

## City Priest to Run in the 2024 London Marathon

Yes you read that right! The son of a very good friend of mine has decided to train and run in the 2024 London Marathon, in memory of his brother Mark Slocombe, who was diagnosed with bowel cancer in October 2022 and sadly died within 5 months! He was a very fit young man who was just 45, a leading light in the Rossendale & Pendle Mountain Rescue Team and still competing in ultramarathons, when he was cruelly struck down. All his life he had been an active member of his community most recently in Ramsbottom and as a fit athlete himself he encouraged many people to get active and stay fit by running. Sadly bowel cancer took all of that away from his family and friends – so very very quickly.

His younger brother, Josh Harris, decided that he wanted to do something in Mark's memory, to raise money for Bowel Cancer UK and contribute towards raising awareness of this terrible disease that is curable if discovered early enough. Dame Deborah James – known as “Bowelbabe” in her podcast – “You, Me and The Big C” – did a huge amount to raise awareness as we all know before she sadly died much too young in 2022 from the disease and Josh's efforts in the London Marathon supported by yourselves, will continue this effort.

Mark was a natural athlete for whom such a feat of running the London Marathon was hardly a challenge but Josh would be the first to say “absolutely not for me”; his calling is to the Ministry many years ago and on its own that is hardly the preparation for a gruelling 26 mile run and all the training that goes with it - or is it?

As expected Josh is made of strong stuff and with the motivation of supporting his late brother and the backing of many people, including his family, friends and parishioners he has set about this mammoth task with a dedication and determination that comes from his faith and from the hope that his contribution to Bowel Cancer UK will make a real difference to the lives of those already diagnosed and receiving treatment, those awaiting diagnosis, those living with the disease that is yet to be diagnosed and of course every member of society who may one day encounter this awful cancer.

Josh's calling takes him to the very heart of London, he is currently Priest in Charge of the Guild Church of St Katherine Cree, in the City of London (Leadenhall Street) where his ministry is dedicated to City Workers. It is some job already without the Marathon training he is doing! He was also seen accompanying Alderwoman and Sheriff Dame Susan Langley DBE at the 2023 Lord Mayor's Show as her Honorary Chaplain - they cut a great picture in the parade; dare I say it may not be the last time they are seen working together in the City!

Josh needs all the help we can give him in his fundraising for the London Marathon on 21<sup>st</sup> April and his website [www.runformark.uk](http://www.runformark.uk) will tell you more about it and provide the links.

Please support Josh in this year's London Marathon by sponsoring him and also spreading the word. He has a big target to reach and any contribution will of course be going directly to this really important cause - Bowel Cancer UK.

Thanks for taking the time to read this and I hope you will be moved to do it right now!

