

Rugby club digs deep for charity 'Royal Blind'

Players and supporters of Edinburgh Northern Rugby Football Club are encouraging others to tackle a 2.6 Challenge in support of Scottish charity Royal Blind.

Set up by organisers of the 26-mile London marathon, the 2.6 Challenge encourages people to take on a fun activity involving the number 26 and to donate to or fundraise for their favourite UK charity.

Edinburgh Northern board member Jamie Kindness said around 50 players and supporters tackled the 2.6 Challenge on Sunday 26 April in support of Royal Blind.

"We have a very strong community focus at Edinburgh Northern so we're enthusiastic about getting in behind a charity like Royal Blind.

"The COVID-19 pandemic is a tough time for everybody, but it's especially difficult for charities like Royal Blind, which cares for older people with vision impairments who are vulnerable to this virus due to their age.

"Together, we raised £300, so I'm proud of the guys."



Image taken prior to lockdown. Courtesy of 'Rugby People's' Susan Shanks.

Royal Blind is Scotland's largest visual impairment charity and is raising funds to help support its five residential care services which remain fully operational during the pandemic.

Jamie Kindness said: "We are passionate about supporting causes close to our heart. For example, last week we raised more than £4000 for worthy causes from a club dinner, held online."

He said the COVID-19 pandemic had put life in perspective.

"Taking part in activities like this challenge has led me to see that the real world and our Edinburgh community does still exist, despite the lockdown and not being able to see anyone face to face."

Many supporters began their challenge on Sunday 26 April, but others are continuing or starting challenges over the next four weeks.

The 2.6 Challenge is open to anyone of any age – the only requirement is that the activity must follow the Government guidelines on exercise and social distancing.

Kindness encouraged people who enjoy keeping fit to set themselves a 2.6 Challenge over the next four weeks.

“An initiative like the 2.6 Challenge helps people give back to our community, while also motivating people to take on a strenuous activity.”

Royal Blind’s chief executive Mark O’Donnell is among those taking on a challenge over the next four weeks.

Mark O’Donnell said: “I’ll be rowing 26,000 strokes on my indoor rowing machine over 26 days.

“They say 1,000 strokes is equal to travelling about 2 kilometres in the water, so overall, 26,000 strokes is like rowing from Leith to Kirkcaldy and back again.

“All our staff at Royal Blind, especially our nursing and care teams, have been going that extra mile to care for all the residents across our five services during this pandemic. That knowledge will be urging me on during this challenge.”



Image taken prior to lockdown. Courtesy of 'Rugby People's' Susan Shanks.

Jamie Kindness said people could be creative with the 2.6 Challenge.

"We are running a weekly fitness competition during the COVID-19 lockdown, with team members earning a point for each unit of exercise they complete.

"For the 2.6 Challenge, we doubled the amount of daily points our members could earn if they made a donation to Royal Blind.

"This lockdown is a great time to set yourself a fitness goal, and to give back to the community, if you are able."

Mr Kindness encouraged people to make a donation to Royal Blind through its website or its 2.6 Challenge page: <https://bit.ly/TwoPointSixRoyalBlind>.

Visit <https://bit.ly/TwoPointSixRoyalBlind> to sign up for a 2.6 Challenge in support of Royal Blind or donate to the Scottish charity's fundraisers.

All images are from pre-lockdown and are courtesy of Susan

Shanks (Rugby People)