



qef.org.uk

# Happening

Autumn 2023

Enabling potential



**Plus**

New  
partnership  
with Stroke  
Association

How you can  
get involved  
at QEF

**Spotlight on...**

## Bugzi Q&A

Hear how Bugzi has been  
transformational for Maisie-May

**QEF**



# Contents

Autumn 2023

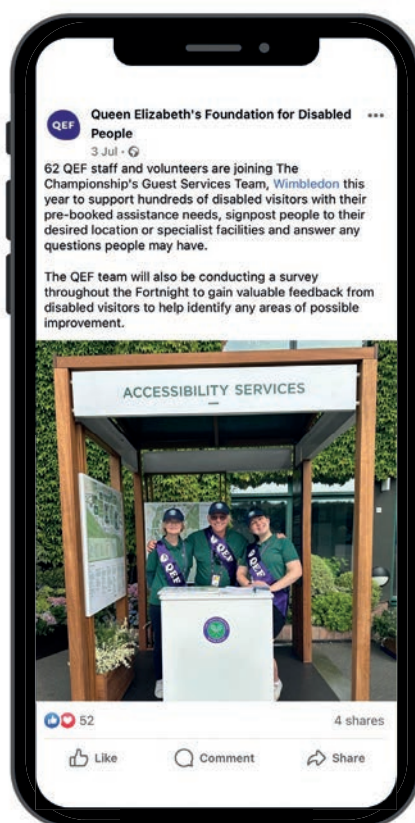
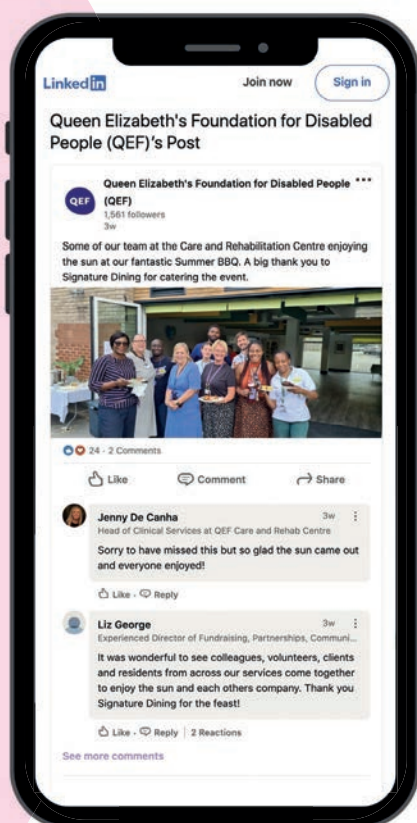
- 3 Welcome from Karen Deacon
- 4 Spotlight on...Bugzi
- 6 Dorincourt closure
- 7 QEF at Wimbledon
- 8 Bugzi School Squads
- 10 Fundraise for QEF
- 11 Free Will writing service
- 12 QEF events calendar



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For up-to-date news, stories, jobs, events, fundraising and more, be sure to follow us on our social media channels.



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**Front cover photo:** Maisie-May in her Bugzi

At QEF we're passionate about our person-centred, expert services that focus on individual needs to provide the best holistic support for our clients.

# Welcome

Welcome to the latest issue of QEF's Happening magazine.

It has been a challenging few months with the closure of Dorincourt at the end of July. There were complex reasons behind this very difficult decision and you can read more about this on page six.

The majority of residents successfully found new accommodation placements and a handful of people have moved into the Care and Rehabilitation Centre (CRC) on an interim basis. Experienced care and support staff have also moved to the CRC and are valued members of the wider team.

The team at CRC are working hard to support clients to rebuild their lives after a brain injury, stroke, spinal injury or neurological illness. They now also provide general rehabilitation after an operation or acute illness, respite care and longer term care for people with complex neurological needs. We have also developed new partnerships with The Stroke Association and Headway in Surrey, to help clients plan for their discharge and connect people with wider services in the community. Read more on page nine.

