

LOOK EAST - COMMUNITY FUNDRAISING



Some of the Flitwick riders celebrating finishing the challenge.



GETTING ON THEIR BIKES FOR THE EUROS!

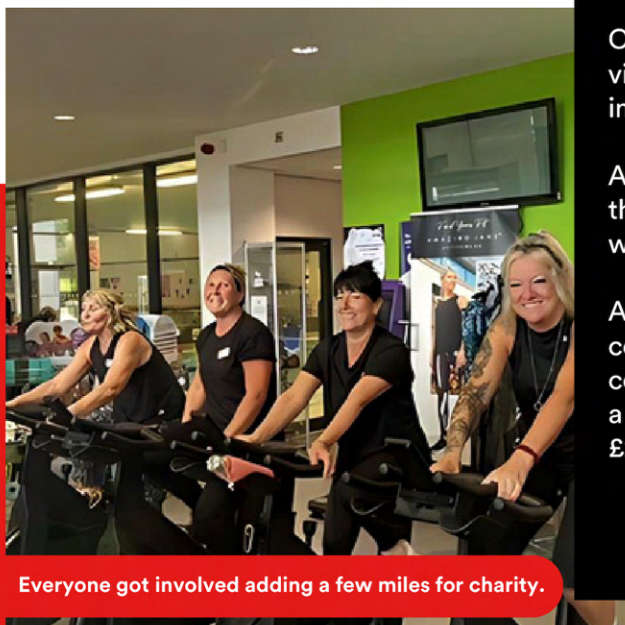
>>> FLITWICK LEISURE CENTRE

To mark the opening of the men's UEFA EURO 2024 on 14 June, the team at Flitwick Leisure Centre set themselves the challenge of cycling the 1,276.21km (793 miles) between Flitwick and Munich, as a fundraising event for Dementia UK.

Colleagues were joined by the centre's members and visitors to help pedal the distance on stationary bikes set up in the reception area.

As Gemma Garner- Higgins, General Manager, said before the event: "We will be encouraging everyone to join in...we will need their help to make it!"

And everyone heeded the call to support with the local community getting behind the event. A total of 78 colleagues and customers joined in to cover the distance in a speedy seven and a half hours! The event raised a massive £295.72 on the day, with more contributions still coming in.



Everyone got involved adding a few miles for charity.

A big thank you to everyone who has contributed to this issue. There are some truly inspirational stories and fundraising challenges underway. Apologies for the newsletter arriving with you a little late this month; we have big news coming which we were hoping to be able to share with you now but it's not to be but we promise you that it's worth the wait. Watch this space!

EURO 2024 kick-off

To help get everyone into the men's UEFA EURO 2024 spirit, the team at Sandy Leisure Centre is hosting a winning team fundraising sweepstake for Dementia UK. Anyone guessing the champions will go into a draw to win a goodie bag. The sweepstake had only just gone under way when we caught up with Tina Jeeves, Duty Manager, but she was happy to report the fundraiser had already generated £25 of the team's £250 target.

Sweet taste

A cross contract cake bake at Whitwick & Coalville Leisure Centre and Ashby Leisure Centre & Lido for Dementia UK, on 30 May, raised a massive £130.68 and £120.82 at each centre respectively. The team would like to give a shout out thanks to everyone who supported and also to those who kindly baked cakes.

Refit fundraiser

To mark the reopening of the newly refurbished gym at Raich Carter Sports Centre and the start of the men's UEFA EURO 2024 matches, the team hosted an open day with some football themed fundraising activities for Dementia UK on 14 June.

JUMPING FOR DEMENTIA UK

»» FAKENHAM SPORTS AND LEISURE CENTRE

"Absolutely terrifying!" Is how Rob Secker, Duty Manager, Fakenham Sports and Leisure Centre, described his recent skydive in aid of Dementia UK.

Rob, who's raised around £400, thanks to in-centre and online donations, decided to tackle the skydive to help overcome his fear of heights and to support those affected by dementia.

"I've not been personally affected by dementia, but I've seen the affects on those members coming to our centre, particularly carers who are often physically and mentally exhausted managing this overwhelming condition with those they love," he explained.

"I was terrified doing the jump, but if I can help make things a little bit better for those managing dementia, then it's been worth it."

Rob described how parts of the jump, which took part at Beccles Aerodrome, near Great Yarmouth on 9 June at 12 noon from 13,500ft (around 4,000m) or two miles in height, were actually quite serene.

"The weather was perfect and it was beautiful once we were above the clouds, but I have never been so scared in my life when the doors opened and the jump was imminent! I think I've overcome my fear of climbing ladders now!"



Rob in free-fall (above) and celebrating a smooth landing (right)!

MARTIN'S COAST TO COAST CHALLENGE



»» NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE

We catch up with Martin Oxford, Maintenance Officer, Whitwick & Coalville Leisure Centre and Ashby Leisure Centre & Lido, who's taking on the Wainwright's Coast to Coast whilst raising funds for Dementia UK.

