HospiceMatters

AUTUMN/WINTER 2026 NEWS AND STORIES FROM ROWCROFT HOSPICE



A brighter place for care

INSIDE

A WEDDING THAT MEANT THE WORLD

BEHIND THE SCENES OF OUR APPEAL FILM

rowcrofthospice.org.uk

rowcroft hospice

Registered Charity No: 282723

Welcome

Welcome to the autumn/winter edition of *Hospice Matters* magazine, proudly sharing news and stories from Rowcroft Hospice.

It's a huge privilege to be writing to you in Hospice Matters. I'm delighted to introduce myself after joining Rowcroft Hospice in January as Director of Marketing and Fundraising, and I'd like to thank you for everything you do to support the hospice.



"We couldn't provide expert care for patients and those closest to them without you."

It's been inspiring to see your support in action in 2026. The Every Moment Matters Appeal raised an incredible £211,000 in just 36 hours. Our Big Tackle walk brought people together in record numbers, while The Sleep Walk was a wonderful summer solstice evening full of energy, joy and determination. I'm also grateful to our 6,282 lottery players, whose weekly support provides vital income for our frontline services. Find out more about an update to our charity lottery on page four.

Looking ahead, I'm excited about Rowcroft's 45th anniversary next May – a chance to celebrate all that has been achieved together over the past four and a half decades. **I would love to hear your memories, reflections and ideas as we approach this special milestone. If you would like to get in touch, please email catherine.cashmore@rowcrofthospice.org.uk.**

Catherine

Catherine Cashmore
Director of Marketing and Fundraising

Contents

Behind the scenes of our appeal film 3
Hospice news 4
Love, laughter and precious memories.. 6
News from our shops 8
Celebrating our volunteer stars 9
"It felt like visiting Mum at home" 10
Bringing calm and comfort 11
Introducing Kate 12
Rowcroft events calendar 14

Keep in touch

Search 'Rowcroft Hospice'

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Registered Charity No: 282723

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Behind the scenes of our Every Moment Matters film

When we launched our Every Moment Matters Appeal back in February, we wanted to share something at the heart of Rowcroft's care – how we support families to make the most of every moment when time together is short.

While hospice care is often seen through a clinical lens – focused on symptom control, pain relief and specialist nursing – it is also about creating space for love, connection and precious memories.

Our appeal film, created free of charge by Goya Productions, brought this to life through the story of a bride on her wedding day reading a letter from her late father, with memories of their life together woven throughout.

"We wanted to highlight that much of our care happens quietly and gently in the background," says Rowcroft's Appeal Manager Alison Upton. "Our specialist teams support families in a way that allows them the time and space to simply be together, create memories, and focus on what matters most."

The appeal was driven by our 'charity champions', who shared the film and other information across their networks. Their support helped bring hospice care to life for thousands of people and inspired a wave of donations, smashing our £200,000 appeal target.

We're also delighted to share that the appeal won (jointly) the Best Marketing Initiative award at this year's Torbay Business Awards.

To watch the film, visit: rowcrofthospice.org.uk/every-moment-matters

How you can help:

give | support | shop | volunteer | pledge | get involved

Hospice news

News in brief from around Rowcroft

New award for Devon Farm Kitchen

Devon Farm Kitchen has added another shiny award to its growing collection – winning a Taste of the West Gold Award for its smoked haddock chowder. It's packed with haddock, salmon and prawns, and loved for its rich flavour.



Devon Farm Kitchen was created to generate sustainable income for Rowcroft Hospice by delivering delicious frozen meals to customers' homes across Devon. Since launching five years ago, the business has gone from strength to strength – even expanding its kitchen and team recently to keep up with growing demand! Find out more: devonfarmkitchen.co.uk

Free Wills Service

We're delighted to have received lots of positive feedback on our Free Wills Service, delivered in partnership with Accord. The service offers a free Will-writing option for patients, families, staff, volunteers and supporters, and has been praised for its fast, compassionate support – particularly in urgent and end-of-life situations. It continues to provide reassurance at a difficult time, while also helping to generate vital future income for hospice care.