Our spotlight this issue is on the wonderful Bugzi – our mini powered

wheelchair for children provided by our partner charity MERU. This incredible piece of mobility equipment continues to change the lives of disabled children every day, whether at home or increasingly at school through our Bugzi school squads. Read about how Maisie-May and her family have benefitted on pages four and five.

I'd like to say a very big thank you to all the wonderful volunteers and QEF staff who helped out at Wimbledon this year. QEF work closely with the Customer Assistance Team to deliver an accessible event to everyone, and we couldn't do this without our 60+ volunteers who give up their time to make this happen across the 14 days of the Championships. See page seven.

Finally, we have had an Autumn of exciting events, such as 'Cars and Canapes' and The Grange Golf Day. We have more events to look forward to with a very special Carol Concert and our 58th Guinness and Oyster event at Mansion House in London. Please take a look at our events calendar on page 12 and get involved wherever you can.



**Karen Deacon**  
QEF Chief Executive



# Spotlight on...

## Bugzi Q&A

**HEAR FROM STEPHANIE, MUM TO MAISIE,** who will answer some questions about how a small powered wheelchair called Bugzi has transformed the life of their daughter.

***Hi Stephanie, thank you for chatting with us. Could tell us how you came across QEF & MERU?***

When we relocated about two years ago, we went to see Maisie's new school and they had Bugzis in the hall. They said to us that for most of the children, if they can, they will secure a Bugzi for them.

***How was the experience of the Bugzi assessment?***

It was brilliant and really thorough.

I was concerned at the start because with Maisie and equipment, the effort of having to sit is so difficult for her, she can't focus on anything else, so she has to be supported in a really good posture position or she will struggle. I just thought it was excellent to see that all of that was considered, everything from her hips to her neck.

Just to see her in action was amazing, she sort of had the freedom to just go. It was actually quite emotional because it was the first time



***“It’s transformational, to be able to see her so independent and free”***

seeing her just move so freely. I think everyone felt that with me. It was a really lovely experience, definitely one that's stuck with me.

***Can you tell us about the impact that Bugzi has had for Maisie?***

What's amazing about the Bugzi is that you make it accessible. Maisie can only use a switch as she is limited

with her hands, so anything like a joystick or anything of that nature would be really difficult

for her. The buttons and the switches she's had practice with in the past and so immediately recognised that and was able to access that very quickly. Once she gets the hang of it, she's off!

The summer was amazing, it was the first summer where her brother was on his feet and able to get involved more. We would go out onto the lovely green every day,





Maisie  
enjoying  
her Bugzi

and Maisie would be driving around in her Bugzi freely and Olly would be able to run around with her.

Whenever we have family down, that's where we are, we're out there because she has her own freedom then. Although, she does seem to aim for the potholes and sometimes her brother!

It's transformational, to be able to see her so independent and free and I know that she's only going to grow with it.

When family come down, we're immediately like 'let's get Maisie and her Bugzi' because you can just see on everyone's face how amazing it is to see her using it. It's completely priceless.

A lot of the time, equipment for disabled children isn't funded by the NHS, and we've found equipment that would really benefit Maisie but it's just impossible for us to fund. So, the fact the Bugzi is accessible is incredible.

Maisie is lucky to have a Bugzi at school as well, meaning she gets the opportunity to practice at home and at school.

I think it's amazing what you guys do and how accessible everything is, I think it's really important to mention that.

## QEF's Ladies Spring Lunch

We had a fantastic time at this year's Ladies Spring Lunch with special guest speaker Alison Steadman OBE. Alison spoke animatedly of how she entered the acting world and shared highlights of her career including *Abigail's Party*, *Gavin & Stacey* and more recently, *Life*.

We were also delighted to hear from Stephanie whose daughter, Maisie-May, is using a Bugzi which was kindly sponsored by attendees from last year's Ladies Spring Lunch.

