



Aquabox news

FEBRUARY 2023 - AQUABOX NEWSLETTER

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TECHNOLOG



Aquabox responds to the earthquake

ONE WEEK on from the massive earthquake in southern Turkey and northern Syria, Aquabox was ready to send its first shipment of aid to the affected areas.

Tens of thousands of people have died, but millions of survivors are at risk, living without shelter in terrible conditions, and without access to clean water. The area affected includes an estimated 12 million people, including two million Syrian refugees

The Aquabox disaster response team has been working with our partners on the ground

to evaluate the most effective way of getting both our family filters and community filters to the places where lack of access to clean water is critical.

Our first shipment is 24 Aqua 12s (288 family filters) and 20 community filters. Together they will be able to provide safe, clean water for up to 12,000 people. But that's just the start: Aquabox volunteers are already working to complete production of more filters, and to plan the fastest and most efficient ways to get the aid where it is needed most.

To support our effort for this, or other similar disasters, donate on our JustGiving page: www.justgiving.com/campaign/Aquabox - or donate directly via our website: www.aquabox.org/donate-online.

Filter assembly teams hit new output record

THE VOLUNTEERS who assemble Aquabox's family filters raised their game in December, as demand hit new levels. By common consent, they agreed to extended production shifts - and shortly before Christmas, output hit a new record of 130 family filters per week. That's enough to process up to 65 million litres of polluted water, and turn it into safe, clean water for drinking, for cooking and for washing!

DIARY DATES



Saturday February 25, 10am-midday:
Aquabox volunteer open day. Aquabox depot, The Hill, Cromford, Derbyshire DE4 3QL

Monday March 20, 6.30pm: **Aquabox annual general meeting.** Aquabox depot, The Hill, Cromford, Derbyshire DE4 3QL

March 14: **Aquabox at the WWT Smart Water Conference,** National Conference Centre, Solihull; www.favershamhouse.com

May 16-17: **Aquabox at Utility Week Live,** Birmingham NEC; www.favershamhouse.com

October 5: **Aquabox at the WWT Drinking Water Quality Conference,** Birmingham NEC Hilton; www.favershamhouse.com

Aquabox is both a registered charity, number 1098409, and a limited company, number 04774277. To contact us:



Aquabox

Mail: Aquabox, PO Box 5398, Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 4ZP

Phone: 01629 825178 (outside UK, phone +441629 825178) - please be aware that this number is sometimes diverted to voicemail

Email: enquiries@aquabox.org

Facebook: facebook.com/aquaboxcharity **Website:** www.aquabox.org

“It’s better than not doing anything”

2022 was the year in which Pakistan experienced the worst flooding in the country’s history. The crisis began in June, after heavier than usual monsoon rains which were attributed to global warming. By mid-August, more than 10% of the country’s land area was under water, and on August 25 the Pakistani government declared a state of emergency.

By then, aid agencies were warning that the lack of clean drinking water was causing outbreaks of diarrhoea, cholera, dengue and malaria.

On September 13, Aquabox sent its first consignment of aid to Pakistan: 24 Aqua 12s (288 family filters in total) and 20 community filters. They were despatched via the Asian Fire Service Association, for distribution by International Emergency UK. Together, these filters had the capacity to provide clean, safe drinking water for around 12,000 people.

The flooding continued into October, but Aquabox’s partners on the ground reported a change in need: 1,739 people had died, but nearly 900,000 homes had been destroyed and an estimated 2.1m people had been left homeless. The need now was to provide some of those people with the basic necessities: shelter, tools, and survival aids.

The second shipment left the Aquabox depot at the start of December: 250 Aquabox gold boxes, each containing basic humanitarian aid for a family, together with a family filter. This shipment was despatched to the Fire Service of Lahore, whose members oversaw the final distribution of aid.

Total value of these two shipments was more than £50,000, funded entirely



Our Asian Fire Service Association partners exhibiting at a fund-raiser for Pakistan.



Aquabox aid, ready for distribution by the Kazguma Health Welfare Trust.



Another shipment of aid leaves the Aquabox depot, destined for Pakistan.

by donations – Aquabox doesn’t get any government funding.

