



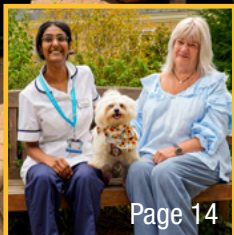
Expanding wellbeing
and outreach for our
community



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Welcome to the latest news and updates from St Leonard's Hospice.

In this edition you'll find a range of stories and articles, from writing your Will for free to experiences from people we've supported.

Everything you'll read here has been made possible by the generosity and dedication of you, our community of donors, fundraisers, shoppers, volunteers and staff. It's this shared support that enables us to continue our work.

Across York and the wider area, our community provides around 75% of the funds we need each year to care for local patients, families and carers. Many supporters know the difference hospice care makes, but some are surprised by how much we rely on public generosity. That's why we're proud to be part of Hospice UK's national campaign for fairer funding. On page 22 you'll find details of how you can get involved.

Thank you for being part of our community. I hope you enjoy this newsletter and seeing the difference your kindness and support continues to make.

With very best wishes,



Emma Johnson
Emma Johnson
Chief Executive



The RHS silver award-winning Symbiotic Flow garden, kindly donated to St Leonard's by designers Deb Strachan and Alison Walker, now enhances our grounds for the benefit of all who use them.

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Expanding wellbeing and outreach for our community

Over the past year, we've seen more people than ever turning to our Wellbeing and Outreach services for support. The number of people accessing this part of our care has risen by 62% this year, showing just how vital these services are for our community.

A safe space to talk

Every Thursday, our Sunflower Wellbeing Hub offers a welcoming space where people living with a life-limiting illness can come together, share experiences, and have open conversations with our staff about planning for their future and care.

These sessions have become an important part of life for many, providing support and a sense of being part of a community.

Support tailored to different needs

Alongside the Hub, we now host specialist groups to meet a wider range of needs, including:

- A twice-monthly Motor Neurone Disease (MND) Social in partnership with the MND Association York Group.
- A monthly Heart Failure Social.

- The Breathing Space, a new group and the only one of its kind in York, for people with a life-limiting lung condition such as pulmonary fibrosis, COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease), emphysema or lung cancer.

Family members and carers are welcome to join all these groups, recognising how important shared support is for people caring for someone close.

Growing our team

To help us expand and meet this growing demand, our team has welcomed two new Wellbeing Coordinators, Lucy and Heather. They'll be working closely with community partners to ensure that everyone who needs our care knows how to access it, regardless of their diagnosis or background.

This expansion is only possible because of the generosity of our community. As patient numbers grow, so too do our running costs, and it takes nearly £10.5 million each year to deliver all our care. Together, we are making sure that people living with a life-limiting illness in our area have the right care and support, at every stage of their journey.

Heather and Lucy, our new Wellbeing Coordinators, looking at our Memory Tree.



Sunflower Wellbeing Hub

Jan has been coming to the Sunflower Wellbeing Hub at St Leonard's Hospice with her husband, John, for a number of years.

Here, she shares how the Hub has become a lifeline for them both.

“John has Parkinson’s disease and dementia, and we first came to the Hospice for an open day a few years ago. We had a tour of the facilities and met the team, and I remember thinking that everyone was incredibly friendly and welcoming.

“It was an emotional day for John, and that’s when we first heard about the Sunflower Wellbeing Hub. We were encouraged to come along to the weekly drop-in, and I’m so glad we did.

“We didn’t know what it would be like initially, but as soon as we walked in, we were greeted with a smile. We met others who understood our circumstances, and knew what it was like living with a life-limiting illness. We felt accepted, never judged, and the Hub has become our comfort blanket over the years.”

Jan recalls a particular fond memory from one of the drop-in sessions last year, when Goldream, a racehorse, and Poppy, a therapy pony, visited the Hospice.

“John used to be a doctor in Lesotho, Southern Africa, in the ‘50s. During his time there, he travelled everywhere on foot or horseback.

