

A new eye hospital funded by Rotarians has been opened in the Indian state of West Bengal.

The building was financed with donations from the Rotary Clubs of Reigate and Winchester in England plus Hooghly (West Bengal) and Calcutta Central in India.

Surgical equipment was funded via Rotary Foundation grants facilitated by the **Rotary Clubs of Cheltenham Cleeve Vale**, Guildford and Hooghly.

A spokesman for Rotary International of Great Britain and Ireland (RIBI) said: "The new hospital replaces the original which was founded by the Rotary Club of Hooghly in 2000.

"The old building will now be used as a mother and child unit and will be administered along with the new eye hospital, by members of the Rotary Club of Hooghly.

"The building is around four times larger than the original and was purpose built to accommodate the needs of the large number of local people who are visually impaired."

The hospital is one of 50 new eye hospitals which Rotary in India and the Guildford Eye Project have pledged to establish by 2020. Their mid-point target of creating facilities which will enable 100,000 cataract operations to be undertaken annually by 2015 is also on schedule.

The Guildford Eye Project is a charity founded in 1998 by Rotarian Dr Sam Das MBE, former eye surgeon and ophthalmic consultant at Guildford's Royal Surrey Hospital. The project, which works with Rotary partners in India and Africa, aims to establish eye hospitals to serve many of the 40 million avoidably blind people worldwide who cannot afford to have their sight restored.

The project provides training for eye surgeons, provides microscopes and laser equipment, hospital transport, mobile eye screening camps, treatment of glaucoma, retinal detachment, diabetic retinopathy and cataract operations.

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