Charity runner exhausted but elated after 100-mile Dorset run raises £32k for the GWCT

Monday 19 July, 2021

On 10th and 11th July 36-year-old Harry Townshend ran 100 miles around Dorset, in one go, raising nearly £32,000 for the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT). That is the equivalent of running from Bournemouth to London, or powering through almost four marathons, one after another.

A passion for the “wonderful scenery and biodiversity” of the British countryside and a “running obsession” led Harry to set himself the challenge of completing the run in just 24 hours. He set off from Abbotsbury on the coast at 7am on Saturday 10th and, pushing through pain, poor weather and darkness, arrived at the finish line, back in Abbotsbury, before 7am on Sunday 11th July.

“I am absolutely amazed that we have been able to raise almost £32k for the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust. Saying ‘thank you’ to the many people who have donated does not seem enough. I, and the GWCT, are incredibly grateful and I am really rather speechless,” said Harry.

“When I embarked on my 100-mile mission I imagined it as an individual effort. Last weekend I learned that I was in fact entirely dependent on my support team to get me over the finish line. The generosity of the many people who pledged to donate was far more important to me in the early hours of Sunday morning that the many hours of training I had done.”

GWCT Chief Executive Teresa Dent CBE, said: “We are in awe of Harry for completing this extraordinary challenge and so grateful for the incredible £32,000 he has raised. His efforts, and the generosity of those who donated, will enable our scientists to continue vital research into habitat and species recovery and our advisors to carry on supporting farmers, gamekeepers and land managers to create a thriving countryside rich in wildlife.”

Harry’s support team, led by his wife Alice, kept him supplied with calories and encouragement throughout the run. He ran the first leg, the equivalent of a marathon, alone. After a brief rest stop and an ice cream, he was joined by school friend and fellow GWCT supporter, Arthur Scott from Rotherfield in Hampshire, for another marathon.

Harry completed his third marathon with friend William Scholes in the early hours of Sunday morning and after a 10-minute stop he set off for the final leg with friend and first-time marathon runner, Xander Caldin. The pair finished at 6.48am, ahead of Harry’s target of 7am. By this time Harry had run a 100-mile loop of slippery footpaths around Dorset, taking in West Lulworth, Weymouth, Chideock, Cerne Abbas and Maiden Newton.

A text from his father James Townshend, described Harry as: “Understandably knackered but spirits high”.

Harry’s JustGiving fundraising page is still open for donations at https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/harry-townshend

For more about the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust please visit www.gwct.org.uk

Ends

Note to editors:

The Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust
– providing research-led conservation for a thriving countryside. The GWCT is an independent wildlife conservation charity which has carried out scientific research into Britain’s game and wildlife since the 1930s. We advise farmers and landowners on improving wildlife habitats. We employ 22 post-doctoral scientists and 50 other research staff with expertise in areas such as birds, insects, mammals, farming, fish and statistics. We undertake our own research as well as projects funded by contract and grant-aid from Government and private bodies. The Trust is also responsible for several Government Biodiversity Action Plan species and is lead partner for grey partridge and joint lead partner for brown hare and black grouse.

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