

Community Giving Back Event Focusses on Portishead Pool

Highlights from Gordano Breakfast Rotary Club's latest Giving Back event...

Every three months, the Giving Back events hosted by Gordano Breakfast Rotary Club provide a quarterly platform for businesses, charities, and community groups in the Gordano Valley to connect, share ideas, address common challenges and find solutions.

The latest event took place at Portishead's Café Lido on Thursday, May 30, where attendees listened to the amazing story of how the town's open air pool secured a sum of £140,000 from the Swimming Pool Support Fund. This will pay for the installation of a solar thermal system to help heat the water and solar panels to offset the pool's whopping electricity bills.

Commenting on the event, Tony Stubbs, president of Gordano Breakfast Rotary, said: "The chair of the Portishead Pool Community Trust, Emma Pusill, and business manager, Matthew Sidwell, gave us a tour of the site and the plant and boiler room to show us where the solar thermal system will go. They also highlighted the many and various volunteering opportunities that are available at the site. There's everything from being a barista in the café, to working on the pool reception, running the tuck shop, weeding and litter-picking the terraces, endless painting and maintenance opportunities and, for the more technically minded, ensuring the boilers keep working – which seemed

ABOVE: Members of Gordano Breakfast Rotary Club with bucket collections for charity

BELOW: Volunteers helping out at Portishead's open air pool



to require skills in something mysteriously referred to as 'tiger whispering'!"

After a short break in the tour, where members could enjoy the wide range of refreshments on offer, Emma then gave some insight into the grant application process.

Emma explained that a grant application can take between 30 to 150 hours to complete, depending on the size and nature of the funder's requirements.

This time is needed to gather and present data related to service users, financial information, and the community served by the charity, all of which are essential to ensure the bid successfully meets the funders' requirements - with no guarantee of success.

For successful bids, there will be further reporting obligations as the funders will want to see proof that the money is having the desired social impact.

Tony said: "In the discussion that followed the tour, the many health and wellbeing aspects that this priceless community asset delivers were highlighted.

"The challenges of managing an asset which has been in existence for 62 years were also discussed."

Throughout the evening many

new connections were made, including between Martha's Kitchen and John Lewis/Waitrose and between Portishead Pool and Portishead Youth Centre. Other companies and organisations were represented including Brampton Services Ltd, Lions, Portishead Church of England, Portishead Porters, Royal British Legion and Willow Gardens.

Tony added: "We also heard about the Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire (BNSSG) VCSE Alliance, launched in January 2024, which aims to influence and facilitate greater collaboration between the regional health system (BNSSG Integrated Care System) and the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector. It seeks to do this by enhancing the role of the VCSE sector in the delivery and transformation of wellbeing and health, and cementing the sector's role as a key strategic partner in the planning, design and delivery of health and care."

The next Gordano Breakfast Rotary Club Giving Back event will take place at Portishead's Café Lido on Thursday, August 29, when there will be an update on corporate volunteering initiatives.