This epic challenge will see Martin walk the famous route, west to east across northern England over 14 days, from Friday 5 July, as he sets his fundraising goal at £1,000.

"I'll primarily be doing the Wainwright's Coast to Coast which is 192 miles, but I can't stop with that so I'm going to round it up to 200 miles – even if it means walking around a car park! I'm aiming for 14 days but have allowed up to 21 days, in case it's very hot and my pace is slower," he explains.

Martin, who is a keen hiker and took on the Yorkshire 3-Peaks with colleagues last year, says: "Undertaking challenges like this is an adventure. I want to enjoy life while I can!" He's also witnessed family members affected by dementia.



Joe Cayless and Martin Oxford on the Yorkshire 3 Peaks.

"Thinking what's that on the horizon?... and then walking there under your own steam offers a tremendous sense of freedom. I've done some of The Lake's main peaks previously and was just blown away by the beauty of the area. I'm looking forwards to the remoteness of the trail."

He will of course be accompanied by Little Oxford, the teddy bear purchased by Martin 20 years ago, which now accompanies him on all of his adventures. Although as Martin puts it: "I think I walk with Little Oxford. He's travelled all over the world with me through work and now hiking. He's a great ice breaker as people always stop and ask what the bear in my rucksack side pocket is for."

Martin will be taking on the route in a self-supported manner. This means he'll carry the tent he'll be sleeping in and all the clothes, food and equipment he needs.

"Self-supported sounds more difficult, but for me it will mean that I can dictate the hours I keep for myself. If it's hot, I can choose to start walking earlier in the morning and be able to rest through the hottest parts of the day. I don't have to be anywhere by a certain time," he explains.





Although Martin reckons his rucksack will weigh about a third of his bodyweight once loaded, especially as he'll sometimes need to carry all the food and supplies he needs for up to three days at a time – such is the remoteness of the route. This means he'll also have to rely on dehydrated meals at times.

“I’ll also carry four and a half litres of water. This doesn’t sound much, but it’s actually quite heavy. I’ll have to filter groundwater on the route too. I’m aiming to stop at official campsites every three days so that I can have a good wash and clean up.”

There are notoriously tough moorland sections of the Coast to Coast route - waist-deep bog in wet weather - and difficult to navigate whatever the underfoot conditions. Hikers have to be mentally resilient and switched on to navigate their path across these sections.

“I’ve discovered it’s usually the mind which gives out before the body and that’s what I’ve been training recently, yes, I’m in the gym using the stairclimber and treadmill trying to get physically strong, but I’m also doing plenty of boring road-walking to prepare me for the mental challenge,” he says.

And as regards future challenges... Martin is already eyeing up the Offa’s Dyke, a 177-mile trail running along the border between Wales and England, and the iconic 268-mile Pennine Way which he will transect on the Coast to Coast at Keld.

If you would like to help Martin reach his fundraising target please visit:
www.justgiving.com/page/joe-cayless-1715943257087



SWIM CHALLENGE RAISES OVER £13,000

»»» BEDWORTH LEISURE CENTRE

A massive congratulations to Bedworth Leisure Centre's George Bowman and Libby Reynolds who have raised well over £13,000 for Birmingham Children's Hospital.

The couple committed to swim one mile every day for 55 days, to mark the duration their son Ritchie spent in the care of the hospital last year in an epic challenge which ran from 23 March to 16 May.

George said: "We have been blown away by how much we have raised. We honestly didn't think we would get anywhere near such an amazing amount."

Ritchie, then aged just 11 months, fell critically ill with septicaemia caused by Strep-A and adenovirus in March last year and was rushed to the Paediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) at Birmingham Children's Hospital.

"The reality is that Ritchie would not be with us today were it not for this incredible hospital and their incredible staff, so this fundraiser is just a small token of our enormous gratitude for what they did for Ritchie and our family.

"We are hoping that as Ritchie grows up he can see how something positive has come from such a horrendous thing," George added.

The couple would also like to thank all those who supported them in their challenge: "Our families helped us a massive amount, with having Ritchie while we swam when we couldn't swim separately. Colleagues in the centre were certainly a huge support, especially Jenni and Kirsty, who helped us raise even more money."





DUO EXPERIENCE

SNOWDON RACE

➤➤➤ LUTTERWORTH SPORTS CENTRE

'Beautiful beyond belief, Savage beyond reason' is the slogan of Ultra Trail Snowdonia (UTS) by UTMB series of races, held in May every year, for good reason.

Toeing the line at this year's 50km billed race (actually 56km with a whopping 3,299m of ascent) were Lutterworth Sports Centre's swim manager Lizzie (left in photo), and swim teacher Rachael, who took on the event to raise funds for Dementia UK. Both Lizzie and Rachael have close family members who suffer from dementia and have witnessed the effects the illness has on family life. They wanted to raise funds for something close to their hearts.

