

Quarterly Update - January 2025

As 2024 came to a close, I was thrilled to welcome the final incredible staff members who completed our team of dedicated individuals. Together, we will make it happen and see this transformational building project through to its opening in 2026. Then, to top it off, we secured an impressive £500,000 award from the National Lottery Community Fund, providing a fantastic boost to the campaign.

We've hit the ground running this year with an exciting milestone: knocking down our first walls! The building is now in the capable hands of the amazing team at Oakland Construction, who are beginning the strip-out phase. It's truly humbling to see our dream start to take shape; it's another step closer to becoming a reality.

I hope you enjoy reading this quarterly update. Please do reach out to the team if you'd like to discuss how you can get involved further with the project. Thank you for your continued enthusiasm and support!

Kindest Regards,

Steph

Stephanie Wheen
CEO & Founder
of Gympanzees



The Build

Breaking Down the Walls

Gympanzees has begun construction on the UK's first fully accessible exercise, play, and social centre for disabled children, marking the milestone with a ceremonial wall demolition. Set to open in June 2026, the centre will offer 11 inclusive rooms, including a horizontal climbing wall and a two-storey soft play area with a wheelchair lift. With £4.5 million raised towards its £8 million target, this permanent space will provide vital opportunities for physical activity and sensory experiences, improving health outcomes for disabled children and young people.



Design Workshops

Throughout autumn we held several design workshops, consulting with families, healthcare professionals, and other charities, to help us shape the new permanent centre. These workshops identified areas for improvement, including corridor layouts, lighting, toileting and storage, all making the Gympanzees Centre more inclusive.

Building the Team

Our thorough tendering process has enabled us to appoint some fantastic companies to help bring the build to fruition. Fulkers Bailey Russell are heading up Project Management and Quantity Surveying, bringing an exceptional level of experience, expertise and understanding to the project.



We have appointed Oakland Construction to start the initial stage of building works, which will involve demolishing the existing internal walls and ceilings on the ground floor to prepare for the reconstruction in Summer 2025, to create the Gympanzees vision.



Fundraising Campaign

National Lottery Community Fund Award

We are thrilled to have received an amazing grant of £500,000 from the National Lottery Community Fund! Following a thorough application process the award is not only a financial boost to our core costs but an endorsement of the project. This funding will also allow us to continue running our vital Lending Library service, which provides accessible exercise and sensory equipment to families, schools and groups. We're delighted to have embarked on this positive partnership with the National Lottery.

We are also delighted that this latest round of funding has brought the total raised to £4.5 million of our £8 million target.

New Business Support

AirHop Trampoline Park Bristol have donated three specialist trampolines equating to a £25,000 gift. A generous gift showing how local companies can support the campaign. We have welcomed dozens of industry contacts to tour the site and hear our vision. It has been fantastic to meet so many people keen to support Gympanzees, whether it's practical aspects of the build or specialist equipment.



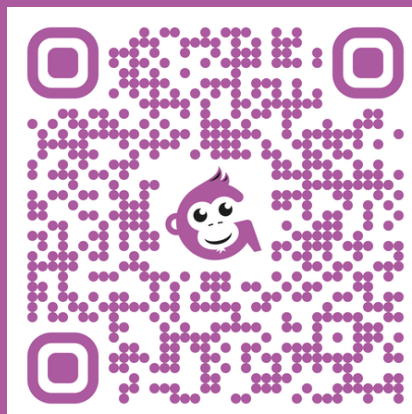
Public Xmas Campaign

In December, we ran a Christmas campaign, 'Dear Santa!' The video highlighted the profound impact of Gympanzees through a heartfelt story that touched the hearts of many. The campaign featured Penelope's wish to play with her brother Frankie, who uses a wheelchair, made possible through our accessible equipment and inclusive play opportunities. This powerful story showcased how Gympanzees helps entire families to bond, feel included, and share joyful experiences together.

We raised £13,500 during the campaign, with inspiring support from both existing and new donors. The success of the Christmas campaign not only reflects the generosity of our supporters but also reaffirms the vital role Gympanzees play in creating joy and inclusion for all.

A huge thank you to all the donors who supported this campaign, for sharing the story and to all our partners! We couldn't do what we do without you!

'Dear Santa'



Click Here or
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Fundraising Events in 2025

Our events calendar is looking pretty exciting! From taking in the views on the golf course, running the Bristol Half, to racing down the river in a 30ft dragon boat, there really is something for everyone. Teams are already signing up, if you'd like to join them, the events are linked below.

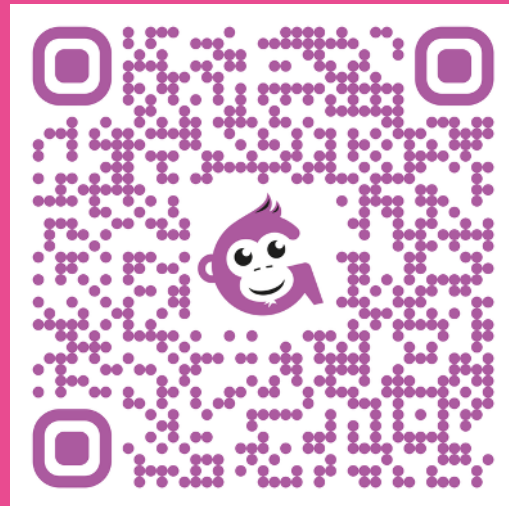


Great Bristol Run
Bristol Harbourside
11/05/25

Gympanzees Annual
Golf Day
Thornbury Golf Club
13/06/25

Gympanzees Dragon
Boat Race
Baltic Wharf Bristol
21/09/25

Gympanzees Events
Scan or Click Here:



For partnership queries please contact our Business Development Manager Leilah King leilah@gympanzees.org

Local High Sheriffs Show Support



We have been shown fantastic support from our local authorities, most recently including a visit from the High Sheriff of Gloucester Mark Hurrell and High Sheriff of Bristol Richard Pendlebury to tour the site. Chair of South Gloucestershire Council, Councillor Franklin Owusu-Antwi, also hosted a fundraising dinner on our behalf having chosen Gympanzees as his charity of the year to showcase and support – thank you!



Updates from Lending Library

Over the past few months and continuing into 2025, the Lending Library team has been hard at work expanding and improving our service. Since 2020 we have been loaning out over 200 items of specialist equipment for children and families to enjoy in their own homes.

In January, we re-launched the Lending Library website, designed to be more user-friendly, beautifully showcase our equipment, and attract even more users to the service including families, schools and groups.

We are thrilled to announce the establishment of our first Partner Hub in Kingswood, Bristol which opened in January, with further hubs opening soon. These hubs will allow families and groups to access our equipment from further afield, a fantastic expansion of our reach and impact.

To help sustain the service, we've introduced a small fee of £3 per item loaned for a month. Waivers are available to ensure the Lending Library remains accessible to everyone who needs it.

"It's amazing!! We've been able to see what our children enjoy and what doesn't work before spending a fortune on equipment that doesn't suit. We've been able to provide a diversity of sensory experiences that we wouldn't otherwise be able to afford. I'm eternally grateful for this library."

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Welcome to the Lending Library

At Gympanzees, we strive to ensure that children and young people with disabilities have equal opportunities to play and exercise, promoting their physical and mental development so that they can reach their full potential.

Register Browse all products

Thank you once again for your support and interest in Project Home. We look forward to sharing more updates with you in 2025. Please do stay in touch and pass this update along to anyone who might be interested.

We've got a building, now you can help us make it a home!


Charity Number 1189375