

# insight

St Cuthbert's Hospice



Autumn/Winter 2024

*Making every day count since 1988*

## Meet Our Therapy Team



*"It doesn't feel like a sad place.  
It feels alive. A happy, calm place."*

- Lynne

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# Welcome

By Chief Executive  
**Paul Marriott**



Hospice care will likely be on the political agenda in the coming months, in debates relating to the funding crisis, rising costs and an increased need for hospice care.

There may also be discussions around whether or not to legalise assisted dying, following an initial debate in the House of Lords in July 2024.

There are strongly held views both for and against assisted dying and different proposals for what should or should not be allowed.

A common theme on both sides of the debate is that there is a need for good palliative care for people with life-limiting illnesses.

Insight magazine aims to give you, our supporters, a window into the world of palliative care, how we support people to live well and what good end-of-life care looks like.

A key feature of good palliative care, as well as the medical and clinical input, is the knowledge that we embark on the final stage of our journey surrounded and valued by a supportive community. Your support demonstrates that we are a compassionate community, willing to go the extra mile to enable a good life, and a good death. That's what makes St Cuthbert's Hospice so special.

*Thank you*

## A message from our magazine sponsor

“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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**All things Christmas!** To start the festive season, we're delighted to let you know that our Christmas Fair will be at the fantastic new venue of New College Durham on Saturday 23rd November.

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# “A Hospice isn’t what we all think it is. It’s more.”

When we met Lynne to speak to her about sharing her story, it was the first day of a new month. This meant she’d just posted a reminder on her Facebook page to tell her friends to check their breasts. Something she’s started doing since her diagnosis of breast cancer in November 2023.



## Lynne shared with us:

“My breast cancer wasn’t the typical lumps and bumps that people often expect. It was far more subtle. A ‘dimpling’ followed by a feeling of change. It’s so important to check yourself and be aware of changes. **And not just lumps - I never felt a lump, and my nurses and doctors couldn’t either!**”

“Once it was discovered, my treatment was fast, which is what you would want it to be. I had a double mastectomy and lymph node clearance followed by chemo. I feel blessed to have the wonderful NHS that we have. I found very quickly that my recovery wasn’t just physical, but also my mental and emotional wellbeing needed to be considered. The team at **Macmillan** helped with support like getting a wig, welfare rights and finances. I was able to access some alternative therapies, though the sessions were limited to just three. I knew I needed more support for my wellbeing. I’d looked at massage therapy locally and everywhere said they weren’t cancer trained. It was **Joining The Dots** who put me in touch with St Cuthbert’s, in fact they did the referral to The Living Well Centre for me and the next thing I knew I had a phone call and an invite to come in. The massages I’ve had with Julie have been a fantastic experience and helped me to relax.”

Lynne has two children, age 17 and 19. “Having older teenagers is good in some ways and not in others. When they’re older, they worry more. You’re unable to

shelter them as much. They can Google things. They don’t have the life experience to know that even when things are tough you can get through them. I did have to explain openly about me coming to the Hospice and it not just being a place for people to go to die, or that you only go when you are very unwell. I was surprised myself, finding out that it was somewhere for people like me.”

“I have a choice about how I respond to this cancer. I can choose to be bitter and angry and sink under the weight of this. Or, that life is full of ups and downs, it is a rollercoaster and we all have things thrown at us. I can choose to react with grace and positivity. It’s important for me to show my children, not just to talk to them about, how we deal with life’s challenges. To show them that we do have a choice and we can choose to smile and find the light and joy. Seek out laughter in a horrible situation. **We can find the good parts.** It’s important to me, for my wellness to be as positive as possible. I’ve been dealt this horrible hand, but I feel so supported on this journey not just by friends and family and people who love me, but by organisations such as St Cuthbert’s.”

“From the first moment that I walked in it just hit me how much of a relaxing and welcoming environment it is. **It doesn’t feel like a sad place. It feels alive.** A

happy, calm place. I thought it would feel more like a hospital. I expected everyone to be talking in whispers and it’s not like that at all. You can come and have fun and smile. It’s not doom and gloom.”

