

Chairman's Report

The 'CAN DO' team: GO FOR IT!

Introduction:

"Go for it!" These were the words that captured the experience of one newcomer to DSUK when she discovered that 'snowsport' was an exhilarating and enabling experience that could influence her approach and confidence in everyday life. The philosophy of 'can do' is core to everything that is DSUK. Indeed, it is this that carried us through 2010, with the belief that however dire the projections for global economic recovery, DSUK was at a turning point and that all the foundations that we have built over the past few years *would* start to reap their reward.

When I reported to you last year, looking forward to 2010, my focus was on the measures taken by the Trustees to mitigate future failure of DSUK as a result of economic uncertainty. The plans would carry it across an anticipated lean winter for 2009/2010. Nevertheless, even against this background, I was able to report on a mood of optimism for the future that has rarely been so strong. I am now happy to be able to report that the optimism was well placed. The main focus in 2010 was to build on our core delivery of services and enhance our capabilities through strategic partnerships and effective fundraising. The real results of 2010 will take time to have their full impact on our financial health, but we have been able to demonstrate that our structure is sound, we have an international reputation for our work and achievements; our members continue to make remarkable progress in their recreational or competitive snowsports, while carrying the personal, social and therapeutic benefits across the work-play barrier, and delivering individual success stories that are astounding.

However, nothing stands still and momentary complacency is not an option. DSUK survives and thrives as a result of continual review, reinvention and realignment to allow it to respond to its membership and empower people with disabilities to participate and succeed. This will be highlighted further below. Participation in disability snowsport isn't a privilege, it is an opportunity for self-development that can be life-changing: an open door, enabling people with disabilities to develop a 'can do' philosophy that will impact on our overall social structure: "Go for it!"

Overview of the Year

As we entered 2010, the Trustees were faced with the interesting dilemma of simultaneously seeking austerity and expansion. Certain austerity measures were required to carry a programme through an anticipated financially lean 2010 so the Trustees supported a temporary policy of 'natural wastage' in support-staff-replacement together with a strong focus on broadening the scope of fundraising activities. Clearly, maintaining the 2010 programme with reduced staff was far from ideal and had a significant and sometimes serious impact on the workload. I congratulate the staff, who went way beyond their duty to ensure that we were able to continue to deliver to our membership. My thanks go especially to the commitment and loyalty given by all our [Staff and Volunteers](#), whose dedication is second to none, and the committed efforts and valuable contribution made by organisations and individuals who have provided support.

Meanwhile, everyone has been busy with a forward-looking plan to expand our resources and the opportunities available to people with disabilities, capitalising on corporate collaboration, building on a developing nationwide adaptive snowsports school network and looking forward from a Paralympic year. Thus, the Trustees continue to endorse a plan that supports core activities but expand opportunities for collaboration and improve the availability of national resources. Some of the key objectives have been:

- To increase participation in snowsport and active social recreation by people with disabilities, including opportunities for casual, recreational and club activities, coaching and competition. Particular attention has been given to the national network of adaptive snowsport schools and the appointment of a Development Officer (with funding from Children in Need).
- To support schools and youth snowsport for people with disabilities. Working to provide

- sustainable and regular activities for recreational and competitive snowsport for young disabled people and to developing local and regional groups.
- To establish partnerships between other relevant groups and individuals involved in disability snowsport, both nationally and internationally. In particular, we wished to see closer links with the travel and snowsports industries. One of the most important collaborations that has emerged and developed during 2010 has been with Crystal Ski. This isn't just a fundraising opportunity but begins a dialogue with the travel industry that will impact the opportunities and access for people with disabilities. The Trustees have supported a closer relationship allowing better integration.
 - To develop pathways and opportunities for performance development for people with disabilities. Paralympic year placed a strong focus on competition and priority was given to establishing our capability and reputation for the training and performance of elite athletes
 - To increase the number and quality of people involved in disability snowsport – instructors, coaches, volunteers, administrators and coordinators. The main effort in 2010 was directed at the instructor level, through further strengthening collaboration with BASI.