Race preparations

Tackling a mountain ultra involves many hours of specific training, with the duo undertaking their training together and individually all over the country. Closer to home in flatter Leicestershire, they went to Beacon Hill and did reps of Bradgate Park.

"We spent a few weekends in Wales taking on parts of the race route," Lizzie said. The last session was tackled in 70mph winds! "We came away thinking if we can do it in these conditions then we can do it in any weather. This, however, didn't quite prepare us for the heat wave and 22-plus degrees we had on race day!" Lizzie said.

Heat takes its toll

Unfortunately the event's aggressively hot conditions resulted in Rachael being timed out at the second checkpoint, due to heat and lack of available water between the checkpoints. The race takes competitors on their second ascent of Yr Wyddfa (Snowdon), along the exposed south ridge, at this point.

Thankfully Lizzie survived the furnace-like conditions. "Just before we diverted off onto the ridge, I actually got into some waterfall pools and had a mini shower. I just lay down and took five minutes to cool down. I also drank this water, which would not be something I would have normally done, but I knew the climb ahead of us and there were limited streams higher up," she said. "The hardest climb of the race for me was on the third mountain. I had a moment of: I can't do this!

"I think it took me 54 minutes to walk one mile. It was so steep and I was really struggling. I sat down had a little cry and looked through some photos of my children and my grandma, had a word with myself, and got up and carried on. This was my low point as I also started to suffer from an old injury. This is when I found out Rachael had not made it and I knew I had to finish it for the both of us."

Lizzie completed the race in an amazing 13.36 hours.

Future plans

She is keen to eventually tackle the famous Ultra Trail Mont Blanc (UTMB) in Chamonix, which involves collecting qualifying 'running stones' in order to enter the ballot. Her UTS completion starts her 'running stone' collection, with January 2025's Arc of Attrition by UTMB hopefully adding to the tally, before The Lakes 100K in April next year, which she will also be tackling for the company's partner charity.

"For me I would like to have trained a bit more on going downhill. For me, this had the biggest impact on my knees and strength. I didn't feel very confident trying to pick up my pace so this is a personal goal I am working on," she added.



Rob & Carl with Gareth & Ivy being interviewed by the BBC radio presenter (centre).

DEMENTIA CAFÉ IDEA FOR EVERYONE

»»» FAKENHAM SPORTS AND FITNESS CENTRE

In another amazing story from Fakenham Sports and Fitness Centre... their newly launched Community Dementia Café goes from strength to strength.

The café, held every Friday at the centre, gives those living with dementia the chance to enjoy time away from home, in a safe and engaging environment, reducing the risk of social isolation which the illness often contributes towards.

The scheme which offers guided activities for those with dementia, such as games, musical activities, and opportunities to chat as well as refreshments, helps those managing the condition remain active in their local community. The centre's general membership has also really got behind the initiative.

Rosie Farrow, the centre's Dementia UK champion, explains how the Café has no shortage of support. "Lots of our wonderful members have been making cakes and donating biscuits!"



Members donate biscuits in support.

"It's been really wonderful having the ability to open our doors for such an activity. We've been working alongside Wensum Dementia Café and North Norfolk District Council Community Connectors to make it a success. This, alongside our little book table, has helped us raise approximately £300 for Dementia UK in May!"

"Both Carl, General Manager, and Rob, Duty Manager, volunteer in their own time to coordinate the café."

The site was even paid a visit by their local BBC radio station, keen to find out what the community initiative involves. During their visit the BBC interviewed café regulars, Gareth Owen and his wife Ivy, who has dementia. Gareth is able to leave Ivy at the café, knowing she is being cared for and is enjoying the activities offered whilst he takes the opportunity to be active in the gym. It's a win, win!

Rosie adds: "Gareth used to be a regular user [at the centre] until his wife's health took a downwards turn and he stopped coming... the café has given them both a new lease of life. It's so lovely to be able to make a difference!"

TOP PRIZES UP FOR GRABS

WIGSTON POOL AND FITNESS CENTRE

As always the team at Wigston Pool and Fitness Centre has been busy fundraising, hosting a Grand Raffle for Dementia UK between 16 and 30 May.

Thanks to the generosity of some local businesses and service providers the raffle had some brilliant prizes on offer including: coffee and cake for two at Cafe Bocca, five desi breakfast vouchers from Chaiwala, three month membership for Wigston Pool and Fitness Centre, free PT sessions, a NOW television smart stick, a £10 Greggs voucher, EA goody bag, and Jimmy Choo Flash Eau de Parfum.



GRAND RAFFLE


FLITWICK LEISURE CENTRE


Flitwick Leisure Centre also hosted a fundraising grand raffle in support of Dementia UK throughout May. Prizes included everything needed to help winners fuel their passion for activity with free memberships, Everyone Active goodies, whey powder and Grenade bars.



EVERYONE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Share your community fundraising stories.

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Sarah

Add your story to the next newsletter... email: pr@spud-media.com