

HOSPICE & GARDEN HISTORY

Visitors often ask us the history of our building and gardens, and when St Cuthbert's Hospice first started providing care. We hope this document helps to answer some of the common questions we get asked, as well as sharing some of milestone moments throughout the years.

1839

Elvet Moor Cottage was owned by Ann Maria Greenwell, and sub-let to Anwick Smith of Langley Grove, later known as Elvet Cottage in 1843.



1851

The house was occupied by John & Georgina Smith, their family and three servants. John was the son of Anwick Smith. The family's association ended in 1853.

1861

The building was occupied by William & Mary Robson, their five daughters and two servants. The Robson's had a thriving upholstery and cabinet making business in Durham City.



1881

Census shows that the building had been renamed to **Park House**, and a number of structural changes had taken place. The property was by now occupied by Charles and Teresa Bell.

1968

Park House was used as the studios for Radio Durham, one of the first BBC local radio stations. Sunderland born journalist Kate Adie began her career at Radio Durham. It was one of the only stations to cover a county rather than a city. Transmissions were ceased in 1972.



1982

12th December

The first steering group meeting, organised by local residents, took place to establish a hospice in Durham. The local community set about fundraising to make it possible.

1987

28th December

Following the £150,000 purchase from Durham County Council Park House, was registered as a company under the name of St Cuthbert's Hospice.

1988

28th January

On 28th January St Cuthbert's Hospice was registered as a charity. It officially opened its doors as a day hospice on 22nd September. Initially providing care services just two days per week. A 'Sister's Report' recorded a 'quiet start' that day, but noted that by the 28th four guests were already attending regularly.

1992

We opened our very first charity shop to help raise much needed income for the Hospice.

Volunteers remain a vital part of our charity shops, helping to sort donations, price items, create window displays and serve customers on the till.



1999

A successful bid to the National Lottery Charities Board enabled the extension of Park House to provide more staff offices and treatment rooms.



2006

The Hospice opened a £3.2m In-Patient Unit to provide specialised care 24 hours, seven days per week. Thirteen individual en-suite bedrooms were created, of which eight were open immediately for service.

2007

The Countess of Wessex, Sophie, officially opened the new In-Patient Unit and a patients' garden. The Countess was given a tour of the Hospice, during which she met staff and patients, and witnessed the dedication of the garden.

2008

The Hospice opened 'Park House Café', now just known as the coffee shop. Staffed entirely by volunteers, it has flourished, and continues to welcome all visitors.

It is open from 10.00am to 4.00pm every weekday.



2009

The Victorian style greenhouse was built in the Hospice grounds, allowing our gardening volunteers to grow a selection of our own plants. The gardens are open to the public Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays 11am-3pm. The greenhouse is sometimes used for therapy sessions for guests of the Living Well Centre.



2010- 2012

Grants from charitable trusts and local donations enabled us to begin a two year project to landscape the Hospice's grounds. The changes included private patio spaces for each bedroom, ramps and walkways into the gardens allowing patients to explore the gardens, whether on foot, in a wheelchair or in their bed.

The Gloria Hunniford Garden was replanted in our grounds after being shown at BBC Gardeners' World Live, where it received a silver-gilt award. It was reconfigured to into a 'three-roomed' garden which houses seating areas for visitors, staff and volunteers to sit and enjoy a quiet moment outdoors.

2012

The Hospice opened its dedicated Children's Bereavement Suite to support children and young people experiencing grief. Today our Jigsaw service provides counselling for children and young people who have experienced grief, loss and bereavement. This may be because of life-limiting illnesses and palliative care, or unexpected or sudden death.

2014

St Cuthbert's became the first hospice in the UK to appoint a specialist dementia Admiral Nurse to raise awareness of this life-limiting illness and help people in the community identify dementia and access help. Today our dementia services also include Namaste Care which aims to promote improved quality of life for people in the later stages of dementia.

2015

St Cuthbert's was the first hospice in the UK to be awarded 'Outstanding' status by the Care Quality Commission.

'Everything in Place' was launched in 2015. This community initiative aims to break the taboos that surround death and dying and encourage people to talk about physical, emotional and spiritual aspects of death. Practical issues like care plans, power of attorney and wills are also covered. The project is delivered as an online or face-to-face course.

2016

The Bridge Project - a generous legacy donation, further grants and local donations financed the vital addition of extra day care therapy rooms, an extended Hospice entrance, reception, Café refurbishment and additional office space. The project bridged the Hospice's past, present and future.

2017

The newly designed Living Well Centre opened early in 2017. Designed to enable more adults than before to access day care at the right time for them, and to benefit from a greater variety of tailored treatments and activities to help them enjoy a better quality of life. Care is free of charge thanks to people in our community making kind donations to our charity. The most up-to-date therapies and groups are listed on our website.



2018

Celebrating 30 years - Three decades on and the Hospice has grown from strength to strength. Our community was so vital in helping to set up the Hospice and we remain incredibly grateful for their continued support and generosity.

The appointment of our first Palliative Care Consultant confirmed our status as a specialist palliative care unit able to support patients with complex needs.



2020

The Win Win Lottery was launched to help create an additional sustainable regular income allowing us to better plan our future. The Lottery also means we can give back to our community with the chance for players to win a prize by becoming a member.



2020

Caring during a pandemic. We faced one of the most difficult times in our history. But with the support of people and businesses in our community, we were able to continue caring and weather the storm.



2022

A National Lottery Community Fund grant helped us to create the community outreach project. This is an extension of our Hospice services into the community of Chester-le-Street. Providing space for people to come together, share their experiences and access support.

2023

Prince Bishops Charity Shop opens. Initially a temporary 'Pop Up Shop' the store remains open today, and has fast become a must visit venue for bargain hunters hoping to pick up a designer item for less. We now have nine charity shops, including a Furniture Outlet in Meadowfield.



2025

We were generously gifted the Hospice UK Garden of Compassion after it was shown at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show. The garden celebrates the important role of hospice gardens in end-of-life care. Created by award-winning designer Tom Hoblyn the garden was awarded a Silver Gilt medal. The garden was fully funded by Project Giving Back, a charity that funds 'gardens for good causes' at Chelsea.



The Future

St Cuthbert's is a registered charity. Although we receive a small proportion of funding from the government, we must fundraise over £2 million each year to keep our care free of charge for all who need us.

If you would like to be part of St Cuthbert's future, there are a number of ways you can kindly support us and help us to keep caring for the local Durham community.



Volunteer

People choose to volunteer for a variety of reasons. For some it offers the chance to **give something back** to the community or make a difference to the people around them. For others it provides an opportunity to develop new skills or build on existing experience and knowledge.

We are always glad to hear from people interested in joining the now 400 plus volunteer team.

Fundraise

When you fundraise for us you will be helping to provide **compassionate care** and support to people in County Durham with life-limiting illnesses.

From sponsored walks to ultra-marathons; bake sales to golf days; coffee mornings to a car boot sales. Whatever you choose to do we'll be cheering you on every step of the way.

Donate

However much you can spare, every penny really will make a difference to someone's life in your community.

We want to help make every day count, and with your help we can.

Scan to donate:



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