one that completes the most amounts of runs in the 24hrs.

In November last year we were approached by Kraft Foods/Cadbury. They run 'Leadership and Performance programmes' for one week every year for their internal managers. DSUK put together a list of challenges that face the charity in advance of the week; the managers' then gain in depth knowledge of DSUK by speaking with staff, trustees and members over 5 days. At the end of the 5 days they put together their ideas of how we (DSUK) could overcome these challenges to enable us to take the charity forward. Some of the information you will hear from Fiona came from that week.

Going forward we are researching the overhaul of our website. This is a huge tool for all of us involved with DSUK and we are aware that it is looking tired. As well as a new website we aim to include online payment facilities and a member's area. We have also been advised that our social network sites such as facebook, twitter and our blog can be embedded into the site so that everyone can keep up to date each time they log on. The more we know what we can do with the site the more we want to do. As with everything we do as a charity the cost of all this will determine how much we can do at any one time, however we are researching this now and I

have had some meetings with different companies. I will be able to report progress at the meeting