ACCORD
LEGAL SERVICES LTD

Rowcroft Lottery

Rising costs in delivering hospice care mean that we need to make a small but important change to help us continue supporting local families. For the first time in more than 20 years, we are increasing the price of Rowcroft Hospice Lottery entries, with each weekly play rising to £2 from November 2026. This update will help us continue to deliver our specialist care, while giving you the chance to win some fab cash prizes! Sign up at: rowcrofthospice.org.uk/lottery



Supporting people of all beliefs and none

In May, Rowcroft Hospice welcomed local faith and belief leaders and pastoral carers to Rainbow House (in the grounds of the hospice) for an inspiring education event on end-of-life care. The session was designed to strengthen how they support people during some of life's most challenging moments. This is just one example of Rowcroft's ongoing commitment to inclusive care for all, helping to ensure that people of every belief feel understood, respected and supported.

Update on the Assisted Dying Bill

The Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill did not become law after running out of parliamentary time in May. Views on assisted dying remain mixed, but there is shared agreement that no one should feel pressured to consider ending their life because high quality end-of-life care isn't available. There is also a clear need for more stable, long-term funding for hospices, so everyone can access the care they need, wherever they live.



To help make this a reality, we will continue to call for fairer funding for hospices – particularly for those in the South West. According to Hospice UK, hospices across England generally receive around 40% of their funding from the NHS. However, in Devon the picture is much tougher, with Rowcroft receiving only 24% of its income from the NHS. This means, we rely on the generosity of our community to keep our care going.

Love, laughter and precious memories

There are some moments in life that stay with you forever. Moments filled with love, laughter, happy tears and the people who matter most. Thanks to the kindness and generosity of Rowcroft's supporters, moments like these can happen, even in the most difficult of times.

In May this year, Rowcroft Hospice became the setting for one such moment when Keiandra Foote and Jeff Coombs were married at the hospice, surrounded by their family, friends and the team caring for Keiandra in Rowcroft's Inpatient Unit.

The Dawlish couple, with three daughters, had been together for 24 years. Although they had talked about marriage for a long time, busy family life always came first.

"We always wanted to get married, probably for the last ten years," says Jeff. "She told me, if I was going to marry her, it had to be in Vegas or nothing."

> "It wasn't until we came to the hospice that we decided we really did want to be married."

For Keiandra and Jeff, holding their wedding at Rowcroft felt deeply meaningful. It was a place where they felt safe, supported and able to focus on what mattered most: their love for one another and precious time as a family.







Their ceremony took place in the Inpatient Unit's Front Lounge, before celebrations continued in Rowcroft's Sanctuary which staff lovingly transformed into a beautiful space for the occasion. Around 30 family members and friends joined them, with Rowcroft Social Worker Nicky Monks helping coordinate every detail alongside colleagues from across the hospice.

> "It means the world to be married, and I honestly can't thank everyone at the hospice enough."

"It wasn't quite the Vegas setting Keiandra had in mind, but we could still make it beautiful and meaningful," says Nicky. "Everyone really pulled together to make the day so special."

For Jeff, the day will be one he always treasures. "The Rowcroft team were incredible," he says. "Being able to hold the wedding at the hospice meant so much to us."

A few weeks after their wedding, Keiandra sadly passed away. As Jeff, their daughters and the wider family begin to navigate life without her, the memories created on that special day remain a lasting gift for everyone who shared it with them.

Their story is a powerful reminder that hospice care is about so much more than medical support. It's about helping people live as fully as possible, right until the end of life. It's about creating special moments and giving families precious time together when it matters most.

Help families create precious memories

By leaving a gift in your Will to Rowcroft, you can help more families to create lasting memories. Rowcroft's Free Wills Service makes it simple to create or update your Will at no cost. Find out more at rowcrofthospice.org.uk/wills

News from Rowcroft's shops



House clearance service offers support through difficult times

Sorting through a loved one's home and belongings can be one of the most emotional and overwhelming parts of bereavement. Rowcroft Hospice's house clearance service is here to help, giving families time and space when everything feels difficult.

Our experienced team takes care of the whole process – from carefully packing belongings to clearing rooms, lofts, sheds and garages – always working with sensitivity and respect.

Launched last year and growing across South Devon, the service helps raise vital funds for hospice care, with reusable items, including clothing, sold in our shops and in our eBay store. Find out more at rowcrofthospice.org.uk/houseclearance

What will you buy for £1?



We've recently launched our very own livestreaming auctions on eBay, offering a fun and simple way for people to support the hospice, with bidding starting at just £1! The auctions include items that haven't sold in our shops, such as clothing with minor flaws, giving them a chance to find new homes.

