

# Fundraisers tackle Route 66 - without even leaving home

STAFF based at [Shawbrook Bank](#)'s Redhill premises have 'virtually' tackled one of the most iconic road networks in the world to raise vital funds for frontline workers in the NHS.

The 14-strong group of colleagues decided to embrace lockdown boredom head-on by signing up for the online 'Route 66 Virtual Fitness challenge'.

Hosted by The Conqueror website, the challenge saw participants complete the 2,280-mile route online by recording the completion of physical walking, jogging and running exercises at home.

Travelling virtually from Chicago to Los Angeles, the group gave themselves a three-month target to complete the entire length of the Route 66 highway.

However, they smashed that target in impressive style, completing the gruelling trek in less than a month - and raising £2,940 for the NHS at the same time.

Gareth McHenry - who launched the charity effort before roping in his colleagues - said the idea initially came about to relieve the boredom of lockdown.

Gareth, head of delivery and innovation at [Shawbrook Bank](#), said: "Lockdown has taken its toll on lots of people across the UK - not just within Shawbrook.

"So we decided as a group to have a think of activities that we could do online that would help alleviate the boredom and the monotony of lockdown and at the same time help us stay fit both mentally and physically.



Gareth McHenry was the brainchild of the event

"Route 66 is one of the most iconic - if not the most iconic - highway in the world and so we felt this would be a great project to start off with. We decided to go for it, and to try and raise some funds for our NHS frontline heroes at the same time and it just grew arms and legs from there.

"We have a group Slack channel that we use to communicate and from within that we just egged each other on. We initially gave ourselves a three-month target to complete all 2,280 miles but we absolutely smashed that within a month - raising almost £3,000 in the process.

"All in all, it's been a very worthwhile exercise and we're all delighted with it."

The Conqueror website

describes the virtual Route 66 trek as the "ultimate running, cycling and walking challenge"

But after just six days the team from Shawbrook had managed to cover more than 400 miles.

Gareth added: "This gave the team a little bit of focus out with work and helped us re-create a bit of workplace atmosphere at the same time. After enjoying it so much we're now trying to plan our next challenge."

The successful team from [Shawbrook Bank](#) included Gareth McHenry, Alex Richardson, Chris Kerr, Edward Grainge, Giselle Kelly, James Popham, John Cullinane, Jonathan Hotchkiss, Nigel Cooper, Patrick Coughlan, Renier Botha, Stephen Birrell, Brendan Ellis and John Kelly.



