



We caught up with Rachel Kennedy, who took part in last year's Walkies Together challenge during an incredibly difficult and heartbreaking time. Her dad was diagnosed with stage four bowel cancer in April 2024 and, after 10-months, sadly he passed away in March 2025. We are deeply sorry for her loss and want to honour her courage in sharing her story. Rachel's experience is a powerful reminder of why this challenge matters so much – not just for those walking, but for the countless families affected by bowel cancer.

Why did you take part in Walkies Together?

"My amazing dad was diagnosed with stage four bowel cancer in April 2024. Having the Walkies Together challenge gave me something to focus on in a really horrendous time. It was a way to channel my emotions and energy into something positive when everything else felt overwhelming."

Did you have any sort of plan or support during the challenge?

"I didn't have a formal plan, but lots of my friends walked with me to support both the challenge and me personally. Their company was a real comfort during one of the toughest periods of my life. It made a huge difference knowing I wasn't doing it alone – having that support motivated me to keep going."

How did you keep track of your walks, did you use our Walkies Together tracker?

"I didn't use the official tracker but relied on my phone's health app to monitor my steps instead. It was just easier and more convenient for me. Technology really helped me stay on top of my progress without adding any extra stress."

What helped you conquer your steps and keep going?

"For me, the walks gave me headspace and something to focus on each day. When my mental health was at an all-time low, putting one foot in front of the other felt like a small win. The challenge gave me daily purpose, even when everything else felt out of control."

Do you have any general advice when it comes to fundraising?

"Social media was my go-to. Sharing cute dog selfies and updates about the challenge helped raise awareness and attract donations. My dog Dusty definitely played a starring role – people love seeing those furry faces! It's an easy way to connect with people and show them why the cause matters."

What about asking friends and family for donations? How did you go about that?

"It's always easier to ask when the cause has personally affected you. My dad was adored by everyone who knew him, so people were really willing to support. Being open and honest about why I was walking helped others understand the importance of the challenge."

How do you think your dog felt about the challenge?

"Dusty absolutely loved the walks. It wasn't just good for me – it brought my dad so much joy to see Dusty out and about getting plenty of exercise. Those walks meant a lot to all of us, especially during such a difficult time."

What's your overall advice for people taking part this year?

"My advice is simple: get outside, breathe fresh air, and embrace nature. Walking is so much more than exercise – it's a chance to pause and remind yourself how precious being alive really is. Sometimes it's the simple things that help you get through the hardest days."

Rachel's experience shows how the Walkies Together challenge can bring focus, healing, and community support during tough times. If you're taking part this year, her advice is to grab the lead, get outside, and make every step count.