“When he saw the horses at St Leonard’s, Goldream touched him gently on the shoulder. Their visit brought John to life. I hadn’t seen him animated like this in a long time or move so well. It was remarkable.

“John feels so connected to St Leonard’s, and he would like to die at the Hospice when the time comes. It’s such a tranquil place.

“We could not do without the support of the Hospice, and we’re so thankful that we have this space to come each week.”



“Those at the Hospice offer support where they feel we could benefit, but they’re not pushy at all. They go the extra mile every time and we can tell they really do care. We’ve met others who understand our circumstances and know what it’s like living with a life-limiting illness.”
Jan and John

Kindness that lasts beyond the Hospice



Sharon and Christine on our In-Patient Unit

When Christine came to the Hospice for just under two weeks, she wasn't sure what to expect. What she discovered was kindness that stayed with her long after she returned home.

She shared these reflections on her time at St Leonard's:

"I was in the Hospice for just under two weeks. It wasn't something I had ever thought of, but it turned out to be a wonderful experience and I was grateful to be there.

"The staff were so very kind, willing and lovely. They would go out of their way. One of the therapists even did

my nails, she cut them, filed them and painted them a soft pale pink, which I still have on now I'm home.

"People could visit me when they wanted, rather than at a certain time, and the staff were good at keeping in touch with my daughter and husband to let them know how things were. Coming back home was all really smooth, and I was grateful for that too.

"If there's one thing I wish people knew about the Hospice, it's that it isn't a place to be fearful of. Embrace it, take it on board. I miss all the staff there, they were wonderful."

Meet Gil and Theodora

Gil Boyd, who lives with MND, and his wife Theodora recently moved to York and have found our MND social drop-in invaluable as a supportive community.

Gil said:

"I've made lots of good friends here, all with MND, which has made my life easier. I've also had some complementary therapy sessions here, which were lovely."

Theodora said:

"As a carer, when I first thought about going to the Hospice for the MND social, I was really apprehensive about being there. It made me start thinking ahead of what might happen to Gil. But when I got there, I was made to feel totally at ease. Being here enables you to have a social life with people who understand, because when you have a lot going on with MND, you don't feel you have the energy to explore new things. But I feel supported there."



The MND social drop-in

A lasting gift: Margaret's legacy lives on

Margaret Wroe, from Sherburn in Elmet, made a lasting decision in the final months of her life by choosing to donate her corneas so others might see.

Margaret had been living with pancreatic cancer, a diagnosis she received two years earlier. She found out about corneal donation whilst receiving care in our In-Patient Unit, where patients can explore donation as part of their advance care planning. After learning that corneas could be donated even by those with certain cancers, she decided to go ahead.

"I just live every day as it comes because I can't change what is going to happen. I just live with it," she said. "It's the best feeling in the world to know that I can do this and give my sight to someone else to see. I will have left a legacy."

Just before her death in May this year, Margaret reminded one of the nurses: "Don't forget my eyes."

Her husband of 47 years, Geoff, said knowing her decision had helped others has brought comfort.

"It's something to live on through someone else so it doesn't seem we have lost everything of her. She wasn't able to donate other organs because

of her cancer, but she could donate her corneas. I'm pleased she was able to do it and that it's now successfully helped two ladies, both in their 70s. It's a comfort to know that her decision has helped others."

About corneal donation

Corneal donation can be an option for many people, even when organ donation isn't. The cornea is the clear outer layer at the front of the eye, and transplants can help restore or improve sight for someone with a serious eye condition or injury.

Nicola Fenton, an advanced clinical practitioner at the Hospice, explained:

"There's a real shortage of donors, and giving the gift of sight to someone else can be amazing. Many people assume they can't donate because of their age, eyesight, or medical history, but that's often not the case.

"That's why we're working closely with NHS Blood and Transplant to help more patients think about this as part of their care planning.

"We are the leading hospice in the north of England to identify patients and have conversations to inform them about this option. Our St Leonard's staff are proud to have embraced this change and to support patients in their decisions."



