

## **Friends push themselves to the limit on gruelling charity hike**

Two friends from Cheshire put their stamina to the test in a gruelling 56-mile hike in treacherous weather.

Paul Brennan and Rob Doogan both from Cheshire, work as senior consultants for Cullen Wealth Ltd in Stockport which has supported Francis House Children's Hospice for many years.

The daring duo spent nearly 24 hours in the Peak District from midday to walking through the night on the Bullock Smithy Hike. They contended with navigating their way in the dark, torrential rain, flooding, deep mud, and rocky and steep descents.

Paul said: "I knew the walk would be a huge challenge where I would really have to push myself otherwise there would be a real chance of failure as a quarter of people fail to complete the hike. To give me the extra motivation I knew I would need walking through the night I wanted to feel I was completing it for a great cause.

"The hike was an amazing challenge with great scenery and people. It is the hardest thing I have ever done and I could barely walk afterwards, although for some reason I am yet to understand I would do it again!"

Rob said: "I can honestly say that there are no words to do justice to how difficult it was! We had 24 hours to pass through 14 checkpoints in the correct order. The entire course is a circular route around the Peak District covering 56 miles, with total climbing involved of 8000ft. It rained torrentially for the first five hours, and so our kit was saturated and the ground treacherous. This made negotiating the course all the more difficult with rocky descents slippery and hill side path either flooded or covered in deep mud.

"By nightfall at around 24 miles, (with over 30 miles still to go) we were both suffering with blisters and had to dig deep to carry on. We grouped with some experienced people who knew the route and this made navigation in darkness easier, however by this time we were exhausted and we just concentrating on putting one foot in front of the other. By the time we reached checkpoint 11 of 14, we had walked all night, and when it became light again we still had 13 more miles to cover. Thankfully we were able to see the job through just in time."

The friends raised a total of £1,223.96 for Francis House. Staff at Cullen Wealth have raised over £21,500.00 through a number of fundraising activities for Francis House. Thank you.