This Spring we welcomed over 40 stallholders to our shopping fayre, selling a wide variety of goods such as jewellery, candles and much more!

Our Spring Lunch was fundraising for MERU, who designs and manufactures unique, assistive products for disabled children and adults. MERU manufacture the Bugzi, a mini powered wheelchair suitable for children under five, and **we are so pleased to have raised an incredible £50,000 towards this.**

Philippa Beck, Alison Steadman,  
Karen Deacon, Sally Ann Marks  
at this year's Ladies Spring Lunch



# Closure of our service at Dorincourt

The last few months have been challenging with the closure of Dorincourt at the end of July. There were complex reasons behind this very difficult decision that included the significant increases to the costs of providing the service, combined with chronic underfunding from Local Authorities, as well as significant financial obligations that meant the sale of the land was a necessity.

Supporting residents throughout this difficult process was our priority. The majority of people successfully found new accommodation placements and were supported by committed staff at Dorincourt. A handful of people have moved into our Care and Rehabilitation Centre (CRC) on an interim basis until their next permanent placement becomes available. They are settling in well and the familiarity of having each other around is really beneficial.

Experienced care and support staff have also moved to the CRC and are valued members of the team in the delivery of our four client pathways - neuro rehabilitation, non-neuro rehabilitation, complex neurological care and short term/respite care.

There have been several activities recently to help the teams get to know each other and integrate into one new service, and to thank Dorincourt staff for their dedication and hard work over the last six months.

**“There have been several activities recently to help the teams get to know each other and integrate into one new service”**



**Queen Elizabeth's  
Foundation for  
Disabled People**

# Magical

## Christmas Concert

Join us for a festive evening of carols, mulled wine and mince pies.

**WHEN:** Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December, 6:30pm

**WHERE:** St Marylebone Parish Church, Marylebone

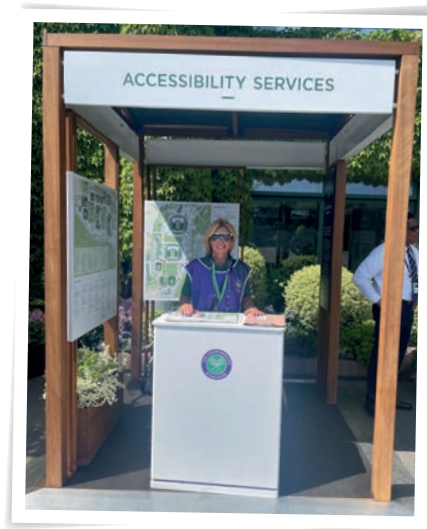
**Tickets £35. Buy yours online at [qef.org.uk/events/christmas-concert](https://qef.org.uk/events/christmas-concert) or call 01372 841 151**

This event is fully accessible. This concert is in support of all QEF services. Proceeds will help provide life-changing services to almost 10,000 disabled people every year.





# Serving up an accessibility needs service at this year's Wimbledon Championships



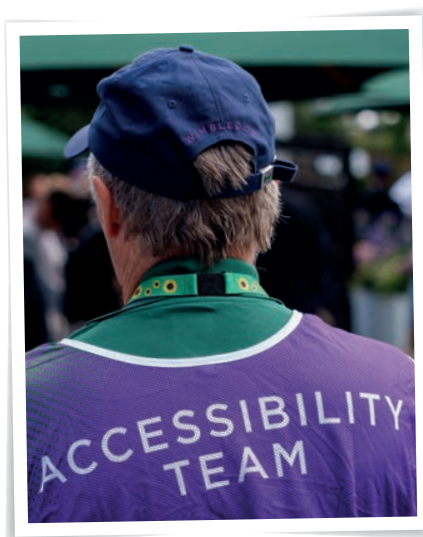
QEF were delighted to once again provide an accessibility needs service at this year's Wimbledon Championships to support guests with disabilities or those who required extra help. Over the fortnight, 62 wonderful staff members and volunteers helped to signpost and chaperone guests who needed extra assistance. This included signposting and chaperoning visitors to their desired location or specialist facilities, as well as alleviating any guest concerns at The Championships.

