

LEICESTERSHIRE FIRE and RESCUE SERVICE

NEWS RELEASE

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LFRS TEAM TAKE PART IN CHASE THE SUN BIKE RIDE IN MEMORY OF PAUL 'TL' WILKENS

On Saturday 17 June 2017, a team of cyclists, plus support crew, will be taking part in a cycle challenge in memory of Paul 'TL' Wilkens (colleague, friend and cycle team mate) who tragically passed away whilst on duty in August last year.

After last year's successful "The Way of Roses" coast to coast cycle challenge on Wednesday 4 May 2016, the group (including Paul) spoke about making this type of challenge an annual event. The "Chase the Sun" event was suggested by Paul. Paul then tragically died so the rest of the team thought it was only right to attend the cycle challenge in honour of their brother, colleague, friend and team mate.

The "Chase the Sun" cycle challenge starts in Sheerness in Kent and finishes in Burnham-on-Sea in Somerset. The team will travel a total distance of 205 miles, which is estimated to take approximately 17 hours. The overall challenge is to complete the ride between sunrise at 04:30 hours and sunset at 21:30 hours, something the team are planning to do for Paul.

Simon Wilkens, firefighter at Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service and brother of Paul, said: "As this is something Paul and I had planned to do together, it has already become an emotional journey before it starts. I have decided to take some of Paul's ashes with me for both motivation and also so that it feels like he is still taking part with all of us."

"We hope that in doing this event the whole of Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service will all remember Paul by doing/supporting something he thoroughly enjoyed."

Whilst the challenge is taking place and the team are on the road, they are hoping to be able to keep everyone up to date with their progress via our social media channels, Facebook ([/LeicsFireRescue](#)) and Twitter ([@LeicsFireRescue](#)), using the hashtag #ChaseTheSun. If you want to keep up to date with the progress of the team or even interact with those taking part, feel free to add our accounts and use the hashtag provided.

ENDS

Notes to editors: Photos are available on request via emailing Corporate Communications on the details below. If using any images, please credit Alistair Langham at The Studio 17

About the Service

Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service provides emergency response, prevention and protection services from 20 stations across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. Its headquarters is based in Birstall, Leicester.

The Service's prevention, education, enforcement and inspection programmes have resulted in significant reductions in the number of incidents. In the last ten years, fire related incidents have reduced by 46 percent.

During 2015/16, the Service attended 666 road traffic collisions, of which 174 were extrications freeing 208 people trapped inside their vehicles and completed 5086 home fire safety checks, fitting almost 4481 smoke alarms. Staff organised or supported almost 1431 events aimed at promoting fire and road safety and arson prevention, whilst also visiting 332 schools to deliver fire and road safety education to pupils.

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