

Access Adventures

Affinity Water provides free access and use of Heron Lake, a beautiful wetland at Wraysbury, for the charity Access Adventures to enable people with disabilities to participate and enjoy water sports. We have a history of over 20 years' support to similar organisations on site – the British Disabled Waterski and Wakeboard Association (BDWWA).

Access Adventures use the lake for a range of watersports including waterskiing and wakeboarding to help make watersports inclusive and accessible for all. Adaptive sport means using specialised equipment, improving site access, or exploring slightly different teaching and communication methods. The charity went from strength to strength in 2021. Previous restrictions during Covid were relaxed, enabling them to support a greater number of people with disabilities. Access Adventures has an active community that help drive them forward and help make decisions. Many of their staff, volunteers and trustees have a disability themselves. Our user-led philosophy gives the charity a unique insight into the challenges and issues people with disabilities face and their requirements.

In April 2021, the charity opened the Heron Lake for adaptive skiers. Its regular attendees included individuals with physical, sensory and learning disabilities. Residential camps we also re-introduced, following Covid guidelines. The social element is such an important aspect of the charity, spending a whole weekend with other people with disabilities, sharing stories and experiences is so valuable. People start the weekend as strangers and leave as friends!

The weekend camps allow plenty of time on the water, with inspiring instructors and coaches encouraging you all the way. The fantastic facilities at the lake mean the charity can run training sessions and welcome new volunteers to the Access family. These begin with indoor classes on disability awareness and adaptive equipment,



and continue with a range of practical sessions on the boat and in the water. New volunteers mean even more people with disabilities can benefit from our life-changing adaptive activities.

The progression from beginners to the sport is staggering. Many beginner skiers need assistance in the water from instructors initially; the level of assistance is reduced over time and independence is encouraged where possible. However, depending on the level of impairment, some individuals may always need support.

They have run more paddlesports taster sessions than ever before, and hosted several adaptive yoga sessions on

the jetty, with the lake as a beautiful backdrop.

In 2022, the charity aims to support even more people with disabilities. One of the biggest limitations is the number of volunteers. A big drive to recruit new volunteers has already begun. A greater number of volunteer training opportunities will be available at the start of the season. The charity aims to increase participation of those who can benefit by improving and utilising the on-site accommodation to attract people from further away, by creating more accessible and comfortable accommodation for people with disabilities.




We're delighted to be partnering with Affinity Water by using Heron Lake and its facilities to the fullest possible advantage, to help provide their participants with improved facilities and open up new opportunities for some – sport can have a powerful positive impact when people do something they never thought was possible."


Jane Sowerby
Founder and CEO of Access Adventures



Our Genes

 Giving customers an exceptional service

Customer outcomes

 Providing a great service that you value

UNSDGs