“I love the title ‘Living Well’, it’s about living. Even if your diagnosis is terminal, it’s about living. I’ve got primary breast cancer and I fully intend to do everything I can to rid my body of cancer. The NHS are doing all they can with the different treatments I’ve had, and am still having, so I can live the rest of my life well. It’s been surprising for me to learn that you can live well with a serious health condition and make the most of everything. There are so many inspirational stories out there of people living with long-term health conditions and a place like St Cuthbert’s Hospice helps you to live.”

“I knew I wanted to keep coming back, and at some point to give something back as well. **I know if people hadn’t donated, volunteered or supported in some way that this care wouldn’t be available to me.** If I can help people to see what St Cuthbert’s Hospice does and help people to access the care on offer, then that’s brilliant. To also help to fundraise to help someone else would be wonderful too. Once my support needs aren’t so high, I want to do something to keep coming and volunteer to be involved because it’s such a lovely place.”





## Trustees are vital volunteers. Could you join the team?

Our Trustees have collective responsibility for making sure that the Hospice retains a clear sense of purpose – it is the Trustees who establish our mission, vision and values. They also set out the future direction of the Hospice, which they do by producing our Strategic Plan. They hold the management team to account for delivering the Strategic Plan, and support staff and volunteers to do so by making sure they have the resources they need. Trustees are responsible for communicating how the organisation is doing by producing an annual report and a quality account. They meet as a Board four times per year and every Trustee

is a member of one of the Board Sub-Committees, which also meet four times per year.

We're looking for new Trustees. We are particularly interested in finding people who will add new skills and experience to the Board. We would like to recruit Trustees who have the following areas of knowledge or experience:

- Clinical services (such as a doctor, nurse or allied health professional)
- Fundraising
- Environmental sustainability
- Commissioning of health and social care services

- Retail management
- Managing volunteers
- Lived experience of using Hospice services
- Digital transformation

**If you would be interested in joining the Board, please contact [volunteers@stcuthbertshospice.com](mailto:volunteers@stcuthbertshospice.com) or call 0191 374 6169 and ask to speak to our Chief Executive.**



**Our Christmas Cards and Calendars** are now on sale in all of our shops and online. Visit our website - [www.stcuthbertshospice.com](http://www.stcuthbertshospice.com)



## Light up a Life this Christmas

Christmas is a time for reflection and cherishing the special memories we've shared with our loved ones.

Our annual Light up a Life Service provides a beautiful opportunity for anyone in our community to come together, whether they have a connection to the Hospice or not, to honour and celebrate the lives of those we love and miss.

This year's service will be held on **Sunday 15th December at 7pm**. By donating to the Hospice through Light up a Life, the name of your loved one will be included in our books of remembrance which will be dedicated at the service. You will also receive a personalised remembrance

card and a special keepsake. The names of all those remembered will also be added to a digital candles page on our website.

Whether you're attending our Light up a Life service for the first time, or if you have remembered a friend or family member with us before, we are so very grateful. By making a dedication you are helping us to continue to make every day count for all families in our care.

**To make a dedication in memory of someone special, visit our website [bit.ly/StCuthLUAL](http://bit.ly/StCuthLUAL)**

*"I have attended Light up a Life for many years now, it's become a sort of tradition for me and my family. It's a lovely way, especially at Christmas time, to remember loved ones that were cared for at the Hospice. Lighting a candle at the end of the service and seeing our loved ones name in the book, gives a moment of calm in a busy festive season."*  
Family member comment.



Light up  
2024  
a Life



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# Meet our Therapy Team

We chatted with **Jenny** (Physiotherapist), **Emily** (Occupational Therapist) and **Beth** (Rehabilitation Assistant) about their roles at the Hospice.

The team's focus is on Palliative Rehabilitation, an approach which encourages and empowers people with a life-limiting illness to actively manage their condition, live as fully as they can and enjoy the best quality of life possible.



Jenny, Beth and Emily sitting in our In Memory Garden.

## Jenny tells us:

"When I was training, I was inspired by a Palliative Physiotherapist and whilst I've done other physiotherapy roles, I always promised myself I'd eventually specialise in palliative physiotherapy."

"People may not know that as the therapy team, Beth, Emily and I work across both areas of the Hospice, supporting patients in our In-Patient Unit and guests in our Living Well Centre."