Last year, more than 376 people in Yorkshire and the Northeast had their sight restored through corneal transplants.

The volunteers who make everything possible

At St Leonard's we couldn't do what we do without our incredible group of 450 volunteers. From welcoming faces in our shops to those working behind the scenes or driving patients to and from the Hospice, every one plays a vital part in ensuring we can support patients and families when they need us most.



Anu

For many people, volunteering with us is more than giving time, it's a way to feel at home in the community. Anu has been volunteering at our Fossgate shop in York and said:

"When I moved to the country earlier in the year, it was during the winter. The St Leonard's shop on my street played a big part in helping me settle in. I was able to get affordable items to keep warm, and the friendly staff welcomed

me in a way that made me feel at home. That sense of belonging meant a lot to me.

"So, when I saw the volunteer opportunity in the shop, I was eager to give back to the community that had given to me. Today, I'm proud and happy to be a volunteer at St Leonard's."

Sarah

Much of our volunteers' work happens behind the scenes, but it is absolutely essential to ensure our care teams can focus on what matters most, supporting patients and families.

Sarah, who supports our facilities team, shares her motivation for getting involved, and what it has meant to her:

"I was inspired to start volunteering because I wanted to give back to my community and experience the meaningful sense of achievement that comes from helping others. I've always wanted to work in the care sector, but life took me down



a different path. Volunteering with St Leonard's gives me the chance to experience that work while supporting others at various stages of their life journeys.

"You never know when you might need the help and support of the Hospice and its amazing staff. Even if you only have an hour to spare occasionally, please consider volunteering, it's really worthwhile."

David

David has joined us as a volunteer minibus driver, helping patients attend Hospice appointments and events that support their wellbeing. This service extends the reach of our care, offering vital opportunities to people who might otherwise struggle to attend in person.

For David, the role is deeply personal: "My wife, Victoria, died in the Hospice in March last year, and the care she was given there, and the home visits she had, made me



think about one day being a volunteer for St Leonard's. I know how much those trips home meant to Victoria, and when I saw the minibus drivers' role was available, I applied straight away.

"I know what having the opportunity to visit home for a short time meant to us, so I'd like to help give more patients that same experience. It meant so much to Victoria and I'll never forget it."

From our shops to behind-the-scenes roles and out on the road, volunteers play an essential part in everything we do. Their time and commitment ensure we can continue providing care and support, and we're grateful to each of them.

Supporting patients through therapies

We're delighted to welcome Harvinder to our team of physiotherapists and occupational therapists. This team plays a vital role in our In-Patient Unit, supporting patients to live as fully and comfortably as possible. They help people build strength, regain independence and achieve goals that are meaningful to them.

Harvinder shares what drew her to this role:

"After working within different specialties for many years, I found myself becoming very interested in oncology and palliative care. Hospices are wonderful places, they allow us to deliver high-quality care in a holistic way, addressing not only medical needs but also emotional and spiritual wellbeing. I'm drawn to this environment because it enables me to provide patient-centred care and make a positive difference to the lives of patients and their families."


One of her most memorable moments so far was when a patient, who loved music, played the piano beautifully in our Sanctuary area while his friend joined in on the double bass.

"Seeing the joy on his face as he did something he loved was incredibly special and will stay with me," she says.

On the impact of physiotherapy, Harvinder says that "Physio helps patients maintain a sense of independence and work towards their own goals, whether that's managing pain, staying mobile, or simply being able to do the things that matter most to them."

For Harvinder, being part of the St Leonard's Therapies team is a privilege:

"The morale of the whole team is inspiring. Whatever their role, everyone here is working towards one thing, supporting our patients."

A photograph of Harvinder, a physiotherapist, sitting on a wooden bench outdoors. She is wearing a white short-sleeved shirt with a blue lanyard and a name tag, and blue trousers. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. Next to her is a small, fluffy white dog named Fidget, wearing a colorful floral bandana. To the right of the dog is an older woman with short white hair, wearing a light blue long-sleeved top and blue trousers. She is also smiling and looking towards the camera. The background shows green foliage and a wooden fence.

