

# Epsom Runner's Tribute to Sister Raises Over £22,000 for Epilepsy Charity

13 March 2025



An Epsom man has completed an extraordinary fundraising challenge in memory of his sister, raising more than £22,000 for national charity Epilepsy Action.

Barry Ahearn, from Epsom, ran **27 half-marathons** over the past year to honour his sister, Abbie, who tragically passed away in September 2023 following a severe epileptic seizure. Barry's challenge was deeply symbolic—each half-marathon representing **one minute of the 27 minutes** his sister's brain was without oxygen while paramedics fought to save her life.

His final run took place on **Saturday, 8th March, in Battersea Park**, where he was joined by **40 fellow runners** and **150 supporters**, including family, friends, and representatives from Epilepsy Action.

## A Challenge Driven by Love and Loss

Reflecting on the challenge, Barry said:

*"Losing Abbie has been the hardest thing I've ever experienced. She was kind, compassionate, and full of life. Every day since she passed, I've felt emotional pain—so I decided to match it with physical pain and push myself to do something in her memory."*

Abbie was just **three months away from her 30th birthday** when she suffered a fatal seizure. Having been diagnosed with epilepsy only six weeks earlier, her death came as a devastating shock to her loved ones.

Barry's journey has taken him across the UK, completing half-marathons in **London, Carsington Water, and even at his local park**, where he ran up and down a single path **55 times** to complete the 21km distance. Some runs were part of organised events, while others were solo challenges that tested his mental and physical endurance.

## Community Spirit and Support

Throughout his challenge, Barry was supported by his **wife Naomi**, who not only cheered him on at every race but also ran parts of the final half-marathon with him.

*"Seeing my best friends, family, and their children cheering me on has been so special. The solo runs were tough emotionally, but I knew I had people behind me every step of the way."*

His efforts have not only raised funds but also **heightened awareness of epilepsy**, a condition that affects **over 600,000 people in the UK**, with **three people dying from epilepsy-related causes every day**.

## An Impact Beyond Fundraising

Barry's campaign has been hailed as a remarkable achievement by **Epilepsy Action's Director of Fundraising, Philippa Cartwright**, who praised his determination and resilience:

*"Barry's efforts are truly inspiring. The funds he and his team have raised will help support vital services, from Talk & Support groups to our helpline, ensuring people with epilepsy get the help they need."*

Barry hopes that his sister's story will encourage more people to learn about the risks associated with epilepsy and push for better awareness and research.

*"When I started this challenge, I wanted to raise awareness and funds. I can't measure the full impact it's had, but if this helps save even one life, it will have been worth it."*

## How to Support the Cause

Barry's fundraising page remains open for donations to **Epilepsy Action**, which continues to campaign for better services and support for those affected by epilepsy.

To contribute to Barry's campaign, visit: **JustGiving - Barry Ahearn's Fundraiser**

For more information on epilepsy and support services, visit **www.epilepsy.org.uk** or call the **Epilepsy Action helpline on 0808 800 5050**.