“When you’re faced by numbers like this – two million people left homeless – it’s tempting to think that nothing we do will make a difference,” said one Aquabox volunteer. “And it’s true that we can’t help all these people. But we can help some of them – and helping some of them is better than not doing anything at all.”

Aquabox will continue to provide aid wherever and whenever it can. If you agree that doing something is better than doing nothing, you can help by donating. Go to www.aquabox.org and click on ‘donate’, or send a cheque to Aquabox, The Hill, Cromford DE4 3QL.

How Aquabox is working in Ukraine

HOW DOES Aquabox aid get to Ukraine? Through the co-operation and support of Rotary clubs in Europe, and the WASH (Water, Sanitation, Hygiene) group in Lviv, in western Ukraine. WASH is operated jointly by Rotary International and the United Nations.

Using a distribution partner based in South Yorkshire, the WASH group collects the aid from Aquabox's depot in Derbyshire, and sends it overland straight through to Lviv. The Lviv WASH operation is run by Rotary volunteers who receive and store all donated water filtration and sanitation items at their depot, and through their network of contacts across the country they then arrange for the onward shipment and distribution of the aid.



Borys Bodnar, leader of the WASH group in Lviv, checks another delivery of Aquabox aid.

Aquabox's contribution to the Ukraine relief effort has been significantly funded by two Rotary clubs in Germany: RC Stade and RC Potsdam. Sabine Yang-Schmidt, one of Aquabox's supporters from RC Potsdam, visited Lviv in November and met with the leader of the WASH group, Borys Bodnar. She reviewed the whole operation and provided very positive feedback on the efficiency and speed with which they are distributing aid. On January 31, she reported back to us:

"Last week, I received compliments for the quality of Aquabox filters, and a call for more from Kherson. A team of Rotarians from Ukraine visited Kherson and heard of the filter project, then shared this with me. Just today, I received another call from the area of Kyiv with a similar story: families have heard of how useful Aquabox filters are, and ask for additional material. I take this as a positive sign that our project is achieving exactly what we planned."

Since the Russian invasion began, Aquabox has sent almost 1,400 family filters to Ukraine. They alone have the



A consignment of filters ready for despatch, funded by the Rotary Club of Potsdam.



An Aquabox community filter in use at a church in Ukraine.

potential to convert as much as 700 million litres of polluted water into safe, clean water for drinking, for cooking and for washing. But as well as that, we have sent a total so far of 70 community filters, intended for use in schools, hospitals, clinics and community centres.

All this costs money – and Aquabox is entirely dependant upon donations to keep its vital work going. If you can help, go to [Aquabox.org](https://www.aquabox.org), and click on 'donate'.



Another consignment, community filters this time, on their way to Ukraine.

New Aquabox volunteers turn out in force

"**WE WERE ALL TAKEN ABACK** at the numbers that arrived!" That was the reaction from Aquabox trustee Roz Adamson, after the first volunteer recruitment morning on Saturday February 18.

About 70 visitors turned up during the two hours the Aquabox depot was open (a few may have bypassed the signing-in process) and were

welcomed with coffee and biscuits, a tour of the depot, and the opportunity to watch water filters being assembled. Aquabox trustees and volunteers were on hand to demonstrate the water filters and the packing process, and explain how the charity works to relieve the suffering of people in disaster areas and combat zones around the world.

And the result: 25 potential new

volunteers, all of whom completed registration forms to confirm their interest.

A second volunteer recruitment day is scheduled for Saturday February 25, and will follow the same format: the depot at the top of Cromford Hill will be open from 10am to mid-day, and anyone interested is welcome to attend, without obligation.

“Our contribution can make a real difference”



TALKING TO Paul Jennings of AVK, it becomes clear that the reason the company chose to become an Aquabox partner was simple: because it could see it was making a difference.

AVK makes valves, hydrants, fittings and accessories for the water industry, and is based in Chesterfield and Staveley, close to Aquabox’s base in Wirksworth “Locality is critical,” says Paul. “And we’re in the water industry, so there’s obvious relevance there. We said yes, we’ll provide some money, and look for other ways to support you as well: we named a couple of our people as Aquabox ambassadors, and we put Aquabox display units in the reception areas of some of our depots.”

