

## Michael & Michelle

"If I asked everybody to think of the words to describe my beautiful wife Michelle, I can guarantee loving, caring, and kind would definitely rank at the top of the list.



"She loved life and she loved people, she was always a Dancing Queen, a Party Girl – and most definitely not the quiet one!

"Becoming a mum was her dream come true and her three children, Elliot, Phoebe and Ophelia, were her greatest achievements but she died from cancer at the age of 54, which means she never got to see our three beautiful grandchildren.

"She was a force to be reckoned with in our family - devoted, compassionate, and fiercely loyal, someone everybody could go to for advice and support, knowing she would help solve life's problems with a cuppa and an egg custard!

"Michelle was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2003 and from the start tackled it with tenacity, courage, strength, and the determination to live the life she has been given, to love and support the people she cares about, even during some of her darkest days.

"The one thing the whole family takes great comfort from, though, is the care and love she received in her final days as a patient at St Luke's.

"Anyone who has been cared for by the team at St Luke's, whether in the hospice or at home, should also take comfort from knowing that their loved ones receive such magnificent care when they need it most.

"In 2019, Michelle spent nearly four weeks at St Luke's at the end of her life and she thought it was fantastic – in fact she described it as five star.

"She could have anything she wanted whenever she wanted it and, even more importantly, we were able to spend time with her as a family, staying with her through the night.

"There were two things Michelle really liked – her hair and her independence – and to have both taken from her was really difficult for her but St Luke's were there with her, supporting her in her final fight because no matter how ill she was, she was still living – still determined to carry on for as long as possible.

"At the very end of her life, I was able to say 'Michelle, I love you' – they were the last words she ever heard and that is a great comfort to me.

"Since Michelle's death, I have been determined to support St Luke's any way I can and we have raised around £11,000 doing things like the Ben Nevis climb and, more recently, I completed four half marathon runs in my shell costume, which is a bit of a daft tribute to Michelle.

"She used to jump on my back and say she was 'Mi Shell' so I know she'd have been laughing if she could see me.

"For me it's not just about fundraising, it's also a way of keeping Michelle's story alive, something I can do in her honour.

"And that is why I am so proud and honoured to be supporting the St Luke's Festival of Light because I know just how much St Luke's means to people like my Michelle."

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