



Cheltenham volunteers recognised by The Queen with prestigious Award

[Newlands Park, a part of Cheltenham Rugby Club](#) has been announced as one of 103 UK volunteering groups to win this year's The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, the MBE for volunteer groups.

The prestigious National Honour recognises outstanding contributions made to local communities by groups voluntarily devoting their time for the benefit of others. It sets the national benchmark for excellence in volunteering, with the work of those awarded being judged of the highest standard.

[Newlands Park](#) has received the Award for [providing sporting facilities for young people in the Community](#).

Winners of this year's Award were selected from 341 groups nominated by members of the public who have been helped personally or witnessed the benefits of a group's work in their community.

[Newlands Park](#) will receive a certificate signed by the Queen and an exclusive commemorative crystal, presented by Her Majesty's representative in Gloucestershire, [Sir Henry Elwes](#) at a special ceremony. The group has also received an invitation for representatives to attend a Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace in the summer.

Speaking of their success, [Mr Steve Ratcliffe, Chairman of Newlands Park and Cheltenham Rugby Club](#) said: "this is a very proud moment for [Newlands Park](#), which has been operated by the [Cheltenham Rugby Club](#) for six years. It is fantastic news for all the 250 volunteers, who give up so much time and energy to help young people in the Community.'

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service Main Award Committee Chair and former broadcast journalist Martyn Lewis CBE said,

"Outstanding volunteer groups across the UK all too often go without recognition for the truly amazing work they do, despite the vital part they play in helping bind our communities together.

It's a great pleasure to celebrate the efforts of [Newlands Park](#) with The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service and help raise awareness of all they do for the benefit of others."

More than 850 groups around the UK, Channel Islands and Isle of Man have now won the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, over the eight years since it was created by Her Majesty to mark the occasion of her Golden Jubilee in 2002.

For details of all this year's Award winners and information on how to nominate a group, visit www.direct.gov.uk/thequeensawardforvoluntaryservice, where a nomination form can be downloaded.

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For further information

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Note to editors

About the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

In 2002, in celebration of Her Majesty's Golden Jubilee, the Queen's Golden Jubilee Award for Voluntary Service by Groups in the Community was established. Its purpose is to recognise groups of individuals who are giving their time freely for the benefit of others. It is the highest honour that can be bestowed upon groups of this kind and is equivalent in status to the MBE. As such, the Queen's Award not only serves to provide recognition of volunteer groups, but also demonstrates the high respect in which volunteering is held.

The Award is overseen by the Office of Civil Society (OCS). As part of the Cabinet Office, the OCS leads work across government to support the environment for a thriving third sector (voluntary and community groups, social enterprises, charities, cooperatives and mutuals), enabling it to campaign for change, deliver public services, promote social enterprise and strengthen communities.

Groups must be nominated for the Award – self nomination is not permitted. A group (two or more people) can be nominated if it is based in the UK, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. The group has to have been volunteering for the benefit of people in the UK or overseas for at least three years and more than half its members must be volunteers who have the right of residence in the UK. Groups solely concerned with fundraising for charitable purposes are not eligible. Further details on entrance criteria and the nomination process are available from www.direct.gov.uk/thequeensawardforvoluntaryservice.