

insight

St Cuthbert's Hospice



Spring/Summer 2023

Making every day count since 1988



Catching up with the Living Well Centre

"It does me so much good to be here."
- Norma

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Welcome

By Chief Executive
Paul Marriott



As ever, I hope you will enjoy the insights into the care we are able to offer, with a special focus in this edition on our Family Support Team and the Living Well Centre craft group that so many of our guests benefit from.

This care relies on us being confident that the Hospice building itself offers a safe and comfortable environment in which to receive services.

With a building that is as old as the Hospice, there is a constant need to refurbish the building and keep it safe and secure. We have invested this year in a new fire alarm system, a new roof on the older part of the building, new boilers, improvements to our emergency generator and new IT services. All this work happens in the background but enables us to be confident that we can continue to offer outstanding care for many years to come.

Regular donations through our annual campaigns, like the Sunflower Appeal highlighted on Page 4, or our Lottery, featured below, are invaluable. We are also grateful to our many supporters who have made the generous decision to remember the Hospice in their will.

However you choose to support us, we can promise you that we will make good and careful use of your support, not just to meet our day to day needs but to ensure that future generations can continue to benefit from your Hospice.

“Thank you for your ongoing interest in and support for St Cuthbert’s Hospice.”

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“EMG Solicitors place a huge value on family - our family at work, home and the wider community. We’re delighted to show our support to St Cuthbert’s Hospice by sponsoring their latest publication of Insight in recognition of the fantastic services they provide to our local communities.”

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Visit www.stcuthbertshospice.com and complete the registration form to sign up to our monthly e-newsletter to keep up to date with the latest Hospice news and events.



Our Family Support Team

Provide support to individuals and their families using our In-Patient Unit and Living Well Centre services.

Aislinn Le Fevre – Social Worker

"I lived just across the road from the Hospice growing up and used to visit fundraising events held here. I volunteered in the Langley Moor charity shop too, so the Hospice has always been part of my local community. When a job came up within the team last spring, I jumped at the chance to apply.

The Family Support Team help bridge a gap, bringing non-medical care into a medical environment. We look at the bigger picture and think about a patient's care plan holistically, considering things like their emotional and social needs. This might be as simple as a quick catch up and cuppa to check in on their wellbeing whilst they are at the Hospice or working behind the scenes with other care providers and the council to see if we can help put anything else in place here, at home or upon discharge, to help them feel more comfortable.

As a social worker, I can help deal with things such as care and support, finance, and lasting power of attorney queries. Things which can be quite overwhelming for a patient and their family if they've never had to deal with that type of thing before.

Sometimes patients think they need to understand everything. They don't. We're here to help answer any questions they might have.

*We do often have difficult conversations, it's part and parcel of the job, but we always take the time to listen and offer support. **Our team make sure to listen to your wishes and are on hand with information to help you make informed choices and decisions about things which matter to you.***

People are often surprised that we are based at the Hospice. Our office is just upstairs above the In-Patient Unit. Being on-site means we can offer timely, compassionate, and personalised care. It's lovely to get to know the people who access our services.

We see the person outside of their diagnosis, because they are so much more than their illness.

We recently helped reconnect a patient with their family members and were able to organise for them to be moved to a care

home nearer to where they used to live, where they had an established network of friends and family. Helping patients make those social connections and support networks is so important.

***One of the best things about my job is being able to get someone back home after they thought they might never be able to.** I was surprised when I started work at the Hospice to learn that many people who come into our In-Patient Unit are able to go home after they have received Hospice care.*

*We work closely with the whole clinical team here at the Hospice - **our doctors, nurses, healthcare assistants, pharmacists, physiotherapists and occupational therapists,** to provide the very best care. We're all cogs in a wheel, working together for the patient and their family."*

Sam Williamson – Family Support Worker

*"I joined the team here in 2022. I knew of the Hospice's good reputation and colleagues and friends spoke so highly of it. **It's such a special place to work.** Part of my role as a Family Support Worker is getting to know the people we care for. Sometimes it's just having a general chat, a chance to ask how they are and to take the focus away from their illness for a little while. A simple catch up can help us to see where we can help.*

*There is often so much pain and disruption when someone is diagnosed with a life-limiting illness, it's nice to be able to say **'let's just chat for a bit'** and **'you can be yourself for a little while'** away from all of the medical things going on.*

It's all about giving the patient back some control,** a lot of their illness might be out of their control, **so it's important we try to empower them where we can.