In addition to providing the accessibility needs service, QEF carried out daily surveys to make sure The Championships could gather feedback from disabled guests and visitors to help improve their services for future years.

One of the guests supported by the QEF Team said, **"The QEF Accessibility Team have been amazing and have made my experience onsite so enjoyable – and for two days in a row!"**

Our amazing staff and volunteers gave tremendous amounts of time and energy and clocked up thousands of steps in their quest to provide the best possible experience for guests who needed additional support. We couldn't be more grateful to the team for giving up their time to ensure a successful delivery of the service.

A huge thank you to all of those involved in making this possible! We hope to see you back at The Championships next year so keep an eye out for this once in a lifetime volunteering opportunity.



## Volunteer your time for QEF

We treasure our amazing volunteers and are always looking for more people to support the work we do. Could you help in one of our shops, support our fundraising team or work in one of our services?

We would love to chat to you. Contact Hazel, our Volunteer Coordinator, by email [hazel.drye@qef.org.uk](mailto:hazel.drye@qef.org.uk) or call **01372 841 135**.



# News from MERU and the CRC

## Bugzi School Squads



Bugzi School Squads is a new initiative created by MERU. It was initially trialed at three special schools with the aim of increasing opportunities

and independence for children who might not have space for a Bugzi at home and enable them to participate in sports days and other activities.

MERU loan Bugzis to children and schools completely free of charge. Each school can apply for a loaned Bugzi for a specific child who is then assessed on the premises by MERU's occupational therapist, thus avoiding any travel for the families involved. The Bugzi remains on site at each school and training is given for the therapists/teachers there to use



**“We had our sports day a few months ago, where we always have a Bugzi race. It’s total chaos!**

**But for many parents, it’s also the first time they’re able to walk alongside their child, and the first time they’ve seen their child move towards them.”**

Tim, early years teacher for disabled children



Children chasing teacher, Tim in their Bugzis



it confidently with the children. The trials have been so successful that the scheme has now been rolled out to 10 more schools.

The Bugzi School Squads scheme helps to up-skill carers and staff at special schools to use our Bugzis confidently with the children on an ongoing basis. For everyone involved, it has been uplifting to see the improved skills of the children.

In the UK today, around one in 20 children are disabled. So many more children’s lives could be transformed by Bugzis: we would love to roll out Bugzi School Squads to more schools around the UK. If you think you could help support more children with a Bugzi, consider a gift of any level today, simply visit: [qef.org.uk/donate](https://qef.org.uk/donate) or call **01372 841 151**.





Proudly working with

**Stroke**  
Association

Stroke Association Coordinators Julie and Arnold with QEF's Head of Clinical Services, Jenny de Canha outside QEF's Care and Rehabilitation Centre.

## New partnership with Stroke Association

QEF and the Stroke Association in Surrey recently announced a new partnership, aiming to benefit clients of our Care and Rehabilitation Centre (CRC).

Returning home after a life changing event such as a stroke can be a daunting time for an individual and their family. A person may be left with disabilities which fundamentally change their life and what they are able to do, some of which may be hidden and hard to explain to loved ones and friends.

The partnership will see stroke clients on the East Surrey NHS stroke pathway receive one-to-one support with their transition home, helping to reduce anxiety and increase connections with their local community services.

The expert teams at the CRC support people straight from hospital with neuro rehabilitation and nursing care to recover as many core skills as possible. This often includes regaining the use of limbs affected by stroke, learning to walk again and regaining the ability to swallow safely, speak and communicate with others. Psychologists also work with a stroke patient and their family or care giver to help people adjust to the changes in all their

lives and find a new way forward. Our new partnership with the Stroke Association will be an important part of supporting people to find this new way forward.