Formerly AVK’s managing director, Paul is now a non-executive director, and he instigated brainstorming sessions about ways to support the charity (see below). AVK is part of a global group, and one of the ideas was to provide Aquabox with international storage and distribution points which are geographically closer to likely areas of need. “We have developed that, we have identified locations, and we’re ready and waiting to take some stock in Australia, for instance,” he says. Holding stocks of Aquabox aid there could mean that the charity’s response to a disaster in the Pacific Rim could be in days rather than weeks.

“We have also looked at other ways to raise money – we did a couple of Walks for Water last year, and we’ll do them again this year, widening the scope to more locations, and the company will help with support. And we’re also going to do a golf day to support Aquabox – we will get income from our suppliers sponsoring individual holes.”

Paul emphasises that a major attraction for AVK was that by supporting a small charity, “our contribution can make a real difference. We have various units dotted around the UK, and one of my roles is to get the Aquabox message out around the group – at the annual group conference, for example.”

He is aware that across the group, there is support for other charities – food banks and local hospices, for example – so while he is encouraging support for Aquabox he doesn’t want to be seen as heavy-handed. “We’re treading carefully in that area – but we will continue to support Aquabox. And I’m sure there are other organisations that would think as we did: that their contributions could make a big difference to a small charity.”



Members of the AVK Walk For Water team hear about current Aquabox projects from trustee Roger Cassidy.

Progress with water industry partners

OVER THE PAST few years, Aquabox has been able to establish corporate partnerships with a number of companies in the water industry – companies which recognise the synergy between their industry and a charity which is committed to providing safe, clean water for people in desperate conditions.

This has been made possible by support from Faversham House, which produces business magazines, websites and exhibitions for the water industry, and has thus created the opportunity for Aquabox to build relationships with key industry people.



For several years now Aquabox has had a regular stand at two annual Faversham House events: the Utility Week Live exhibition at the National Exhibition Centre (see above), and the Drinking Water Quality Conference at the Birmingham Hilton. When the first contact was made, Aquabox had just one corporate supporter in the water industry. But thanks to our presence at the shows and conferences, that has grown into a significant list: our corporate partners, donors and supporters in the water industry now include AVK UK, Hydro-X, MAV Reality, Rotork, Technolog, Underwater Vision, and Xylem Water Solutions.

“I’m delighted that Aquabox – and by extension those it helps – have benefited from the association with us,” said Amanda Barnes, chief executive of Faversham House. “Our work with Aquabox is part of our positive social impact, and we are keen to continue it.”

An Aquabox year in numbers

A YEAR AGO, things were looking better. Aquabox had come through the pandemic, and completed the move to its new depot. The volunteer teams were back up to strength, and production had resumed. Then came Russia's invasion of Ukraine – and almost overnight, Europe was facing its biggest refugee crisis since World War II.

According to the UNHCR, as of February 6 2023 there were 8,054,405 refugees from Ukraine across Europe – equivalent to 19% of the total Ukrainian population. But within Ukraine itself, a further 5.3m people are estimated to be 'internally displaced': people who have left or lost their homes, and they are now homeless in their own country.

Charities and aid agencies around the world have responded to the Ukraine crisis, and the Aquabox volunteer teams have been among them. Meanwhile we have still continued to send aid to long-term projects, including natural disasters in Nepal, and refugees from the civil war in Yemen; and we have responded to the catastrophic floods in Pakistan, and to the aftermath of Hurricane Fiona in Puerto Rico. This is the past 12 months at Aquabox in numbers:

Shipments to Ukraine	10
Shipments to Pakistan	3
Shipments to Yemen	2
Shipments to Nepal	1
Shipments to Puerto Rico	1
Total aid shipped:	
Gold boxes (basic humanitarian aid)	1,300
Family filters	3,067
Community filters	90
Total cost, including shipping	£287,910

It is now widely expected that the war in Ukraine is likely to escalate. Meanwhile there is no end in sight to the violence in Yemen; natural disasters will continue to occur; and of course we now face the challenge of the earthquake in Turkey and Syria. The demand for our water filters and humanitarian aid isn't going to let up – and neither are we!



