

## **BACKGROUND TO THE BIKE RIDE**

### **Pancreatic & Liver Cancer Research Charity Bike Ride Story**

Pancreatic cancer is a devastating disease that affects up to 8,000 people each year in the UK. It is very difficult to treat at any stage but sadly due to the fact that it generally presents when quite advanced the majority of patients cannot be cured. Liver cancer affects up to 18,000 people each year with most of the cases being spread from bowel cancer.

The department of hepatobiliary and pancreatic surgery (HPB) at Leicester General Hospital regularly conducts research into the causes and treatments of these cancers. Research is very costly and rarely funded by the NHS and although the government and large granting bodies do support some of the work this is almost exclusively for the higher profile, politically favoured cancers such as lung, breast, bowel and prostate. Organising studies and analysing samples to help us learn and understand the processes involved in the development and resistance of cancers is very expensive and as a consequence we need to find ways of raising money to ensure that this vital work can continue.

In 2013 one of our patients decided to 'give something back' to his surgeon and explained to his nurse specialist that he and his family were planning a charity bike ride from Leicester to Skegness to raise money for pancreatic cancer research at University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust. Upon hearing this, the nurse decided to take up the challenge herself and accompany the patient. Word rapidly spread and the group quickly grew to include his surgeons, patients, anaesthetists, nurses, scientists, senior managers, family and friends.

Over the past three years and with three charity bike rides under our belt we have raised over £100,000 which is astonishing and a 100% of the fundraising goes directly towards supporting research into pancreatic and liver cancer in our HPB unit in Leicester which we hope will benefit patients everywhere in the country. We are very fortunate that local supermarkets and shops donate drinks and snacks and we are grateful for their continued support (it is a long way with no food or drink!). In addition we have been overwhelmed by the generosity of all the individuals and businesses who have donated the raffle prizes and explains why the tickets are so popular.

Due to the success of the bike rides and popular demand this has now become an annual event and the numbers of participants is growing each year which helps us raise more money to support our research. Originally we cycled to Skegness and more recently to sunny Hunstanton.

**Cris Pollard**