

“Living with a Disability for the Day”



On Saturday 12th March CILPK had a sponsored event where the staff “Lived with a Disability for the day”. I was in a manual wheelchair and here is my version of the day.

The day started at 8.30am at our office where we loaded everything up that we needed for our stand in the St John’s Centre, thankfully it was a nice day and Mel’s daughter was with us so she could push me to the centre. We managed to negotiate our way there with a few scary moments trying to get onto pavements where the dropped kerbs were not low enough and nearly falling out of the chair when the front wheels got stuck on the pavement, thankfully I had my belt on. We then had to go up South Street on the road for a while as we could not get past the scaffolding, this was slightly scary and a rush to get across before the cars came down the road. We did thankfully make it to St John’s Centre in one piece.

Setting our stand up was quite tricky as it is difficult to manoeuvre and stretch across the table when you are in a wheelchair.

I attempted to go into the Works and to my surprise they had moved their isles around to create more space and I got around the shop no problem, I also went to Campus Sports and once I had got a help to get up the little step into the shop I got around no problem.

I went to Howie’s with my parents for lunch, my dad pushed me there to give my arms a break, as I directed them past the front door of Howie’s and up an alley at the back I think they thought that I was having a laugh but thankfully there was a chef outside who I could ask to get someone to open the back door to let me in. Once the staff came to help us the service was fantastic they could not have been more helpful. We managed to get to the lower section and had a lovely lunch, the toilet was also spacious. It was unfortunate that we had to enter through the backdoor though as it did make us feel that we were not as important as the other customers.

On the way back to the office I propelled myself which was hard work especially trying to get off and onto pavements. Crossing canal street my front wheels got stuck in a pot hole which caused a minor panic as the cars coming down the street kept going past me. There was also a little panic trying to get onto the pavement at the top of Marshall Place, trying to negotiate the dropped kerb and the incline of the pavement felt like the wheelchair was going to tip over, on the 3rd attempt I managed to get up onto the pavement.

Overall it was a successful and very tiring day.