With Rowcroft's income from traditional rag markets virtually disappearing due to changes in the industry, this new approach helps us turn unsold items into funds for hospice care. So far, it has already raised thousands of pounds, and is a shining example of the innovation of our Retail Team.



Bringing calm and comfort

Anna Berkley is one of Rowcroft's trained complementary therapy volunteers who help to bring moments of calm, comfort and relaxation to patients and their loved ones. Therapies can include massage, aromatherapy, reflexology, reiki and simple relaxation techniques, offered both in the hospice and in people's own homes.

For Anna, volunteering with Rowcroft as a complementary therapist has been a deeply rewarding experience.

"My voluntary role has given me the opportunity to make a difference at an important time in people's lives. I have found it a privilege to offer support and witness how patients enjoy complementary therapy. I cannot give much time, but I have felt so appreciated and valued."

"It opens my heart to feel part of the Rowcroft team, and I am touched by my experiences here."





Interested in volunteering?

If you'd like to chat about volunteering with Rowcroft, our new Volunteering Coordinator, Richard French-Lowe, would love to hear from you. There are a wide range of opportunities available across the hospice – in our shops, gardens and offices, and in roles supporting patients and families. To find out about current volunteer opportunities, visit rowcrofthospice.org.uk/volunteers or contact Richard on 01803 210852.

"It felt like visiting Mum at home"

For Nick, Shane and Leanne, dedicating a light on Rowcroft's Tree of Light is a special way to honour their beloved mum, Debbie Pease, who was cared for at the hospice during the final weeks of her life. Rowcroft brought comfort and support through the hardest of times – and continues to hold a special place in the family's hearts today.



"Rowcroft's care was amazing," says Leanne. "I remember the day we brought Mum in. We were all nervous, but the sun was shining through the windows and I thought, 'Thank God – Mum's going to get help now.'"

"Hearing the word Rowcroft is scary," says Nick. "But when you experience the hospice, it's warm, light and homely. We need to break the stigma that it's a frightening place."

"It didn't feel like visiting Mum in a hospital or hospice," says Shane. "It felt like visiting her at home."

After Debbie passed away, the family dedicated a light in her memory on Rowcroft's Tree of Light and attended the Light up a Life celebration in the hospice grounds, where the beautiful Tree of Light was illuminated.

> *"If I could describe Rowcroft in one word, it would be 'kind' – with a big heart drawn around it!"*



Remembering loved ones

This festive season, dedicate a light in memory of someone special and join us at our Light up a Life celebration on Sunday 29 November at 4pm. See: rowcrofthospice.org.uk/light

Creating a more welcoming space

We're delighted to share that we've made some wonderful improvements to our Inpatient Unit to create a calmer, more comfortable environment for our patients and families.

Made possible through a government grant, all single rooms now have en-suites and improved soundproofing, plus there are wider doors enabling beds to be wheeled onto the sea-facing patio. There's also improved storage, redesigned layouts, and a new accessible ramp at the entrance. Family spaces have been refreshed with new furniture and kitchenettes, and there is a new en-suite single room.

"For patients and families facing one of the hardest journeys imaginable, coming into the hospice can be overwhelming," says Dr Gill Horne who led the refurbishment project. "Our goal is to make every part of their experience as smooth and comfortable as possible."

Careful design choices such as thoughtful colour schemes, non-reflective surfaces, and quieter areas help create a calmer environment. And nature-inspired murals add a beautiful finishing touch.



▲ Hawthorne room with fresh décor. (This room also benefits from a new en-suite.)



▲ The newly refurbished front lounge offers a quiet space for families.

▼ Dartmoor- and coastline-inspired mural by Neil Wilkinson-Cave of Sacredart Murals.



NB: The government grant was restricted to building works and improvements to facilities.

INTRODUCING KATE

Kate Holmes, Rowcroft's Senior Community Fundraiser

Hi, I'm Kate, and I'm delighted to introduce myself as the new Senior Community Fundraiser. As I settle into my new position, I've been so inspired to see the magnificent fundraising taking place in our community – I've included a few photos and stories here of a few fantastic examples.



While this is my first appearance in Hospice Matters in my new role, some of you may recognise me from previous editions where I shared mine and my husband's story.



