

SCARLETT'S 2.6 CHALLENGE

HomeCycling Stories Scarlett's #twopointsixchallenge 05/05/2020

Meet Scarlett, an enthusiastic cyclist and campaigner who has committed to cycling 2.6 miles up to Beachy Head every day.

- **Why did you choose to participate in the 2.6 Challenge via Wheels for Wellbeing?**

It is so much easier to do something if you make it into a habit. Sometimes it is easier to do something if you are doing it for someone else. I try to get out most days, but there is often something else to do and I need a prompt. I cycle 2.6 miles up to Beachy Head from my home on the electric bike. I

always feels better when I get there. I am due to have a stem cell transplant later this year, so I want to be as fit as possible as it can be risky, especially as my immunity will get lower and catching a virus then could be dangerous. I have been working with the 'Centre for Perioperative Care' on how doctors and others can help patients get 'fitter better sooner' for their operation. See www.cpoc.org.uk. It is strange being a doctor and a patient. And it is also strange having hidden disabilities and incurable conditions, yet working.

- **How long have you've been cycling for, and what made you start?**

I used to cycle before I got ill. In fact, that's when I knew there was something wrong two years ago – I couldn't cycle up hills or climb stairs without getting short of breath or chest pain. I developed severe heart failure. I had Myeloma (bone marrow cancer) which had produced 'amyloid' making my heart very stiff. Even after months of chemotherapy I couldn't walk far and had to use the lift everywhere. Then my Consultant told me I should do some exercise every day. I got an electric bike – which is great, because you never get stuck unable to cycle home. I have been a doctor for 30 years and had even led the report 'Exercise the miracle cure' but I didn't think it applied to me. I have been amazed at how quickly I improved – just a few weeks. I have gone back to work (2 days a week) as an Orthopaedic Surgeon, until lockdown.

<https://wheelsforwellbeing.org.uk/scarletts-two-point-six-challenge/>



- **How has cycling every day made a difference to you during lockdown?**

Even if it takes a lot of effort to get out, I always feel better. After 20 minutes, the endorphins kick in and your head clears. My health has improved massively and I can now run upstairs while holding a conversation. Tests at the hospital show my heart is just as rigid, but it functions better than an average 20-year-old's. I have far more energy. It is nice to be able to cycle now the roads so clear. I think some drivers don't realise how scary roads are. If more car-drivers gave more space when overtaking, or slowed down around bikes, then more people would cycle. Lots of motorists think of cyclists as selfish men in lycra, but some of us with disabilities find it easier to cycle than to walk or drive. I have been trying to get my local cycling campaign group to publicise 'top tips for drivers to help ALL people to cycle'.



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