January: Another consignment for Ukraine, funded by the Rotary Club of Stade in Germany.

Remember, Aquabox is funded entirely by donations. To support our work, go to **Aquabox.org**, and click on 'donate'. And remember too that Aquabox is run almost entirely by volunteers – so every donation we receive will help to make a difference to the life of someone, somewhere, who is in desperate need.



November: A consignment of filters leaves the depot on its way to Lviv.



February 16: The Aquabox warehouse – the shelves are bare because everything is shipped as soon as it's ready!



And this is why it all matters: Aquabox aid being delivered to refugees in Yemen.

Board of trustee changes

SEVERAL CHANGES have taken place on the Aquabox board of trustees over the past few months.

Bea Jagger has retired as a trustee, after more than four years as a member of the board. She joined the board in April 2018, and stepped down at the end of August 2022. Bea was closely involved with ensuring Aquabox's premises and working practices were in line with current health and safety legislation, and was also focused on updating the charity's corporate documentation. "She did a fantastic job in terms of meeting the challenges of current

governance regulations, following the closure of Wirksworth Rotary Club, and the resultant need to amend the charity's Articles of Association," said board chair Roger Cassidy.

Three new trustees have been appointed in the past year: Roger Keeling, Peter Kidd and Pam Fraser.

Roger Keeling joined the board at the end of May 2022, taking on the role of treasurer, which Roger Cassidy had been covering since former treasurer Colin Lloyd was forced to stand down through ill health.

Peter Kidd joined on the same

day; he is a solicitor with a practice in Chesterfield, and his appointment adds significantly to the board's range of experience and expertise.

Pam Fraser became a trustee in September 2022. She has been associated with Aquabox for 10 years or more, starting as a volunteer with the gold box packers, and then training as a member of the filter assembly team. As well as being a trustee, she is also an active member of the Aquabox community liaison group, working to build awareness of the charity in Derbyshire and the surrounding area.

Come and see us!

HOW ABOUT a day out with a difference? Come and visit the Aquabox depot! We are proud of what Aquabox has achieved over the past 30 years, and we welcome visiting groups at the depot so we can show them how we work, and tell them about our plans for the future.

The Aquabox depot is easy to reach by road – we are just off the A6 at Cromford – and we have plenty of free parking right outside the door. All the main activity is on the ground floor and wheelchair accessible. You will see the Aquabox water filter in action, watch filters being assembled and tested, and see our Gold boxes of humanitarian aid being packed. And afterwards, we can direct you to several of the excellent pubs, restaurants and cafes in the area.

Have a day out! Bring your group to visit Aquabox – just go to www.aquabox.org, click on 'Find out more', and then on 'Visit the depot'. We're looking forward to welcoming you.



Members of the Derby Ramblers watching the filter assembly team at work.

VIP visitor



STEVE BROWN, paralympic star and Springwatch TV presenter, visited the Aquabox stand at the Rotary District 1120 conference in October 2022.

Looking for a speaker?

ARE YOU A MEMBER of a Rotary club? A Womens' Institute? A Townswomens Guild? A church group? A local social group? Inner Wheel? Probus? U3A? In fact, any club or association which uses regular or occasional guest speakers? If so, would you like to hear from an Aquabox speaker?

Aquabox has a network of Aquabox Ambassadors all over the country, ready and eager to come and talk to you. They will tell you and

your colleagues about the charity, what it does, how it's funded, and most important of all – the difference that Aquabox has made to the lives of so many desperate people around the world.

Your Aquabox Ambassador will bring an Aquabox filter and demonstration kit, so your audience can see for themselves the way it can convert filthy polluted water to safe, clean water for drinking, for cooking and for washing.

To find out more, or to book a speaker, go to the Aquabox website: www.aquabox.org. Click on 'Find out more', and then on 'Book a speaker'. Or contact us through Facebook: www.facebook.com/aquaboxcharity. Or write to us at Aquabox, Unit 10, The Hill, Cromford, Derbyshire DE4 3QL.