Clients will meet with a Stroke Association Coordinator on a one-to-one basis before their discharge home. Support from the Stroke Association will then continue for up to a year post-discharge to help people adapt to their new normal and achieve their personal goals.

**Jenny de Canha, Head of Clinical Services at QEF says; "I am looking forward to seeing this new partnership in action as I know our clients on the pathway are going to really benefit from this extra level of support. Easing anxieties around the transition home is so important and connection with their community services will enable people to continue their rehabilitation after leaving QEF."**

Tara Lakin, Stroke Association's Service Delivery Lead for the South East says; "We are delighted to be working with the team at QEF's Care and Rehabilitation Centre, helping people to plan for their discharge home and reducing the anxiety that often comes with this.



# Fundraising

## Get involved

QEF rely on income from fundraising activities to support our services and develop new initiatives.

## Star Fundraiser

A special thank you to Clive who has been raising money for us through toy fayres and car boot sales. He has already raised over £2,000 for our vital work and we are truly grateful to him for giving up his time and expertise to support us. Look out for Clive at one of your local events!



## Run Leo, Run

Four-year-old Leo from Chessington dressed as his alter ego, Batman to run the one-mile Mini London Marathon in April in aid of QEF. A huge congratulations to Leo and his mum Jess, who raised an amazing £1,313.25!



Leo chose to run for QEF as he spends a lot of his time in the charity toy shop in Chessington.

**“Leo has been going to the shop ever since he was born and visits pretty much every other day to buy items that he uses for a short time before donating them back. The staff are special there and the ladies have watched him grow... so they almost feel like part of our family.”**  
*Jess, Leo's mum.*

## Remembering Dorothy Wheeler



On the 18th May, devoted QEF supporter, Dorothy Wheeler sadly passed away. Dorothy was part of The Oxshott & Cobham Friends of QEF. Dorothy ran the Bridge Tea fundraiser twice a year and was involved in many other

fundraising activities, as well as volunteering at QEF events, raising around £40,000 for QEF. Dorothy will be missed by many but is leaving behind an incredible legacy in her fundraising efforts over the past 25 years.



## Take on a sponsored challenge

Whether walking, running, cycling or event jumping out of a plane, we'd love you to fundraise for QEF whilst challenging yourself to achieve something amazing.

## Charity of the Year

Can your school, university, club, church or workplace choose QEF as their charity of the year? We can help them organise lots of fun fundraising activities.

## Hold your own event

A quiz night, bake sale or dinner party...the possibilities are endless, and we can support you with all your ideas. If you're interested in fundraising for us, please get in touch or visit our website for more ideas:

[events@qef.org.uk](mailto:events@qef.org.uk)

01372 841 151

[qef.org.uk/get-involved/fundraising](http://qef.org.uk/get-involved/fundraising)



# Did you know QEF offer a free Will writing service?



Have you been thinking about writing or updating your Will? We are now offering a free Will writing service to our supporters, through the Goodwill Partnership.

You can use this service to write or update your Will in the most convenient way for you – over the phone, on a video call or through a home visit from a trained adviser. Simply book a free, no-obligation appointment at a time to suit you - daytime, evening or weekend. You will be contacted by a trained and trusted adviser who will draw up your Will and send it to you directly.

Book at **[thegoodwillpartnership.co.uk/QEF](http://thegoodwillpartnership.co.uk/QEF)** or call **0844 669 6148** and quote 'QEF'. Please

**"I thought it was time to make a Will after I had children, but as life is so busy, it kept getting put to the bottom of the list. I wish I'd known sooner how easy it was. The service was friendly and professional, I couldn't believe it was free. Plus, it gave me a chance to leave a little something to QEF in my Will. I'm so pleased I can finally tick it off my list!"**

***Rebecca, QEF supporter***

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note, there are a limited number of free Wills available each month on a first come, first served basis.

Once you have looked after family and friends, please consider leaving a proportion of what's left to QEF – every gift, however large or small, makes a real difference to the

lives of disabled people, now and in the future.