Harvinder with therapy dog Fidget and her owner Chris. Our Therapies team work with partner charity Pets as Therapy, to give patients the opportunity to spend time with the therapy dogs during their stay.

Be one of 100 new volunteers this year

We are aiming to recruit more than 100 new volunteers to support our 14 charity shops this year, helping us raise £1 million in vital funds for patient care. Income from the shops already funds care for one in ten of our patients, but with demand for hospice services increasing, every new volunteer means we can provide more care.

Tim, who has been volunteering at our Pocklington shop since it opened nearly two years ago, shared his experience:

“My mum passed away with cancer more than 20 years ago, and I know how important hospice care is. I’m semi-retired and still work part-time, but volunteering is something I can fit around my job. It’s great for my mental health and I love meeting and chatting to new people.

“We’re a busy shop, people visit Pocklington from across the region and often pop in for a browse, especially in the summer. My favourite part of a shift is knowing the difference it makes. I help with whatever’s needed, from sorting and displaying donations

to serving customers. I love the variety and hands-on work.

“The team in the shop are amazing. They go out of their way to make shoppers feel welcome. It’s not like a traditional charity shop, it has more of a boutique feel but with charity shop prices. For me, it’s close to my heart. I know how much hospice care means to people, and also how much it costs to run hospice services which are provided free. Volunteering is my way of giving something back. I feel part of a family when I’m there.”

Our shops are currently supported by 350 dedicated volunteers, but we urgently need more, especially on Saturdays. With plans to modernise all of our shops in the next five years, and some already revamped, we hope more people will be inspired to get involved.

Jason Lomas, our Head of Retail, says:

“We’re ever grateful to the volunteers who support our shops across York and the surrounding areas. Their help is vital, and we simply couldn’t do what we do without them. Whether

it’s speaking to customers, sorting donations or working on the tills, every contribution makes a difference to the care we can provide when people need it most. We provide full training, and it’s a chance to join a friendly team while helping a local cause. With costs continuing to rise and only a small proportion of funding coming from the

NHS, every volunteer plays a vital role in helping us raise the funds needed to provide care, free of charge, to people across the region.”

If you’d like to find out more about volunteering in one of our shops, visit **stleonardshospice.org.uk/volunteering** or pop into your local shop to speak to the team.

Tim in our Pocklington shop



stleonardshospice.org.uk/volunteering





Celebrating 40 years with special thanksgiving services

In May, hundreds of people attended our 40th anniversary thanksgiving services at Selby Abbey and York Minster to celebrate the work of the Hospice and give thanks for the incredible support of our local communities.

Both services included music from The York Railway Institute Band, Jessa Liversidge, The Abbey Belles and The York Chapter House Choir, plus readings and stories from volunteers, supporters, patients and families.

Thank you to everyone who attended or helped make these such special services

People are at the heart of what we do

Paid roles

We have a variety of clinical and non-clinical roles at the main Hospice site and retail opportunities in our shops. We are proud to offer fantastic benefits for our incredible team. These include generous pay and annual leave entitlements, development opportunities and an attractive pension scheme, which are a few ways that we recognise the amazing work our staff do every day!



To see our current vacancies or find out more about what it's like to work at the Hospice, please scan this QR code.



Volunteer roles

We couldn't carry out the important work we do without our committed and talented team of volunteers: people of all ages, and from all walks of life who help us care, support and raise funds. There are so many reasons why you might love volunteering at St Leonard's, including:

- Having the feeling you have made a difference
- Supporting your mental health and wellbeing
- Meeting new people
- Gaining new skills and experiences

This year we're looking for 100 new retail volunteers, so there's never been a better time to get involved. To find out more about our volunteering opportunities and what it's like to volunteer at the Hospice, please scan this QR code.



This October is Make a Will Month

Making a Will is one of the most important things we will ever do in life; securing our finances, minimising taxes to be paid after death and ensuring our loved ones are properly considered after we are gone.

