

With our lives getting busier by the day, you might be forgiven for thinking that the island's fine tradition of honorary service was under threat – not a bit of it. Many islanders still give up an incredible amount of their time to help good causes, and so we plan to recognise that in each edition of Connect, in this Charity Champion feature. We'll be celebrating those individuals who normally go unremarked – but without their work, Guernsey just wouldn't be the place that it is. E-mail editor@bailiwickexpress.com if you know of someone who fits the bill.



Rhona Humphreys Charity Champion

Which voluntary roles have you undertaken?



Rhona Humphreys, Director Imperium Trust

I currently sit on the Cheshire Homes Support Group, which basically is the fund-raising arm of the home. There are around 14 people on the committee and we organise a range of events for the home, which provides such a vital service to the island. Shorncliffe is home to 11 full time residents and a number of respite visitors, all managing the challenge of severe physical disability aged from their 20s to 80s. With no government funding, we need a minimum of £1,100,000 a year to run the home, so it's quite a challenge.

On a personal front, I have also undertaken a number of fund-raising challenges independently, raising money for various charities and causes – cycling, walking and even dancing.

What type of activity do you get involved with?

I am a 'hands-on' person so whilst I bring my business experience to my role on the Cheshire Home Support Group, I like to get involved with whatever is going on. So

yes my expertise as a company director is of real value, but I have got more out of getting stuck in at the 'coal face'.

The home has lots of events throughout the year including our dinner Gilbert and Sullivan weekend when a range of local performers put on an amazing production (evening and matinee) of one of the G&S favourites at St. James. The Cheshire Home team don appropriately themed costumes and wait on table, sell raffle tickets and do whatever else is needed on the night. So I have been seen dressed as a sailor and a geisha – I will leave you to work out what the respective shows were!

During the summer this year we held an afternoon tea to mark the 100 years of the end of WW1. Maggie Talbot-Cull hosted the event in a field at the back of her house on Jerbourg Point. The house is also 100 years old this year and although not old in Guernsey terms, has an interesting history. So again the team was serving teas and running the raffle (and washing up!).

Other events include open gardens, car treasure hunts, cake sales – you name



it, if we can raise some well needed cash, we will.

As far as other fund raising is concerned, I completed the London to Paris cycle ride with my husband Russell (actually he supports everything I do and makes quite a convincing geisha himself!) a few years ago raising money for Parkinson's Research. I had lost my mother to this disease and wanted to do something towards moving us closer to finding a cure for this dreadful illness.

I have also done the 'Ride the Night' bike ride around London – a 100km cycle ride around the city raising money for Breast Cancer Care. This year I completed the inaugural 'Walk the Night' London event which covers the equivalent of a marathon (26.2 miles) in aid of Breast Cancer Care and Prostate Cancer UK. I already have some thoughts on a bigger challenge for 2019 but nothing decided just yet.

I also help out with SWATS – one of the Guernsey drama clubs. Both my children have always been involved with the local drama scene and so I have got 'sucked in' –

helping backstage or prompting and I even found myself on stage in one of the local pantomimes a few years back.

How important is it for professional individuals to be involved in local charities and why?

Guernsey has an extremely active third sector offering an amazing service to our community and with an incredible number of people volunteering their time. I started getting involved when my children reached an age where they were a bit more self sufficient and I wanted to fill that time doing something for the community. The Cheshire Home is a charity that is not necessarily at the forefront of people's minds but really needs on-going fund raising support.

I would encourage anyone with some spare time – no matter how much/little – to get involved. It gives you a real perspective on life both from working with other volunteers who come from all sorts of backgrounds, but also from meeting the beneficiaries of the charity itself. Seeing people facing serious challenges in their day-to-day lives brings a real focus on

what's important in your own life.

What does Imperium do to support the community?

Imperium Trust supports all our staff's own fund-raising efforts on a 'matched sponsorship' basis and we also make regular donations to charities in which our own staff are involved (which might be anything from a raffle prize to a cash donation).

We also support any local or national fund-raising days – Bermuda shorts, bright tights, garishly coloured ties – we try to do our bit.

Is there any else you would like to add?

I think it's a well publicised fact that Guernsey, like many communities, relies more and more on the valuable contribution made by our third sector. We all have something to offer and none of our local charities could survive without volunteers so I would encourage anyone to get involved whether you can offer pro bono legal advice or simply sell flags on a couple of Saturdays a year.