

CHARITY CHAMPIONS

Phil and his team celebrate £82,000 raised for hospice



MILESTONE: Phil Bessant Accountants celebrating when they hit the £50,000 fund raising target for St David's Hospice Care

A Gwent accountancy firm's support for a local hospice has added up to many thousands of pounds over the years.

Phil Bessant Accountants chose to support Newport-based St David's Hospice Care as its charity of the year.

And over the past few years the colleagues have raised a phenomenal £82,435.55 through staging an ingenious array of fund raising events and roping in friends family and clients along the way.

Phil Bessant, who at one stage was locked up as part of a fundraising stunt, said: "We wanted to support the local community and in particular a charity that was not directly related to personal benefit and so we decided to support St David's Hospice Care.

"We now typically arrange six to seven fund raising events a year which range from quiz nights and golf days to a Beaujolais event, wine and cheese evenings, staging a beer mile and a stalwart, the annual raffle of a home-baked and iced Christmas cake.

"Initially we simply put on events like golf days that we knew would be supported, now we chat among ourselves each year to see if we can come up with something new and different.

Mr Bessant, who won the South Wales Argus Charity Champion award at the 2019 Pride of Gwent awards, said: "The hardest time was trying to put on events or to fundraise during Covid. Then we had staff and clients and even my grandson and granddaughter, doing events.

"Rhys, aged 11, did a series of events throughout one month to raise money including keepy ups, running and cycling while Sophie, also 11, previously had her long hair cut which she donated to charity and raised funds for St David's Hospice Care at the same time. This fund raising can become quite addictive!

"All our events are fun but I guess the one that stands out is the first one when I was locked in my boardroom and not let out until I had raised £1,000. In the end we raised more than £3,000. We're still



NAMED: Phil Bessant and Karen Bessant join Emma Saysell, CEO of St David's Hospice Care to officially open the Phil Bessant room at the In Patient Unit at Malpas, Newport

aren't sure if the money pledged was to let me out or keep me locked in!

"A stand out moment was when we hit £50,000 as we really could not believe we had reached this milestone. We had a fabulous cheese and wine evening to celebrate and raise even more funds for the hospice.

"We have a superb team who rally round and support the events as they happen. Without this team spirit none of this would have been possible.

"It's essential that you have this support from your team.

"I believe people want to give. They just need someone to make it easy for them to do so by arranging various events in which they can get involved like the ones we stage.

"I'd encourage other businesses and organisations to go down the route we have of adopting a charity for the year such as we have done with St David's Hospice Care.

"The need from organisations, such as the hospice, is always

there and people really want to support the hospice but often aren't sure how they can go about doing this. They don't necessarily realise that even a relatively small donation can make a big difference.

"Along the way we have had one or two events, particularly this last year, when they haven't been as well supported as we would have liked, but the view is that any money raised is money the hospice didn't have beforehand and will be grateful to receive."

Phil said: "We don't pressure colleagues to get involved with the fund raising. We have always been quite clear that just because Phil Bessant Ltd wishes to support such a cause there is no pressure on the team to participate. But if they can, they do, and we all love the reaction we get when we hold the events. This does seem to bring us all closer together as a team.

"Our supporters have been with us every inch of the way.

"Without our supporters we wouldn't have raised anywhere near the amount that we have

CHARITY CHAMPIONS



MAJOR SIGNING: (l to r) Karen Bessant, Cheryl Hunt, Emma Bessant, Lauren Durston, Kris Broome, from the hospice, and Nicola Yoxall, with Phil Bessant making out the cheque for £82,435.95 to St David's Hospice Care. Picture: DBPR



ACCOUNTANTS: Phil Bessant with the cake that raised £500

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RECOGNISED: Lindsey Keyes (right) and Aaron Mead presents the Pride of Gwent Charity Champion Award to Phil Beasant Ltd at the Pride of Gwent 2019 awards. Picture: Chris Tinsley

so we are very grateful. Our supporters, as well as being clients, have become very close friends because of the charity work which is a marvellous bonus for us all. Long may it continue."

Emma Saysell, chief executive of St David's Hospice Care, said: "Phil and his team are marvellous supporters of the hospice. I'm sure it's the enthusiasm and commitment to the events they stage which has seen them able to raise such a wonderful amount of money for the hospice over the years."

Hospice chairman Jim Thompson said: "Phil and his colleagues are fabulous in all that they have done to support the hospice over the years.

"The unbounded effort and hard work they put in to arranging and then staging all their fund raising events is staggering."

Phil Bessant said he and his team are committed to carrying on with its fundraising and among events planned for 2023 are a quiz night at Fugitives Crickets Club, Newport, on Friday, March 24 and a golf day at Woodlake Golf

Club, Pontypool, on Friday, May 12; a beer mile in July; a wine and cheese evening in September; a black tie celebrity dinner in October and a Beaujolais day in November.

A Charity of the Year is a charity which your company chooses to work with for 12 months in order to raise money for its cause. If you would like to select St David's Hospice Care as your charity of the year, you can contact them on 01633 851051 or at hello@stdavidshospicecare.org.

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