*Sometimes people just need a bit of reassurance that **their feelings are totally valid.***

Recently, we spent an hour sitting and chatting with a patient before they were going to be discharged and moved to a care home. They let us know they had a 'really good hour' with us, which eased their nerves.



Sam and Aislinn in our In Memory Garden

No two days are the same, but we always start with a morning handover with both of our clinical teams, one for our Living Well Centre and then for our In-Patient Unit. Handovers are important to see what's been going on overnight, if we have any new admissions, what groups will be taking place in our Living Well Centre and if there's anything else we need to know. We'll then go and chat to patients. They might need support with financial worries or have questions about their care and what will happen as their health journey progresses.

Our job is to look after the patient but to also think about their family. Often the people caring for their loved ones don't label themselves as 'carers', they see themselves as 'just' the husband or wife, or child, but they need support too.

*We had one carer who told us **they had been able to go home and have a full night's sleep for the first time in weeks** after chatting with us, because they had had time to talk things through and knew their family member was being looked after at the Hospice.*

Another said they didn't think their loved one would ever get outside again but we were able to get them out in a wheelchair to enjoy our beautiful Hospice gardens.

We make sure to see who our patients are as people. It makes me proud to know I have been a part of someone's care journey and helped them to get the care they need, at a time and place which is right for them.

Aislinn and I work together to try to make sure we help a patient have a support system in place of people to fight their corner, and we're always fighting their corner too."

Your support allows our team of caring colleagues like Aislinn and Sam to continue to be there to care.

Dedicate a Sunflower to Someone Special



Sunflowers welcome in the summer, and our annual Sunflower Memories Appeal is a beautiful way of celebrating happy memories.

The gardens of our Hospice will once again be host to the bright and cheery display featuring hundreds of dedications. Each imitation sunflower will be planted in the Hospice gardens alongside a plaque with your loved ones name. The sunflowers will be on display from 1st-30th June after which they are available to take home. We hope that all who choose to donate to the appeal will be able to come and visit the display. We will also be creating an online sunflower garden where you can view all the dedications.

We share some words from Laura Tregoning, about why she supports the Sunflower Appeal every year, in memory of her husband Steve:

"I want to say thank you, even in a small way, for the care and support we both had during Steve's final weeks.

He loved to be outdoors and, in the garden, where he grew sunflowers from bird seed. So, a sunflower in your garden seemed a perfect memorial, particularly as I don't have a physical grave to go to without a boat trip, as Steve was buried at sea.

It is lovely to see the 'sea of yellow' each year and it reminds me that however low you feel, you are not alone in feeling loss and in your grief journey.

I take the flowers home each year and keep them in a vase with some silk wild flowers. I have the occasional tear when I look at them but mainly smile because their sunny faces help me remember all the joy we shared."

To dedicate a sunflower, simply complete and return the enclosed form or call 0191 386 1170 option 5.

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Love Running?

Durham City Run

Join #TeamStCuthberts and take part in the Durham City Run on Friday 14th July 2023. Spend a summer's evening racing around our historic city following a 5K or 10K route. This year we have charity places available with the chance to 'run for free' (gaining free entry to the race) when you pledge to raise £100 for the Hospice.

Great North Run

Up for a tougher challenge? We have charity places available for the world's best half marathon, the Great North Run, on Sunday 10th September 2023 **for only £30** when you pledge to raise £350 for the Hospice!

St Cuthbert's Champions

Lace up your trainers and come for a run!

Join our free running club, St Cuthbert's Champions. We meet **each Monday evening at 5:30pm** in the Hospice Car Park. Open to all abilities, we're a fun and friendly group of Hospice staff, volunteers and members of our local community. Our next couch to 5K course starts this spring and we'd love it if you could join us.