"In my role, I help patients with their movement, mobility, safety and making sure they can achieve their goals, whatever they may be. A lot of this might be **helping increase someone's confidence**, for example, to go out into their back garden or go shopping."

"A lovely example recently has been a Living Well Centre guest who has gained more confidence to move safely, and they're now planning on catching a flight to visit their family abroad."

"Beth joined the Hospice as our Rehabilitation Assistant (a new role within the team), earlier this year. She has increased the capacity of the therapy team to be able to provide more - all those little extras. She supports both myself and Emily, and is working towards delivering her own sessions such as **bed exercises, chair exercises, and supporting Cognitive Stimulation Therapy** sessions for people with mild to moderate dementia."

**Beth adds:** "This is my first role in health care and I've gained so many skills already. As a team, we support

people as their conditions change. **It's so rewarding getting to help others and knowing we have made a difference.** The groups provide a space to encourage conversations and build people's confidence."

## Emily reflects:

"I've been an Occupational Therapist for four years. I joined the Hospice earlier this year and it's been lovely to have the balance and variety of working across both the In-Patient Unit and Living Well Centre. It's a beautiful environment and so rewarding. **The best thing about the role is getting to know our guests and patients.**"



The team run group sessions in our Living Well Centre, including Seated Exercise, Health and Wellbeing, Strength and Balance, Wellness Wednesdays and Gardening. Emily shares: "All of the groups are therapy-led, so they each have a focus and we know what we want to achieve."

"I'm not very green-fingered!" she laughs, "However, the gardening group has been so much fun and I've learnt a lot. We've created hanging baskets, and been doing all the mucky jobs!"

"The Health and Wellbeing group rotates with the Gardening group. In time we have plans to develop a 'FAB' session (fatigue, anxiety and breathlessness)."

"Therapeutic groups are a gentle way to welcome people to the Hospice and see what it's all about."

The team speak about how rewarding their roles are, and how important it is for them, to get to know and care for those who use our services.

"It's great being part of a multi-disciplinary team, all working together to meet the needs of the patient and provide holistic care. The way people are cared for here is different," Jenny summarises.

We chat more about the rewarding elements of their roles and talk turns to the hardest parts of Hospice life.

Emily says: "It's always difficult when you create such close connections with patients and then find out their health may have deteriorated, or they've sadly passed away."

Jenny reflects: "**We know that following a diagnosis, we can't change the outcome, but what we can do is make sure that someone's quality of life, between now and then, is the best it can be.**"

## Family member comment:

**"He thinks the world of you all. His life has improved tremendously and can now walk without support of a walking stick and hold conversations with people. Thank you for your outstanding dedication and care."**



# EVENTS DIARY

## Christmas Fair

**Saturday 23rd November 2024**  
**New College Durham 11am – 4pm**  
 Entry by donation.  
 Visit Santa - £5.  
 Free parking.



## Christmas Jumper Day

Put on your favourite festive jumper and raise funds for us on **Friday 6th December** or choose a date which best suits you.

## Light Up A Life

Our remembrance service returns to Durham Cathedral on **Sunday 15th December at 7pm**. No tickets needed.

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## Reindeer Run

Reindeer Run is a sponsored walk, run or skip for schools, nurseries and groups. You choose the date, distance and route. Each child receives a pair of free Reindeer antlers to make it more fun!

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## Christmas Tree Recycling

For a suggested donation of £12, we will collect your real Christmas tree. Collections will begin on **Monday 13th January 2025 across postcodes DH1 – DH8**. Kindly sponsored by MGL Group and with thanks to:



## Strictly St Cuthbert's

Don your dancing shoes and learn to dance! 10 weeks of dance lessons will take place from January – March 2025, with a grand Strictly Come Dancing style finale on **Saturday 22nd March 2025**. With thanks to Applegarth Academy of Dance and Dudman Academy of Performing Arts & Fitness.



To find out more visit [www.stcuthbertshospice.com](http://www.stcuthbertshospice.com) or contact us on **0191 386 1170** or email [fundraising@stcuthbertshospice.com](mailto:fundraising@stcuthbertshospice.com)

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