

Cumbrian businesses under starters orders for virtual coast to coast walk

Monday 20 May, 2024

Dozens of businesses across Cumbria are ready to embark on an unusual fundraising campaign – the Virtual Coast to Coast Corporate Challenge.

Businesses across the county have signed up to take part in the challenge, organised by Cumbria Community Foundation, which begins on Monday [20 May] to raise money for local good causes.

Instead of walking Alfred Wainwright's famous route from St Bees Head to Robin Hood's Bay in Yorkshire, they will complete the 171 miles in their home, office or gym by walking, running, swimming, static exercise bike, rowing machine or any other form of exercise where you move to record mileage.

To show how it is done – and to encourage more businesses to take part – Foundation employees headed for the test track at M-Sport, Dovenby Hall, equipped with a rowing machine and exercise bike.

Dr Jenny Benson, director of programmes and partnerships at the Foundation, said: "Doing the challenge virtually means everybody can take part.

"You don't need to book a fortnight off work and battle with the elements from St Bees to Robin Hood's Bay – you can clock up the miles in your lunchbreak, taking the dog for a walk, or even in front of the TV if you have an exercise bike or rowing machine.

"Having six weeks to complete the challenge makes it much more inclusive. You can take your time and fit it in around your everyday life."

Cumbria Community Foundation staff are themselves attempting the challenge. They plan to walk together during their lunch break and after work.

Jackie Blacklock, development assistant, said: "Working for the Foundation, I get to hear about all the amazing projects and community groups that we fund and I thought this was a great way for me to give something back."

Businesses participating include WCF, Armstrong Watson and the Centre for Leadership Performance in Cockermouth.

Rhianna Smith, project lead at the Centre for Leadership Performance, came to the launch event at M-Sport.

She said: "To be honest I'm not very prepared. But I walk my dog every day and she'll be delighted she gets a few longer walks. It's incredible the work that Cumbria Community Foundation does. It supports so many different people, so many different communities. We're really delighted to support them."

The Foundation embarked on the Challenge to mark its 25th anniversary. Entrants can sign up at any point but must complete the challenge by July 1.

All the money raised goes to its Cumbria Fund – which supports a wide range of charities and community groups – or to the participants' corporate fund with the Foundation, if their company has one.

Andy Beeforth, the Foundation's chief executive, said: "This is a brilliant way for businesses and our corporate supporters to raise money for local causes.

"We also hope it will be a fun way for companies and their staff to join together and give back to their community."

Businesses can register online at: <https://www.cumbriafoundation.org/vc2c>

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