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LLEVELO | Garden Design

The Panathlon Joy Garden at RHS Chelsea Flower Show Media Pack

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Hope thousands more young people with disabilities could benefit from grassroots sport as charity Panathlon extends its reach at RHS Chelsea Flower Show



- *Disability sports charity teaming up with designer Penelope Walker of Llevelo Garden Design for The Panathlon Joy Garden*
 - *Wheelchair accessible All About Plants garden at the show to be officially opened by Paralympians Steve Brown and Liz Johnson on press day (Monday 20 May)*
 - *Panathlon's current fundraising campaign aims to tackle waiting list for its sporting events for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)*
 - *To be relocated to Marjorie McClure School in Chislehurst, London, a school for students aged 4-19 years old with complex medical needs and physical disabilities*
- *Supported by Project Giving Back, the grant-making charity that funds gardens for good causes at RHS Chelsea Flower Show, the garden is a colourful and uplifting depiction of how Panathlon inspires inclusion and normalises difference, with an overall message that joy is for everyone*

Disability sports charity Panathlon is hoping around 5,000 more young people could benefit from the life-changing sporting opportunities it offers, by amplifying awareness of its current campaign to raise an extra £100,000 when it exhibits at RHS Chelsea Flower Show.

With a long waiting list for the competitive sporting events it runs across the UK for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), the charity is teaming up with multi-award winning garden designer Penelope Walker for The Panathlon Joy Garden. The aim is to highlight the

transformative impact of its work and the drive to secure much-needed funds to help more young people.

Paralympians Steve Brown and Liz Johnson will officially open the garden at the show and share their hugely positive experiences of working with the charity. Fellow Panathlon Patron and TV presenter, Alex Brooker, is also providing pre and post-show support. The Patrons hope the event will offer a unique chance to garner more support from the show's 150,000 visitors to extend Panathlon's reach UK-wide.

Already Panathlon is poised to increase its services to help nurture the physical and mental wellbeing of even more children with SEND, and to promote aspiring youngsters with disabilities to become potential future medal winners in competitive disability sport. With greater funding and donations, it is hoped that an additional 5,000 young people can be involved in the 2024/25 school year.

Demand is increasing for Panathlon's competitive disability sporting events, which the charity has delivered throughout the UK for over 25 years. In 2023 Panathlon achieved a record-breaking year, providing 62,981 young people with disabilities with the opportunity to participate in competitive disability sport.

Panathlon Patron Steve Brown (Wheelchair Rugby Captain at the London 2012 Paralympics and BBC Countryfile presenter), comments: *"Providing children with disabilities the opportunities to develop their interests and skills across all sports, allows them to open their minds to the competitive possibilities. The platform and experience that Panathlon creates is awesome, and with greater support, we can do even more nationwide for young, aspiring para-athletes!"*

Paralympic Champion and Panathlon Chair, Liz Johnson, says: *"Panathlon delivers life-enhancing opportunities for over 60,000 young people every year. Research in 2023 proved that Panathlon massively improves the self-confidence, motivation, mental (and physical) well-being of tens of thousands of children with disabilities and special needs. We want to involve more children, and already we have the demand to expand outside of our current resources. We would love to hear from businesses and individuals who wish to support our work!"*

Ashley Icceton from Panathlon, adds: *"Panathlon needs to raise £900,000 every year, and as we expand we have to raise even more money! RHS Chelsea Flower Show is our opportunity to tell 150,000 people about Panathlon's core mission – and we hope to encourage more people to support the charity whilst increasing the number of young people participating in Panathlon. With greater funding, it is hoped that an additional 5,000 young people with disabilities can become involved with Panathlon during the 2024/25 school year."*

Panathlon will demonstrate the sport of Boccia Golf on the garden during the show.

The Garden

The Panathlon Joy Garden, in the All About Plants category at the world-famous show, is an uplifting depiction of how the charity inspires inclusion, enables accessibility, and normalises difference. The overall message of the garden is that joy is for everyone.

The garden is a colourful space with tangible and conceptual details to promote and represent joy. Curves dominate in the layout, soft and hard landscaping. Colour is present in the planting and garden features, whilst 'ribbons' across the rear boundary represent Panathlon's use of ribbons in celebration at their sporting events.

