British Polio Fellowship's Chair of Trustees to Deliver Speech at European Polio Summit

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This year, the Annual General Meeting of the European Polio Union (EPU) takes place on Monday 25 May at the London Heathrow Marriott Hotel and The British Polio Fellowship's Chair of Trustees, Bryan Rowley, will be a key speaker at the event. Bryan was invited to speak at the AGM by EPU President John McFarlane and from 3.00pm to 3.30pm, he will be addressing the Conference with a presentation entitled 'The Changing Face of The British Polio Fellowship.'

"This event will give me the opportunity to address our friends in the EPU and present the current position in respect of the changing face of The British Polio Fellowship, and I am very much looking forward to it," said Bryan Rowley. "It also gives me a chance to deliver the charity's verdict and that of our members on the current state of play with respect to Polio and Post Polio Syndrome (PPS) in the United Kingdom. Our point of view matters, and comparing notes with our European colleagues makes this event an extremely valuable one."

Bryan's talk will follow another given by Dr Julian Harriss, Deputy Director of the Lane Fox Unit at St. Thomas' Hospital, whose topic will be 'PPS – Perspective and Treatment in the UK.' PPS is a neurological disorder that affects approximately 120,000 Polio survivors in the UK and Dr Harriss' Unit is the only one in the United Kingdom that is qualified to treat those with the condition.

After both Dr Harriss and Bryan have spoken, an open forum will take place where it is expected that Bryan and Julian will take questions from the assembled audience – a who's who of international delegates with an interest in Polio and PPS.The British Polio Fellowship is in regular contact with the EPU on several areas of mutual interest and its work with Andy Love MP to take the PPS message to Parliament has mirrored efforts by the EPU to put similar pressure on the European Parliament.

"With this year's EPU Conference being hosted in London it gives both Bryan and The British Polio Fellowship as a whole the perfect opportunity to shout about the work we are doing to raise awareness of PPS in the UK," said Ted Hill MBE, CEO of The British Polio Fellowship. "Our continued work alongside the EPU is important as we look to strengthen the public awareness of those living with the late effects of Polio and PPS across the whole of the EU, but especially here in the UK."

The European Polio Union has prepared a political manifesto for people with disabilities, making specific reference to PPS. This calls upon the EU Parliament (and national Parliaments) to recognise Polio survivors in their own right and finally for member states to deliver official acknowledgement of PPS. The battle to beat Polio and PPS remains an international effort and one The British Polio Fellowship remains committed to through both the EPU and through Rotary International's End Polio Now.

For more information on The British Polio Fellowship and the late effects of Polio and Post Polio Syndrome go to www.BritishPolio.org.uk

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Notes to editor

About the British Polio Fellowship

The British Polio Fellowship is a charity dedicated to helping, supporting and empowering those in the UK living with the late effects of Polio and Post Polio Syndrome (PPS). It provides information, advocacy, welfare and support to enable its members to live full independent and integrated lives and works to develop worldwide alliances with other Polio and Post Polio groups for the mutual benefit of its members. Further information about the British Polio Fellowship and details on how to make a donation can be found at www.britishpolio.org.uk or by calling 0800 043 1935.

About Post Polio Syndrome (PPS)

Post Polio Syndrome (PPS) is a neurological condition which can occur in up to 80% of those who have had Polio. It is estimated that around 120,000 people in the UK are living with PPS today. After an interval of several years of stability, individuals can develop increasing weakness, fatigue and pain in previously affected or unaffected muscles, a general reduction in stamina, breathing, sleeping and/or swallowing problems and cold intolerance. PPS usually begins very slowly, although it can appear suddenly and often following triggers such as falls, surgery or immobility.

There is no specific cure for PPS, but properly managed it may stabilise or only progress slowly and lessen the cost on the NHS whilst increasing the quality of life of those affected. Much can be done to retain independence, including self-management strategies such as pacing and energy management, appropriate use of adaptive equipment, looking after your general health, and social and emotional support.

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