



## Press Release

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# HUNDREDS JOIN THE WALK OF LIFE

A record 225 people put their best feet forward on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> May, taking part in the 'Walk of Life', a sponsored walk along the beautiful Kennet and Avon canal organised by the Royal United Hospital's Forever Friends Appeal charity. All walkers took part to raise funds for the RUH Cancer Care Campaign – helping to build a pioneering new Cancer Centre for the hospital in Bath.

Walkers took part in either the full 21 miles from Devizes to Bath, 12 miles in the morning from Devizes to Bradford-On-Avon, or 9 miles in the afternoon from Bradford-On-Avon to Bath. Men and women joined in from all over Bath, Somerset and Wiltshire, and were cheered on by marshals all along the route. The weather was kind, with perfect temperatures and the rain staying at bay for the full day walkers to reach Sydney Gardens, Bath in beautiful sunshine.

This popular walking event was proudly sponsored by Bath based, Mogers Solicitors who also had a 16 strong team taking part. Jo Hones, Events and Community Officer said: *"We are just so proud of all our wonderful walkers! We would like to thank them all for their support, as well as our fabulous team sponsors Mogers Solicitors, our volunteer marshals and everyone who helped make this event run so smoothly. We have had some really fabulous feedback with everyone thoroughly enjoying the day – despite the blisters! The Walk of Life is going from strength to strength and growing in numbers each year. Last year the walkers raised over £30,000 so hopefully this year we will raise even more towards building a pioneering Cancer Centre."*

The current aim of the Royal United Hospital charity, The Forever Friends Appeal, is the RUH Cancer Care Campaign - raising funds towards a pioneering new Cancer Centre for the hospital. Following the fantastic support from the public and the recent wonderful news of the £4million donation to the Campaign from The James Dyson Foundation, the Appeal have now met their minimum fundraising target and are therefore extending their Campaign by a further £2-3million. This will enhance even

further the therapeutic environment that RUH doctors are aiming to create, and maximise its impact for patients with additional state-of-the-art medical equipment, dedicated research facilities, as well as art and pastoral gardens.

This is the first public event since the amazing news of a £4 million donation from the James Dyson Foundation and Tim Hobbs, Head of Fundraising for The Forever Friends Appeal was keen to make the public aware that their efforts were going to make the new Cancer Centre something truly remarkable. Head of Fundraising for The Forever Friends Appeal, Tim Hobbs, comments: *“Following this truly wonderful donation, the continuing support of the public and other donors is so important. The Dyson Foundation wanted to help us secure our minimum target so that we could extend our fundraising ambitions and the vision for the building. They particularly want to support and help maximise the efforts and impact of the fundraising by the public so that the clinicians involved in the planning of the new Cancer Centre can be even more imaginative, inspired and innovative in their vision for the design of the building and how it works. It is the public that will now help this pioneering building be truly exceptional and vastly improve cancer care in this region – in the same way as the Dyson Centre for Neonatal Care has already done for premature babies and their families”*.

The Walk of Life was created with and in memory of loving wife, sister, mother and daughter Vanessa Kyte, who sadly lost her life in November 2007 having lived with cancer for seven years. Vanessa, who lived in Frome, was extremely passionate about fundraising for cancer care. Every year, Vanessa’s family and friends love seeing the Walk grow and help raise even more funds for the cause that was so close to Vanessa’s heart.

Vanessa Kyte’s sister, Nicola Noble from Warminster, has continued with Vanessa’s fundraising drive and says: *“It has been an incredible week with the £4million donation from the Dysons and it carried on with a beautiful sunny day with people from our community walking along the canal raising money towards the new cancer centre, which will now make it not just an amazing unit but an incredible one! It’s always lovely to hear such moving stories as to why people take part in the walk. I have met so many lovely people throughout the day – Ness would have thought everyone taking part were incredible.”*

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**For further information, please contact Jo Hones, Events & Community Officer for The Forever Friends Appeal on 01225 825823 or [joanna.hones@nhs.net](mailto:joanna.hones@nhs.net)**