The unusual tree shapes symbolise normalising difference; they may look different from the 'norm', but this does not impact their ability to function and perform perfectly well and still exude beauty. The pathway connecting both ends of the garden, and the seating area with space next to it for a wheelchair, both promote the message of inclusion. The pathway is also slightly concave to create playfulness, as does a bright orange, organically-shaped rocking bench.

Planting is colourful and undulating to ensure all garden visitors - irrespective of ability or age - connect to the plants, with a better sight line for wheelchair users. *Geranium* 'Anne Thomson', *Salvia* 'Neon', *Allium sicutum*, *Heuchera* 'Midnight Rose', *Actinidia kolomikta*, *Trifolium rubens* and *Asphodeline lutea* add pops of colour, and evergreen Portuguese laurel shrubs in a ball shape are repeated to create consistency and sense of flow.

Penelope Walker says: *"It's been a pleasure to design The Panathlon Joy Garden and I'm so excited to share this with visitors. I really hope they feel inspired by the garden and take some new ideas home with them."*

Plants are supplied by How Green Nursery in Kent and the trees by Van den Berk Nurseries, and the garden is built by Stewart Landscapes Construction.

Following the show, the garden will be relocated to the Marjorie McClure School in Chislehurst in London, a school for students aged 4-19 years old with complex medical needs and physical disabilities.

The Panathlon charity relies on sponsors, charitable trusts, foundations, and individual giving, to support its work each year. To help the charity create opportunities for more children in 2025, visit <https://panathlonfoundationltd.enthuse.com/cf/joygardenchelsea2024>.

Each donation of £25 will allow another child the opportunity to take part in competitive sport. Donations pay for adapted sports equipment, specialised coaches, and the cost of supplying medals, sports clothing and trophies to reward the competitors.

– ENDS –

Notes to Editors

- [Arsenal amputee footballer Isaac Addai](#) has credited Panathlon with kick-starting his career by giving him the opportunity to compete in disability sport at school. Last season Isaac was voted Arsenal's 'Player of the Year' when the Gunners won the England Amputee Football League Cup.
- [Great Britain wheelchair racer Michael McCabe](#) began his dream of becoming an athlete while competing with Panathlon during his school years. He finished fourteenth in the London Marathon 2024 men's wheelchair race.
- In the last 12 months Panathlon's UK reach has broken records! [In 2023 Panathlon's programmes featured: 62,981 participants](#); 7,359 young leaders; 3,012 schools; and took place across 44 English counties and 10 areas of Wales.

- March 2024 saw Panathlon deliver 142 sports events across the country, involving 6,303 competitors with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) Additionally a further 1,387 young leaders were involved, providing those children with new responsibilities and leadership qualities.
- Panathlon's sporting programmes include: multi-skills, swimming, football, 10-pin bowling and boccia and a range of impairment specific sports.
- Panathlon needs to raise £900,000 every year.

Media Enquiries

For more information about **Panathlon**

Contact Helen Stock – helen@foxredmedia.co.uk

For more information about **The Panathlon Joy Garden** or **Penelope Walker**

Contact Emma Mason – emma@emmamasonpr.co.uk / 07762 117433

Press Images

Images for media use can be found by clicking [here](#). If you require more, please get in touch with the media contacts above.

About Panathlon

Panathlon delivers over 950 days of sporting activity each year, across every English county, into North and South Wales and Northern Ireland.

[Independent Research in October 2023 reported](#) that due to Panathlon:

- 92% of schools reported increased self-belief and pride in themselves
- 88% increased confidence and resilience
- 82% increased teamwork and leadership skills
- 79% of participants had their first-ever competitive sporting experience
- 77% increase in social interaction

Moreover, the research also found an additional 51,164 children have benefitted from Panathlon-inspired activities, with schools making PE curricula more inclusive; investing in equipment; developing assessment tools; creating leadership roles for SEND children; building new inter-school sports fixtures and opening school facilities to the community.

This ripple-effect shows the work of Panathlon to promote inclusivity in sport will continue to extend to even more pupils in the future. This provision to at least 114,145 children and young people this year is more crucial than ever, given the barriers of cost, resources, and local authority support to physical education among children and young people with special needs are increasing, emphasising the lens through which the growing impact of Panathlon should be viewed.