Contact The Community and Events Team to secure your charity place now! For more information call 0191 386 1170 option 5 or email fundraising@stcuthbertshospice.com

Catching up with our Craft Group

In a flurry of glitter, wool, paint and pencils, we spent an afternoon with guests in our Living Well Centre chatting about how our care makes a difference.

On Thursday afternoons the Sycamore Room is filled with laughter and chatter. From decoupage to making pom poms, sequin art to drawing and painting, our guests enjoy creating art together for a couple of hours each week.

Volunteer and self-confessed craft lover Janette helped our team re-start the group after the pandemic:

*"We started back up in 2022 after covid with only two guests, but now the group has grown and grown, and we have ten people attend each week. The Hospice cared for my mum and **this is my way of giving back, volunteering and this group have really helped heal my grief.**"*

I absolutely love it. Everyone gets involved and gives it a go, no matter their ability. We always have a good laugh and we get on so well.

The Hospice's Meadowfield Furniture Outlet often give us items for the group and my husband prepares things at home for us to decorate such as picture frames and wooden ornaments.

We'll decorate anything we can get our hands on!"

Norma, one of our guests is busy making pom poms in this week's session:

*"I'm housebound, so I am so pleased when I am able to come to the group – as I'm leaving the session I always say **roll on next Thursday!**"*

It does me so much good to be here.

I would say to anyone, don't hesitate to go, the staff are wonderful here."

She shows us the decoupage brooches she's wearing today which her friend Susan, a fellow guest, made for her at a previous session. Susan laughs, **"We're all pom pom daft, we love making them! I love every bit of the group."**

Deb tells us, *"I can relax when I'm here. **You can lose yourself in what you are doing and forget about everything else.** Everyone always has a go and it's nice to do something like this."*

Elaine praises the friendly, helpful, staff and volunteers and tells us it's great to meet new people. *"If I wasn't here I'd just be at home feeling sorry for myself, the group really isn't long enough. I could stay for hours!"*



James and Claire

Barbara agrees, **"everyone is so caring and friendly."**

Surrounded by art supplies, James tells us:

"I initially came to the Hospice for Reiki and counselling. I got chatting to Ann-Marie one of the Hospice team about my love of art and crafting and brought in one of my art scrapbooks to show her. That's when she suggested I join the craft group on a Thursday. I enjoy coming to the group and seeing what everyone else is up to."

Volunteer Claire echoes the group's sentiments: **"I really would like to let people know how much this group helps and how much it matters."**

If you would like more information about The Living Well Centre, please contact us on 0191 386 1170 option 3.



Maureen and Rita

You'd think they'd been friends their whole lives, but Rita and Maureen didn't actually meet until they both started volunteering for St Cuthbert's Hospice 15 years ago.

Maureen had been visiting a friend who was receiving Hospice care. *"I had retired from my career as a neonatal nurse and*

Meet Our Volunteers Rita and Maureen

wanted to do something useful with my spare time. During my visits I'd noticed that the Hospice was setting up a new coffee shop and thought that would be a perfect opportunity to get involved with volunteering."

Around the same time, Rita had picked up a leaflet advertising the Midnight Walk for the Hospice and decided to take part. *"I loved the idea of taking part in fundraising for the Hospice. Although I had no personal connection, I was aware of the great work the Hospice does for members of our community. I then decided that I wanted to do more for St Cuthbert's so applied to become a volunteer.*

I spent my first week at the coffee shop where I met Maureen and the rest is history.

We've been here ever since and always help

out with Hospice events together. It's great having a catch up with a good friend and helping the Hospice at the same time. We meet new people and spend time chatting to our Living Well Centre guests while they enjoy tea and a scone in the coffee shop.

If you have spare time, we'd definitely recommend joining our team. I also volunteer at the Houghton-le-Spring shop a few hours a week so feel free to pop in and have a chat about charity shop volunteering."

We'd be lost without Rita, Maureen and the rest of our incredible volunteers.

If you'd like to find out more about our volunteering opportunities, please visit www.stcuthbertshospice.com/volunteer or call our Volunteer Coordinator on 0191 374 6169.

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