Aquaboost project gets under way

AQUABOOST is the name chosen for an ambitious new project with the aim of significantly increasing Aquabox's output of family filters. The board of trustees have set a target of doubling output to 6,000 family filters annually by the end of 2023.

Aquaboost - the name was chosen by the volunteers themselves - will use industrial analysis processes to find ways of increasing output without increasing the workload of the assembly volunteers, and initially without needing to recruit extra volunteers or increase the number of shifts (although both of those options are included in the longer-term plans).

The key Aquaboost process is Value Stream Mapping (VSM): a flowchart method which reviews every step in the

assembly process from the arrival in the warehouse of raw components to the delivery of a finished filter. It includes:

- Control: how do we know what needs doing?
- Information flow: how do people know what to do?
- Material flow: how does the material move through each stage of the process?
- Standardised work: what method or steps should we use to complete the task?
- And process data: how long does each step take?

The project is being led by Dominic Wish, a new volunteer with a background in production and industrial management;

he previously worked for Forged Solutions Group in Darley Dale. He is being supported by Peter Whitely and Helen James from Forged Solutions, and Darren Bradburn from the US aero engine maker Pratt & Whitney's supplier improvement team - all of whom have generously been 'loaned' to Aquabox by their employers.

After an initial meeting on February 9, the next step is a four-day 'VSM event' on March 7, 8, 9 and 10. The project leaders and assembly teams will work over the four mornings to analyse current production practices, material flows, inventory management and process flow, and ultimately to create an action plan.

See the next issue of Aquabox News for an update on the Aquaboost project.



Sabine Yang-Schmidt

MEET OUR LATEST AMBASSADOR!

SABINE YANG-SCHMIDT is the latest addition to the growing list of Aquabox ambassadors around the world.

Sabine is the owner of Cassandra Foresight, a consulting firm for international political risk and strategy management. She has been a member of the Rotary Club of Potsdam in Germany since 2016, she is currently the club secretary, with responsibility for public relations, and a member of the WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) Rotary Action Group.

She describes herself as a globetrotter (currently living in Freetown, Sierra Leone) and a

passionate Rotarian. More importantly, in April 2022 she was the initiator of the Potsdam RC 'Water filters for Ukraine' project, together with Aquabox, and she continues to act as the project's coordinator.

As an Aquabox ambassador, Sabine will represent the charity and its work in conversations and presentations with local groups, spreading the Aquabox message, raising funds, and helping to identify areas of need for Aquabox's support. Her appointment means that Aquabox now has ambassadors in England, Wales, Scotland, the USA, Canada, Australia, France, Sweden and Germany.

Meet MAV Reality

AQUABOX is delighted to announce a new corporate partner.

MAV Reality delivers end-to-end video collaboration, from the worker on the frontline utilising wearable tech, to the boardroom and hybrid workforce. They aim to provide the best possible consultancy and deployment service in the video conferencing, mixed reality and collaboration industry.

From the first meeting it became very clear that there

was a significant synergy in terms of values and aspirations between the two organisations.

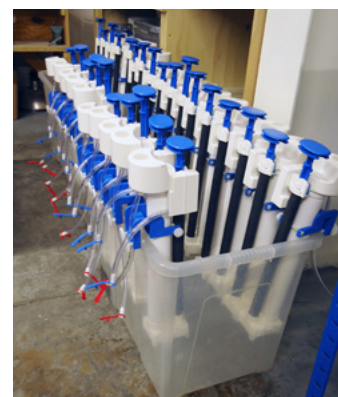
MAV has offered to donate the cost of an Aquabox family filter following completion of an installation. So, in effect, every MAV installation will

provide clean drinking water for up to 10 desperate people in disaster areas or refugee camps around the world.



Building more family filters

THE VOLUNTEERS WHO make up the Aquabox filter assembly teams are working to keep pace with demand. Each filter takes several days to make - some of the component parts are glued together, and the adhesive needs time to cure. The volunteer teams have been setting new production records recently - and the new Aquaboost project aims to identify ways in which the assembly process can be made even more efficient. It's all about getting more



filters into the hands of people who desperately need them.

Thank you

Aquabox would like to thank all our Corporate Partners and Corporate Donors for their continued support.



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