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Press Release

GB WHEELCHAIR RUGBY TO APPOINT FOUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS

GB Wheelchair Rugby (GBWR) is delighted to announce the appointment of four new independent Board members. The new trustees together bring with them extensive experience across high performance sport, commercial, finance and governance.

The new Board members will take up their posts following GBWR's AGM in September and replace a number of long-serving trustees who complete their terms of office. The new recruits, who were identified through an open recruitment process, are:

- Paula Dunn, MBE: Para Athletics Head Coach at UK Athletics
- Kate Clayton: Paralympics Executive at Channel 4
- Chris Conway: Chief Financial Officer (CFO) for Commonwealth Games England
- Sam Seddon: European Brand Amplification Lead at IBM

Paula Dunn is a former Olympic sprinter and Commonwealth Games medalist who has been Para Athletics Head Coach for Great Britain since 2012, leading the team to consistent success in major championships including the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games. Dunn received an MBE in 2018 for Services to Athletics.

Kate Clayton is the Paralympics Corporate lead at Channel 4, the UK Paralympics broadcaster. Clayton has over 15 years' experience across sports marketing, PR and stakeholder management and has prior experience assisting a wide range of key stakeholders in the disability sports arena, including Help for Heroes, the BPA and UK Sport.

Chris Conway joined Commonwealth Games England as CFO in 2018 from Badminton England where he was Finance Director. He has been an independent member of GBWR's Governance and Finance Committee for the past two years.

Sam Seddon has been the UK Sports and Entertainment Partnership Lead for IBM Global Markets for the past seven years, with key partnerships including the RFU and The Championships, Wimbledon. Seddon has over 20 years' experience across IT, Business Strategy and Marketing.

Ed Warner, who in September will take over the role of Chair of GBWR from Kevin Aitchison, said: "I am delighted to welcome GBWR's new board members. They have emerged from a highly competitive recruitment process.

Great Britain Wheelchair Rugby Limited

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Registered Office: Rugby House, Twickenham Stadium, 200 Whitton Road, Twickenham, Middlesex, TW2 7BA

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“The breadth and quality of applications we received for these roles bears testimony to the high standing wheelchair rugby has in the UK.

“Like all sports, we currently have much work to do to ensure our grassroots and elite players can return to training and then competition as the country emerges from lockdown. We will not lose focus on the long-term strategic development of the sport, however, and our new Board members will have much to contribute to its growth at grassroots and the success of the GB team in the years ahead.”

Almost 1,000 people take part annually in wheelchair rugby in the UK. The GB team have won the past three European Championships and finished fifth at the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games. The team is currently seeded fourth in the world rankings and has strong ambitions to medal at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games next summer.

-Ends-

Notes to Editors

- Great Britain Wheelchair Rugby Limited (GBWR) is the National Governing Body for the game of wheelchair rugby in England, Scotland and Wales, is a registered charity and is a full member of the International Wheelchair Rugby Federation (IWRF) and of the British Paralympic Association (BPA).
- GBWR is funded through public, commercial and individual investment and its mission is to build wheelchair rugby communities where athletes, officials and volunteers all enjoy being part of a team. It is a values-based organisation which aims to be inclusive, accessible and supportive of all who wish to be part of the sport.
- Wheelchair rugby is a London 2012 legacy success story and since then GBWR has grown the sport from a domestic league with a single division comprised of 7 teams, to one which now has 3 divisions providing competition opportunities for 20 teams. A further 16 teams play Wheelchair Rugby 5's a form of the game which GBWR created to allow those with greater functionality than is permitted under Paralympic rules to play. The domestic league is internationally recognised for its high level of competition, where it regularly sees international players from Europe joining domestic teams and strengthening the level of competition. The domestic league culminates with the RMA Sport sponsored National Championships.
- In partnership with The Lords Taverners's charity, GBWR delivers a junior programme providing those aged 8-17 years the opportunity to experience wheelchair rugby in a junior-only environment. Currently the programme has over 120 youngsters playing the game regularly.

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- GBWR delivers programmes in all national Spinal Injury Units and provides the coaching and support for the Invictus Games wheelchair rugby team, where Great Britain took the gold medal in 2015.
- The GB national team are the current European Champions, having taken the gold medal a record total of 6 times since 1995, and are currently ranked 4th in the world. GB achieved 4th position at the 2018 IWRF World Championships in Sydney, Australia.
- GBWR activities are funded through a mix of government, National Lottery and commercial funding, along with significant fund- raising and philanthropic donations. Sport England recognised the success of GBWR's grassroots delivery with a 4-year award totaling £1.4m.
- The Japanese charitable foundation, ISPS Handa is GBWR's Official Principal Partner and is supporting the British Team's performance programme as it prepares for the Tokyo Paralympic Games. A number of Lloyds of London underwriting agencies and insurance brokers have also made a significant contribution over the last four years towards the team's preparation for Tokyo. King Power, Thailand's leading retail travel group, sponsors the annual King Power Quad Nations Wheelchair Rugby Tournament.
- GBWR as long-standing partnerships with the England Rugby Football Union and with Wales Rugby Union. The RFU provides a generous donation and value-in-kind office services, whilst the Wales Rugby Charitable Trust funds wheelchair rugby development in Wales. Links with the rugby community are further strengthened through club partnerships including premiership clubs Leicester Tigers, Gloucester, Northampton Saints, Harlequins, Exeter Chiefs, Bristol Bear and Saracens, whilst in Wales, Ospreys and Dragon's support their own wheelchair rugby teams. England and Lions legend Jason Leonard is GBWR's Patron and Harlequins and England's Mike Brown and former Wales international Rupert Moon are both GBWR ambassadors.

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