

Where connected communities can achieve the incredible



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Business scrums down to help college



Scrumming down in the back row are (from left): Gaynor Collett, Sports Co-ordinator at QAC; Phil Pemble, Pertemps; Sunita Ottridge, QAC Fundraising. **Front row:** Suraj Dail, aged 20, a QAC student from Oldbury; Ian Buchanan, Tyndallwoods Solicitors; Kerri Webley, aged, 20, a QAC student from Northfield. *(Editor's note: Whilst our HEM Life photo uses rugby union balls, supporters of the wheelchair sport will know the game itself is played with the round version!)*

By **PHIL BROWN**
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A SPECIALIST college is Accounting down to the official opening of its new £1.4 million sports hall – and is set to field its own team of wheelchair student rugby players thanks to the support of local businesses.

Queen Alexandra College (QAC) is a specialist college for people with disabilities based in Harborne. They work with people with disabilities of all ages, offering supportive academic and employment based programmes as well as short courses and an independent living provision.

Scheduled to open at the end of October after two years of extensive fundraising, the sports hall development at the Harborne campus in Court Oak Road will provide all students with regular and consistent access to a sports facility designed with people with disabilities in mind.

A few students are lucky enough to have the opportunity to be involved in wheelchair sports, such as wheelchair rugby and tennis, but staff at QAC are particularly excited about the opportunity to bring wheelchair sports to all students.

However, QAC are still looking for support from local businesses and individuals to help equip the centre with a range of sports apparatus for the students, including £3,500 to purchase their own rugby wheelchair which will provide them the opportunity to work with Great Britain Wheelchair Rugby.

Tyndallwoods Solicitors and Loves Restaurant have already donated, as have Pertemps People Development Group, who are right behind QAC's initiative and have donated £350

from their payroll giving scheme in support.

The company's PR manager Phil Pemble is also West Midland's chairman for rugby's charity Wooden Spoon.

"As a charity, we have extensive experience of involvement with wheelchair rugby and the inclusive benefits it can deliver," said Phil.

"I'd like to think there are more local businesses that can get involved and would urge more companies to consider making a small contribution to the appeal so that QAC can offer this dynamic sport to its students."

Ian Buchanan, a solicitor at Tyndallwoods, said: "Wheelchair rugby is a fantastic, exhilarating sport for young people.

"We've had a long association with Birmingham Royal Institution for the Blind and are delighted to support this QAC initiative."

Gaynor Collett, Sports Co-ordinator at QAC, said: "The students love this sport. It's inclusive, played by mixed teams, and enables people to play to their own strengths with fire and passion and a will to win."

QAC student Kerri Webley, aged 20, a member of the West Midlands Warriors team, said: "I'm an outgoing person and I like new experiences.

"Wheelchair rugby is the most brilliant game in the world."

It is hoped that the sports hall will also be available to local groups to hire and make use of to build and develop other sporting opportunities in Harborne.

If you would like to support QAC in their project and donate to the fundraising efforts please contact Sarah Caldwell on 0121 428 5064 or scaldwell@qac.ac.uk

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Finish line in touching distance at Moor Pool

THE Save Moor Pool fundraising campaign is closing in on its target to raise £325,000 by September 30.

A charity auction in August raised nearly £4,000 and helped the community fundraising figure reach £73,000. Another £43,000 in grant pledges has been secured. In a few days time, the Moor

Pool Heritage Trust will also discover the outcome of a grant application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for £100,000.

"With some other grants and private donations in the pipeline for September, we are confident our combined funding streams will enable us to complete a deal with Graingers plc," said Rob

Sutton, chairman of the Moor Pool Heritage Trust.

Landowners Graingers plc have given the MPHT first option to buy the community hall, sports facilities and parcels of green land within the historic garden estate.

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