In parallel with year-end (May) the Trustees commissioned a review of the organisational structure that would underpin DSUK development in the future. This was timely on two fronts: 1. the 2010 austerity measures clouded lines of responsibility with an 'all hands to the pump' approach. This was a temporary solution, but was neither sustainable nor desirable. 2. Further development of DSUK requires a strong platform with key individual technical, operational and financial knowhow bound together as an integrated expert team. As a result of this review, the Trustees approved a structure that both supports our core activities in a professional manner and provides an organisational framework to build development. 2010/11 will see the first year working within this new structure and the Trustees expect to report on a significant overall improvement in delivery, opportunity and efficiency.

One high point for this year's success was the House of Lords reception, hosted by Lord Colin Moynihan, to launch our new DVD. A number of years on from our previous visit to the House of Lords, it highlighted the extent of the progress that has been made by DSUK and the advances that have been achieved for and by people with disabilities. Being so closely involved with the organisation, we forget to step back and see the benefits and progress of our work, so it was a time to hear the astonishment from others and receive their enthusiastic encouragement and support. We would particularly like to thank Lord Moynihan for his support and all those who made the effort to attend this event. The DVD is available via our website: take a look and marvel at the accessibility and opportunity of snowsport. We would also like to thank BAFTA winner Peter Lawlor, who created the soundtrack for the DVD. We were greatly privileged to be beneficiary to his artistic talents.

Financial Development

Effective income generation has been a major priority this year. The year has been marked by constrained expenditure, but such constraint has been absent from our approach to fundraising. We have reconsidered how we can continue to sustain and expand the current level of service and grow in the activities for our members and future members. As described in the CEO report, we have reorganised our fundraising team to provide a wider scope of expertise, continuing to cover grants and trusts but expanding our portfolio of events and other activity based fundraising. As highlighted in the financial report (copies available) the results have been excellent, especially at a time when charities have struggled to survive. We have an ongoing strategy for further expansion and have recently included a corporate co-development training programme, providing volunteer trainee support for our activities, aligned with corporate sponsorship. Although the economic environment for all charities continues to be difficult, we believe that we now have a broad and robust financial development programme that has greater potential to withstand the downturn in charitable grants and income from Trust Funds. Within this portfolio, the achievements from our fundraising team have been outstanding. Nevertheless, although our results demonstrate the success of the revised strategy, we must continue to be cautious in

projections of the financial health of DSUK. As we can see from the financial report, the downfall in unrestricted income has been reversed and our reserves improved (albeit by modest but significant margins). The overall financial management has remained strong and now allows us to anticipate further improvement in the coming year. The Trustees recognise that risks remain high and will continue to follow a strategy of review and refocus the scope and quantity of development activities planned for next year.

'Go for it' in the face of austerity.

Notwithstanding the tight financial control and reduction in delivery that was demanded by the depressed economic outlook, DSUK maintained a high quality in its delivery, retaining the core provision to grass root Members and enjoying the excitement of a Paralympic year. The outstanding turn around in performance of our athletes in the last years, under the guidance of their coach and the team structure, was well rewarded. Although there was no Olympic podium place this time, the team are gaining medals in international competition and are now seen as serious contenders. As stated previously, 'Can do it' within DSUK will not compromise quality, training or procurement of the best service, so there is a continuing determination that delivery of recreational, competition and club support activities will continue at the highest level.

The Trustees have now approved the support and delivery of a full programme of recreational activities (internationally, centrally and locally) through 2011, with continuing investment and expansion of an embedded provision within facilities in the UK. One of the ongoing pressures continues to be finding and retaining volunteers to maintain our vibrant and proactive voluntary sector Helpers. The Trustees have identified this barrier as an area for major investment of effort and funds to be able to 'can do' the vision of access and therapeutic benefit. With a national emphasis on volunteering, we hope to further develop the opportunities for volunteers within DSUK benefaction of a Volunteer Fund is invited.

Governance

Governance of DSUK is undertaken by a [Board of Trustees](#), with management and delivery delegated to a talented and dedicated Staff through the CEO, Fiona Young. The Board includes both appointed and elected members and we remain dependent on the expertise of the Board and, in line with Charity Commission guidance, look upon contributory expertise as a key factor in recruitment of new Trustees. We continually review the expertise of the Board and seek a broad range of skills, knowledge and experience.

Looking ahead, Disability Snowsport 'can do' things that other activities cannot reach. DSUK combines, sport, social activity and achievement and will continue to provide regional and international recreational and competitive activities, empowering people with disabilities to 'go for it'.

"Go for it", we are the 'can do' charity.

Chairman
Autumn 2010