

Charity champions show what they're made of



EFFORT: Phil Villa undertook his challenge in memory of his late wife Jane Villa



People do all sorts of things to support their chosen charities and today we focus on a teacher who completed 100 miles in 100 hours in memory of his wife and look forward to the virtual MacMillan Coffee Morning. By Jo Barnes

Phil Villa

PE teacher Phil Villa had to call on all his physical and mental strength to complete a muscle busting walk in aid of St David's Hospice Care.

But Phil, aged 55, had the memory of his late wife Jane at the front of his mind as he fought to complete 100 miles in a 100 hours to raise money for the hospice that cared for her as she battled stomach cancer.

The Blackwood PE teacher is relaxing after raising £7,035 for the hospice through his epic five day ordeal.

Phil, of Oakdale, initially set himself a target of raising £1,000 but this was soon smashed as support piled in from family, friends and the community.

The Blackwood Comprehensive School PE, whose wife succumbed to cancer in April after a two year battle, said: "Throughout the walk, I was in a good space mentally. I had my wife's memory at the forefront of my mind. I also had

tremendous support which was a great help.

"The PE department were very supportive. My family live near Kidderminster and my dad and sister surprised me by coming down and joining the walk. Other members of my family across the UK have also done a few miles and sent me the videos."

On his 100-mile journey, Mr Villa, a father of four, Kerryann, 40, Sammyjo, 32, Emily, 21 and Charlie, 20 and a grandfather to five, was joined by several people in the community, which he said, had helped to keep him motivated.

"Of the whole challenge, I only did four walks on my own, the rest I had people walking with me," he said. "This helped to keep me going and I cannot thank everyone enough."

Mr Villa set off on his challenge at midday on Thursday, August 20, and finished at 4pm on Monday, August 24. He'd made sure to do some training beforehand, accumulating around 120 hours of walking his dog and timed walks and also inspired others to get

DETERMINED: Phil Villa was well supported on his 100 miles in 100 hours walk in aid of St David's Hospice Care, which he undertook in memory of this late wife



involved in their own way. "The last 15-20 miles was the toughest part as I could feel the pain in my toes, but it felt like I was on autopilot knowing I was near the end," he said. Phil had special praise for the staff at the hospice who cared for his late wife Jane: "The St David's Hospice Care nurses are incredible."

Kris Broome, of St David's Hospice Care said: "Phil demonstrated immense strength, both physically and mentally, to complete his momentous walk to raise vital funds for the hospice for which we are extremely grateful." Anyone wishing to donate can do so here: www.justgiving.com/fundraising/philip-villa?fbclid=IwAR0icDB7zesx_jlmf

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Macmillan Coffee Morning

NOW in its 30th year, here is how you can still support Macmillan while keeping to social distancing guidelines.

TASTY: In years gone by the Macmillan Coffee Morning has been a really popular event



EVENT: The MacMillan Coffee Morning has gone virtual this year



SUPPORT: Phil Villa during his 100 miles in 100 hours walk in aid of St David's Hospice Care

The charity fundraiser usually sees millions of pounds donated every year to help support people affected by cancer.

And Newport East MP Jessica Morden and Newport East MS John Griffiths are encouraging residents to hold a virtual Macmillan Coffee Morning to show their support.

The money raised from the events helps fund Macmillan services to make sure people with cancer can get the physical, emotional, and financial support they need.

Mr Griffiths said: "Macmillan Cancer Support is out there in our communities, offering personal, one-to-one care and support to people living with cancer and to their loved ones, and that's why we are supporting this initiative."

"Like so many other things at the moment, coronavirus is presenting a huge challenge to charities like Macmillan and it is having a worrying impact on the amount of money that is being raised."

Ms Morden said: "We are proud to support the event, encourage

donations and help let people know that while it might be different, virtual and socially distanced this year, the coffee mornings are still going ahead.

"There couldn't be an easier or more fun way to raise money for people with cancer - people who, in the current crisis, need the support of their local communities more than ever."

The charity estimates it could see a £20m drop in its coffee morning income across Wales and the wider UK, even though people with cancer need support more than ever.

Macmillan is encouraging people to take part however suits them, from having a socially distanced coffee morning safely from their doorstep to setting up a virtual coffee morning online.

People are being urged to take a selfie and post to social media raising a mug for people living with cancer, while donating.

Visit coffee.macmillan.org.uk for hosting ideas, games and baking inspiration.

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