

Mud runners get set to raise much-needed church funds

FRIENDS are not usually ones to sling mud at each other are they? However, that's exactly what a group of determined fundraisers and friends are going to do later this month.

The Friends of St Peter's Church in Carmarthen are taking on the challenge of Back 2 the Trenches 6km mud run at Cothi Bridge.

The aim is to raise much-needed funds for St Peter's Church in the town.

Sunday October 18, will see Reverend Leigh Richardson leading a congregation to the slightly alternative morning venue instead of the pews.

"It's fantastic to have this sporting wing of the friends' association — something which has been completely organic and has grown out of people's passion to help St Peter's," he said.

"The amazing thing is that people aren't conforming to what they think the church ought to do to fundraise, people, and Simon Ratty in particular, are playing to their strengths and interests, and the mudrun is the first in a whole list of sporting challenges that are waiting in the wings for Team Friends.

"I will be taking part in the mudrun along with my curate Ben — apparently we're the first clergy to take part in it — so it should be a lot of fun.

"We're taking a Sunday morning off to do it, so all the prayers will be said before we set off, and probably one or two fired off as we go around the course."

While in church over the summer, the parish discovered that Leigh

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had agreed to take part in the Back 2 the Trenches this autumn.

For the past few years St Peter's Church and its congregation have been fundraising to save the church and formed The Friends of St Peter's Church in late 2014 to improve the church.

The fundraising group was set up due to the increased interest in helping the church survive in the face of financial struggles — the grade two listed church needs £50,000 to keep going.

Since this time thousands of pounds have been raised through concerts, Christmas fairs and even a UK wide sponsored motorbike ride — which saw motorbikes blessed before the altar, a first for the 900 year-old church.

The Friends of St Peter's Church members were first alerted to the mud run by one its members.

Local archaeologist Simon Ratty, had offered to participate in the mud run.

He said: "I saw the opportunity to do something a little different to fundraise and all sponsorship money would then be donated to the church.

"Before I knew it other people were offering to participate in the mud run and Leigh kindly said he would join in the fun.

"We are hoping to take a big team of runners to Cothi Bridge to help us raise lots of money" added Simon.



"Everyone knows the huge costs of keeping these large historic buildings going, but we are ever more aware of how much the community depends on them too in times of family loss."

St Peter's Church is at the heart of Carmarthen's wonderful community, and the community has embraced the need for fundraising to keep it the church open.

Others taking part in the run include town businessman Andrew Bassett, chairman of the Camron Coney Memorial Trust Adam Whitehouse among others.

Team shirts have been created for the event sponsored by Coracle Coaches. The team has been named Friends for the Friends.

There is still an open opportunity for others to join in the fun.

A Facebook page has been set up called "Team Friends for the Friends" and we welcome all community members to join in the Mud Run.

Friends member and mud runner, Jenny Fox said: "The Friends of St Peter's Church were over the moon when Simon Ratty suggested the 6k Mud Run, and soon after an appeal for a team of volunteers went out over social media.

"Since then training has seen thousands of miles walked, crawled and cycled by all the members of the team.

"This is something completely new and different as a fundraiser for the Friends of St Peter's Church.

"We are delighted that Reverend Leigh Richardson and Reverend Ben Read have joined the team also.

"Everyone expects St Peter's Church to be there, for happy family weddings and sadder occasions to mark Remembrance Day or funerals. St Peter's Church needs all our support so it can be saved for future generations.

We would appeal to all local residents to put their hands in their pockets and sponsor these volunteers who are taking part in this great event. All monies raised go to the church, each entrant has paid their own entry fee."

Back 2 the Trenches brings together both natural and man-made obstacles in runs ranging from 6km to 18km, and the first event of its kind in Wales was held in Cothi Bridge in May last year.

Obstacles include running up hills covered in mud, crawling through muddy water on your hands and knees while keeping your head below barbed wire, climbing over rope nets and tyres and much more.

GOING IN: The Friends of St Peter's Church in Carmarthen are taking on the challenge of Back 2 the Trenches 6km mud run at Cothi Bridge on Sunday, October 18.

Picture: Mike Walters

TEAM FRIENDS:

THE team for far for the mud run is as follows:

- Reverend Leigh Richardson
- Reverend Ben Read
- Simon Ratty
- Denise Phillips
- Jenny Fox
- Sarah Morris
- Camron Sampson
- Adam Whitehouse
- Simon Morris
- Eken Durbury
- Leigh Bastey
- Lynsey Whitcombe-Jones
- Andrew Bassett
- Claire Griffiths

● To sponsor the mud runners visit www.justgiving.com/stpeterscarmarthen