



**May 2013**

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Stuart Bell and friends take on 75 mile walk in memory of stillborn niece, Jessica, and to raise funds for Sands, the stillbirth and neonatal death charity**

Following the tragic stillbirth of his niece, Jessica on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2012, Stuart Bell of North Hykeham, Lincoln, has been determined to raise funds for Sands, the stillbirth and neonatal death charity, which provided such incredible support to his sister and her husband at such a devastating time in their lives.

Stuart's plans are now in place for him and four mates to complete a 75 mile walk from the maternity wing at York Hospital; where Jessica was born, to Lincoln Maternity unit. The walk will take place on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2013.

Stuart says: 'The reason for finishing our walk at Lincoln is that my son, Charlie, who has just turned one was born there, and we absolutely know how lucky we are to be able to cuddle him every night. I am walking in memory of Jessica but we want to raise as much as we can to enable Sands to continue their great work.'

Stuart will be joined by friends Matthew Starbuck, Nathan Poundall (both from North Hykeham), Murray Ogle (from York) and Nick Glascott-Tull (from Liverpool), as well as family members and other friends who will be joining the walkers along their route.

'When Jessica was stillborn we were all totally devastated but Sands provided amazing support to my sister and her husband, as well as to ourselves and both sets of grandparents.

'Until Jessica died we had no idea that 17 babies die everyday in the UK - 11 are stillborn and 6 die shortly after birth.'

The route will take Stuart, Nathan, Matthew, Murray and Nick from the centre of York, through a host of villages, as well as passing by the outskirts of Selby and stopping on the Saturday evening at approx. 6pm at Haxey. On the morning of 9<sup>th</sup> June they will head off towards Gainsborough and are hoping to reach Lincoln Hospital maternity wing by early evening.

Stuart continues: ‘The support Sands provides to bereaved parents makes such a huge difference. Their work ranges from funding research to better understand why so many babies are still dying everyday across the country; to running a network of nearly 100 support groups across the country and providing memory boxes to ensure no parents leave hospital without precious memories of their baby.

‘We hope that people along our route will come and say hello and spur us on to Lincoln. We hope to raise £1,000 for this very special charity, but we also want let people know stillbirth is not selective, it can happen to any family, and something needs to be done to stop so many babies dying every day in the UK.’

Stuart’s wife Paula has also been involved in fundraising for Sands and recently completed a 10K race and raised £150 for the charity.

To donate or to find out more about Stuart’s route, please visit: [www.justgiving.com/stuart-bell11](http://www.justgiving.com/stuart-bell11)

To find out more about Sands, please visit: [www.uk-sands.org](http://www.uk-sands.org)

ENDS

**For further information, please contact Sands press officers:**

Lyn Peters – 0203 598 1937

Or

Lisa Wardle – 0203 598 1942

**Key Information about Sands:**

Sands, the stillbirth and neonatal death charity, was established by bereaved parents in 1978 and obtained charity status in 1981.

Sands core aims are to:

- Support anyone affected by the death of a baby;
- To work in partnership with health professionals to improve the quality of care and services offered to bereaved families; and
- To promote research and changes in practice that could help to reduce the loss of babies’ lives

Helpline: 020 7436 5881

Office: 020 7436 7940

Web: [www.uk-sands.org](http://www.uk-sands.org)

E mail: [support@uk-sands.org](mailto:support@uk-sands.org)