After the loss of my husband Paul in May 2024, I know all too well the importance of our hospice and the incredible impact it has on patients and their families. The support my family and I received from Rowcroft was invaluable during a difficult time and no words will ever be enough to share just what a difference they made – to Paul and to us all.

It is now a privilege to be leading our community fundraising efforts and helping to ensure that others can continue to receive the same compassionate care and support when they need it most.



I look forward to meeting many of you soon and hearing about your own fundraising ideas and events. Please do get in touch for a chat any time – I'd really love to hear from you. Call: 01803 210833 / 07896 941202 or email kate.holmes@rowcrofthospice.org.uk



'Rowing for Rowcroft' has quite the ring to it! Many thanks to the **Castle Inn Rowing Club**, who have chosen us as their Charity of the Year. We're loving their mixed team name: 'The Rowcrofters'. How perfect!

On 18 April 2026, **Maisie** completed a two-hour 'Dartathon' as part of her school's Civic Awards. Supporting Rowcroft Hospice in memory of Liz, Jean and Elsie, Maisie smashed her challenge and we couldn't be more grateful for the **£265** raised!





A HUGE thank you to **Ella Scott** who raised an incredible **£1155** for the hospice through her boxing match... and yes, she also won!



We are so grateful to **Sara**, along with friends **Lynsey and Debbie**, for organising 'Live 'n' Loud' in memory of Sara's partner Jabez. They raised a staggering **£5,800** through a brilliant evening of live music featuring three fantastic bands that Jabez had played in over the years.



Thank you so much to **Babbacombe and St Marychurch Lions Club**, represented by President Frank Wallis and Past President Phil Tozer, who visited us recently with their very generous donation.

GET INVOLVED!

Here's a round-up of exciting events and ways to support Rowcroft. To find out more, please call our Fundraising Team today on 01803 217450 or visit: rowcrofthospice.org.uk. If you have your own ideas, then we'd love to hear from you.

November

29 NOVEMBER LIGHT UP A LIFE
Dedicate a light on the 'Tree of Light' in memory of someone special, and join us at our wonderful Light up a Life celebration on Sunday 29 November at 4pm in the grounds of the hospice.



December

RECYCLE YOUR CHRISTMAS TREE FOR ROWCROFT
If you live in one of our participating South Devon postcodes, we'll collect and recycle your Christmas tree in return for a small donation to the hospice. Bookings open 1 December. Minimum suggested donation: £15.

RUDOLPH RUN
This December, children from primary schools across South Devon are donning their antlers and jingling all the way in a festive fun-filled sponsored run or walk.

6 DECEMBER
COMMUNITY CAROLS
Join us for a beautiful evening of festive carols at St Luke's Church, Milber, Newton Abbot, from 3pm. Tickets are £5.

March

13 MARCH THE BIG TACKLE
Take on an eight-mile walk around Torquay before heading to Torquay Rugby Club for a pint and a pasty and the screening of The Six Nations rugby – England v Scotland.

10–15 MARCH SAHARA TREK
Rowcroft's brave explorers will experience the magic of the desert on our unforgettable Sahara challenge to raise funds for the hospice.

April

SPRING & SUMMER OPEN GARDENS
Enjoy a wander through some of South Devon's most beautiful gardens while supporting your local hospice. Fancy opening your own garden for Rowcroft? We'd love to hear from you!



May

8 MAY
45TH ANNIVERSARY GARDEN PARTY
Come and celebrate our big birthday with us! All welcome.

June

BIG BAKE SCONATHON
Get creative in the kitchen and whip up your very own Big Bake Sconathon event. Whether it's a party, cake sale or coffee morning, it's all about raising dough for Rowcroft!

July

4 JULY MEADOW OF MEMORIES
Each year, a beautiful wildflower meadow is sown in the grounds of the hospice. Visit: rowcrofthospice.org.uk/meadow in the new year to dedicate a flower in memory.

17 JULY THE SLEEP WALK
Our much-loved Sleep Walk invites participants to take on an eight-mile sunset coastal walk in Torbay in support of the hospice.



September

19 SEPTEMBER
TORBAY HALF MARATHON & 10K
Go the extra mile to support your local hospice by taking on the half marathon or 10k for Rowcroft!

October

14–22 OCTOBER
GREAT WALL OF CHINA TREK
Our amazing supporters are pushing their boundaries and taking on the adventure of a lifetime by trekking 35km along the Great Wall of China.



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