Panathlon Touchpoints

Web – <https://panathlon.com/>

Email – enquiries@panathlon.com

X – <https://twitter.com/Panathlon>

Facebook – <https://www.facebook.com/PanathlonChallenge>

Instagram – <https://www.instagram.com/panathlonchallenge/>

LinkedIn – <https://www.linkedin.com/company/panathlon-challenge/>

YouTube – <https://www.youtube.com/user/Panathlon1>

The Designer

Penelope Walker is an award-winning landscape and garden designer based in the UK who set up her own practice in 2016. Driven by a passion for design, Penelope has an eye for style; her trade stand design at the Chelsea Flower Show 2022 was featured in an article titled 'Five Trends to Watch Out for in 2022' by Homes and Gardens UK. Penelope is a pre-registered member of the Society of Garden Designers and has passed the first stage of adjudication.

Penelope's strength lies in her spatial awareness and ability to make a space fit for purpose as well as beautiful and reflective of its setting. After graduating from the English Gardening School at the Chelsea Physic Garden, Penelope spent a year working at The Place for Plants; a highly reputable independent Plant Nursery selling everyday and unusual plants from perennials to shrubs and trees.

One of Penelope's core beliefs is that design has the strength to evoke powerful emotions. With a particular affinity for designing wellbeing gardens and 'feel good' gardens in the faith that a little joy can go a long way.

With extensive experience of listening to clients' needs and delivering quality work, Penelope has vast knowledge of what is required to design and implement a range of gardens and landscapes as well as a real eye for style.

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Tel - 01206 625330

Project Giving Back

Project Giving Back (PGB) is a unique grant-making charity that provides funding for gardens for good causes at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show. PGB was launched in May 2021 in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and its devastating effects on UK charitable fundraising - effects that have since been exacerbated by the cost of living crisis. PGB will fund a total of 15 gardens at RHS Chelsea Flower Show in 2024 and intends to fund up to 60 gardens inspired by a range of good causes at the show from 2022 - 2026.

Find out more at www.givingback.org.uk.

Celebrity Panathlon patrons

Liz Johnson - a triple Paralympic medallist, became a Panathlon patron in 2010 and, since then, has attended dozens of competitions around the country, inspiring a new generation of athletes. She is now chair of the charity. Liz, a 100m breaststroke S6 swimmer, won the gold medal at the Beijing Paralympic Games in 2008, to add to her silver medal from Athens 2004. She then went on to complete a hat trick of medals in front of a home crowd at London 2012, where she won bronze.

Steve Brown - the Great Britain wheelchair rugby captain at the London 2012 Olympics, Steve is a Panathlon Patron. He was a TV host/presenter at the Paralympics in Rio as well as a regular on BBC's Countryfile and Springwatch programmes.

Alex Brooker - co-hosts award-winning show The Last Leg, and has been a Panathlon patron since 2013. He rose to fame as a reporter for Channel 4 at the 2012 London Paralympic Games.

Plant List

Trees

Platanus x hispanica 'Malburg

Plants

Actinidia kolomikta

Alchemilla sericata 'Gold Strike'

Allium cyathophorum var. *farreri*

Allium sicutum

Asphodeline lutea

Asplenium trichomanes subsp. *trichomanes*

Astrantia 'Buckland'

Astrantia major 'Star of Beauty'

Blechnum spicant

Carex testacea

Cirsium rivulare 'Atropurpureum'

Epimedium pubigerum

Erigeron 'Lavender Lady'

Festuca amethystina

Foeniculum vulgare

Geranium 'Anne Thomson'

Geranium 'Mavis Simpson'

Geum 'Pretticoats Peach'

Heuchera 'Midnight Rose'

Luzula nivea

Paeonia lactiflora 'Nippon Beauty'

Pimpinella major 'Rosea'

Prunus lusitanica

Rhaphiolepis umbellata 'Southern Moon'

Rosa 'Cardinal de Richelieu'

Salvia 'Neon'

Silene banksia 'Hill Grounds'

Sorbaria sorbifolia 'Sem'

Tellima grandiflora

Trifolium rubens

Tulbaghia violacea

Valeriana officinalis

Scabiosa columbaria subsp. *ochroleuca*