Yet recent data* shows 53% of adults aged 50-64 and 22% of those aged 65 and over do not have a Will. Dying without a valid Will can create stress and uncertainty for the family and friends left behind. It can also mean significant sums are lost to taxes, instead of being passed down to loved ones as the deceased person would have wished.

St Leonard's Hospice has served our community for 40 years, and we know the vital importance of having your financial affairs in order. That's why we encourage you to make or update a Will this October. Friendly, expert local solicitors will help you to create the Will that serves you and your loved ones best, and they will do so without charge.

All we ask is that you make a donation to St Leonard's as part of this promotion, 100% of which goes to support local hospice care.



Four simple steps to securing your new Will

- 1) Choose a participating solicitor and book an appointment for this October, making sure you mention St Leonard's Hospice's Make a Will Month. For the full list of solicitors available, please visit stleonardshospice.org.uk/MakeAWill or scan the QR code.
- 2) Get ready for your appointment. You'll need to create a list of your assets and the people you'd like to include. There's a comprehensive, free guide on our website.
- 3) Make your donation to St Leonard's Hospice. You can make your donation by post, online or over the phone by calling **01904 777 777**.
- 4) Go to your meeting and let the solicitor guide you through the process.



If you've got a question about Make a Will Month, please get in touch by calling the number above or emailing legacies@stleonardshospice.org.uk

Other ways to support us this year

The Accumulator Challenge

Assemble your team and see how much profit you can generate from £30 in just 30 days.

Elf Run

Taking place at York Designer Outlet on Sunday 23 November, get your elf hats at the ready for this fun, family-friendly event.

Festive fundraising

From selling mince pies and singing carols to organising raffles and donning festive knits, there are so many ways to fundraise for St Leonard's at this time of year.



For more information and to see all events, scan the QR code or visit stleonardshospice.org.uk/events

Hospice Care Week open session

This year, the theme for Hospice Care Week is "Hospice care is more than you think." As part of this, we're inviting anyone living with a life-limiting illness, along with their families and carers, to join us for a special open session.

When: **Thursday 9 October**
from 3.30pm to 5pm

Where: **St Leonard's Hospice Sunflower
Centre, Tadcaster Road, York**

This is a chance to:

- Hear about the wide range of services we provide.
- Meet our team and ask questions about how we can help you and your family.
- Discover how hospice care is more than you might expect, with support for patients and their family and carers.

If you know someone living with a life-limiting illness, or their family and carers, please pass this invitation on to them. Full details are on our website.



Write to your MP today

Join the national campaign for better hospice funding

On the wards, in the community, and in people's homes across the UK, hospices support people approaching the end of their lives, every single day.

Hospices provide nearly 1.4 million home visits each year, helping to keep people out of hospital. But these vital services are under threat.

The need for hospice care is rising, while costs are soaring and government funding is falling short. Without urgent action, services will shrink just when they're most needed, for patients, families and the NHS.

You can help. It takes just 30 seconds to write to your MP using the simple online form on the Hospice UK website. Enter your name, email and address, and a letter will automatically be sent to your MP asking for better funding for hospice care. You can also add your own words if you wish.

Scan the QR code to send your letter today.

Together, we can secure the future of hospice care.



Christmas cards on sale now



£4
10 cards
per pack

Get your cards by visiting one of our shops,
online* or by telephone*

stleonardshospice.org.uk 01904 788 777

* Postage costs apply to orders placed online and by phone. Details can be found on our website or by calling 01904 788 777.

Remember and celebrate your loved ones this Christmas

**Join us at one of our
remembrance services**

Easingwold Market Place

Thursday 27 November

St Leonard's Hospice

Sunday 30 November

Selby Abbey

Sunday 7 December

Pocklington, All Saints Church

Sunday 14 December

To find out more and to make a donation, please visit:

stleonardshospice.org.uk/LUAL

Light Up A Life



01904 708 553



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