You can find out more about the impact of leaving a gift in your Will to QEF by requesting your free Gift in Wills pack; email us at **[legacy@qef.org.uk](mailto:legacy@qef.org.uk)** or call **01372 841 228** to speak to a member of the team.



# QEF Events Calendar

From adrenaline-packed challenge events to lunches, dinners and teas! QEF has something for everyone. Find an event that suits you, and enjoy!

## Thursday 23rd November

### 58th Guinness and Oyster Luncheon Mansion House

Held in the beautiful surroundings of Mansion House, the extremely sought-after Guinness and Oyster Luncheon has been a city favourite event for over 57 years. Each year over 400 guests attend this relaxed, stand-up luncheon.

## Monday 11th December

### Magical Christmas Concert St Marylebone Parish Church

Celebrate the magic of Christmas with QEF at the beautiful St Marylebone Parish Church in the heart of London.

## Sunday 21st April 2024

### TCS London Marathon

Team QEF are running the TCS London Marathon on Sunday 21st April! If you already have your own ballot place in the 2024 London Marathon, you can still use it to support QEF. By joining our team you'll receive all the same support as our charity place runners.

## April 2024

### Ladies Spring Lunch Epsom Downs Racecourse

Our Ladies Spring Lunch consists of a shopping fayre, a special guest speaker and a two-course lunch.

## Sunday 14th July

### Asics London 10k

Run 10k through central London with live music at every kilometre.

## ONGOING EVENTS:

### Skydiving – March to October

A once in a lifetime opportunity to skydive! We have teamed up with Skyline Events to bring you this adrenaline-packed experience.

### The Three Peaks Challenge – Weekends May to October 2024

Climb three of the highest mountains across the UK in one weekend and push yourself to new heights in support of QEF.

If you're interested in hosting your own event or taking on a challenge in support of QEF, please contact the Events Team, [events@qef.org.uk](mailto:events@qef.org.uk), to find out how we can help!

Please visit [qef.org.uk/events](https://qef.org.uk/events) to find out more about some of the amazing events we have planned this year!

## Yes, I will make a gift to support the life changing work at QEF

Please accept my gift of: ☐ £15 ☐ £25 ☐ £35 or my choice: £ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make your cheque payable to QEF OR Please charge my:

☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ Maestro ☐ CAF/Charity card

Card No.                 Security Code:

Start Date:     Expiry Date:     Issue No (Maestro only):

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

I'm happy to receive emails at:

and calls on: \_\_\_\_\_

Please let us know if you have chosen to leave a gift in your Will to QEF, tick here [ ☐ ]

### Please complete and return this form to:

Freepost RTCJ-SRJB-XRKK, QEF, Leatherhead Court, Woodlands Road, Leatherhead, KT22 0BN.

If you prefer, telephone 01372 841151 or go to [qef.org.uk/donate](https://qef.org.uk/donate)

Your support allows us to deliver expert services to enable disabled adults and children to achieve their potential and live with greater independence.

### We really couldn't do it without you.

We'd like to continue to contact you about our work. If you would like to change how you hear from us, please email [hello@qef.org.uk](mailto:hello@qef.org.uk) or call us on 01372 841151.

Remember our privacy policy sets out how we collect, use and store your personal information. You can read it at [qef.org.uk/privacy](https://qef.org.uk/privacy).

QEF, Leatherhead Court, Woodlands Road, Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 0BN  
01372 841151 | [appeals@qef.org.uk](mailto:appeals@qef.org.uk) | Registered charity No. 251051 | Ref: H-A-23



## Your gift could be worth 25% more!

☐ I want to Gift Aid any donations made in the last four years and any I make in the future to QEF. I am a UK taxpayer and understand if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Gift Aid is reclaimed by QEF from the tax you pay for the current year. Please notify QEF if you want to cancel this declaration, change your name or address or no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains.

☐ No, I am NOT a taxpayer.

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

*giftaid it*

Please remember to include your name and address



SCAN ME