

Beat: News

Top Gear star drops into GCHQ to support Severn Freewheelers

Government Communications Headquarters

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USPA NEWS - Richard Hammond, star of BBC's Top Gear, and Zog Ziegler, local motoring correspondent, joined staff at GCHQ at their Cheltenham HQ to celebrate the purchase of a new life-saving motorbike for Severn Freewheelers, funded by GCHQ staff.

The GCHQ charity fund (GCFund), towards which staff donate, has provided the £13,000 needed to buy the new machine as part of its remit to support worthwhile causes. The bike will assist local charity Severn Freewheelers in their critical care service to people in Gloucestershire and the surrounding area.

Sporting its new livery, the specially adapted bike was brought into GCHQ to be shown off with the help of the two special guests at a fund-raising "bake off" for Severn Freewheelers. Both Richard Hammond and Zog Ziegler are keen supporters of the charity.

The new BMW bike will form part of the six-strong fleet of Severn Freewheelers' 'blood bikes' which provide a free year-round emergency out-of-hours medical courier service to the NHS.

Available 365 nights of the year, the blood bikes carry plasma, pathology samples, patient notes and other critical care items between hospitals, laboratories and care homes. Severn Freewheelers cover an area of some 10,000 square kilometres across Gloucestershire, Worcestershire, North Wiltshire and Herefordshire.

Severn Freewheelers is one of the many local and national charities actively supported by GCHQ staff .

In addition to raising funds, some GCHQ staff also ride for Severn Freewheelers in their free time. One GCHQ volunteer said:

'It's brilliant that GCHQ staff have donated such a significant sum of money to purchase a new blood bike. SWF is funded totally by charitable donations, and with an annual running cost of £64,000, it is only possible to continue with the service if people continue to make donations " every contribution makes a difference and helps save lives"'

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