

# HospiceMatters

SPRING 2024

NEWS AND STORIES FROM ROWCROFT HOSPICE

NO   
ONE  
ALONE  
APPEAL

## Our new appeal

A VISION OF SPECIALIST  
END-OF-LIFE CARE FOR ALL

[rowcrofthospice.org.uk](http://rowcrofthospice.org.uk)

rowcroft  
hospice



Registered Charity No: 282723

# Welcome

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

There are so many different ways you can help:



While Rowcroft continues to play a vital role in delivering specialist end-of-life care and support to 2,500

*“In response to the growing pressures on the hospice, we have launched our ‘No One Alone Appeal’ to help care for 260 more patients each year across South Devon.”*

**Our vision is a world where no patient with life-limiting illness, or those closest to them, will be left to face that difficult time at end of life alone.**

Thank you so much for your amazing support as we work towards this. Please spread the word with friends and colleagues - the more people who support us, the more patients we can help.

**Tina Antonio**  
Head of Fundraising

patients and their loved ones each year, I’m shocked and saddened that too many people in South Devon still can’t access the essential end-of-life care they need, due to a national shortage of resources and funding.

Across the UK, each year an estimated 100,000 people who could benefit from palliative care die without receiving it. And due to the rising demand caused by the needs of an increasingly ageing population, it’s set to get much worse.

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## Keep in touch

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Registered Charity No: 282723  
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## No One Alone Appeal

As a Healthcare Assistant here at the hospice, it breaks my heart that there are people in South Devon who cannot get the support they need at the end of their lives - the time when they are at their most vulnerable. Rowcroft’s recently launched No One Alone Appeal is a beacon of hope for us. With the help of our community, by 2026 we aim to help care for an additional 260 patients per year. This milestone is a big step towards our long-term goal of supporting 3000 patients and their loved ones each year by 2030.

Life-limiting illness affects nearly everyone, directly or as a loved one. It can create unimaginable challenges and emotional turmoil that can be all-consuming and overwhelming. Rowcroft can make a real difference - by delivering expert medical care, as well as compassionate support and reassurance, at the time when it’s needed most.

No matter how large or small, every donation to the No One Alone Appeal is a lifeline for those who rely on our



▲ Kieron George, Healthcare Assistant

care. If you’re able to donate, your gift will bring comfort and relief during life’s most challenging moments, and will mean that patients, and those closest to them, won’t have to face their journey alone.

Thank you



Please help us to be by the sides of more patients who need us. Make a donation to the No One Alone Appeal today at: [rowcrofthospice.org.uk/no-one-alone](http://rowcrofthospice.org.uk/no-one-alone). And remember, if you can give a regular monthly donation it will help us to plan our services with confidence going forward.

# Hospice news

News in brief from around Rowcroft

We're thrilled with the success of our new initiative of sponsoring student nurses at the universities of Plymouth and Exeter. Qualified nurses will then join our hospice team after completing their degrees.

Our first graduate, Rebecca Hale, joined us last September as a nurse and is settling well into her role at the hospice.



## FESTIVE fundraising

A big merry thank you to everyone who took part in all our festive fundraising. At the time of going to print, we're hoping to raise in excess of **£60,000** through our Rudolph Run, Christmas Tree Recycling, Santa's Grotto and the No One Alone Christmas Appeal.

## Dementia conference



Rowcroft is proud to be hosting our first-ever Dementia and Palliative Care Conference on 26 March 2024. To be held at Buckfast Abbey Conference Centre, the day will provide invaluable insights into the latest advancements, innovations and research in dementia care and the important role of palliative care in enhancing the quality of life for people living with dementia.

## Planning for the future

Using their knowledge and expertise, Rowcroft's Education Team have developed a 'Planning for the Future' hub for patients, carers and health and social care professionals. It aims to support people in having conversations around their wishes for death and dying, and preparing practically for the future. See: [rowcrofthospice.org.uk/planning](http://rowcrofthospice.org.uk/planning)



## Devon Farm Kitchen scoops best online retailer award

We're over the moon that Devon Farm Kitchen has received the Best Online Retailer Award in the Food Drink Devon Awards 2023. With all profits going to support the hospice, Devon Farm Kitchen has been going from strength to strength since the social enterprise launched in 2021: they've fulfilled 11,500 orders and delivered over 85,000 meals across South Devon. Take a look at the menu at [devonfarmkitchen.co.uk](http://devonfarmkitchen.co.uk)



Congratulations to volunteer Pat Goss, Chair of the Friends of Rowcroft, who has received the highly esteemed Order of Mercy Award from the League of Mercy Foundation. This prestigious award acknowledges Pat's outstanding contribution to the hospice and her exceptional commitment to making a difference in the lives of others. For more information about how to become a 'Friend of Rowcroft' please contact Debbi Shotton on 01803 210833.



## Tech for Better Care

As part of the Health Foundation's 'Tech for Better Care' programme, Rowcroft has been selected as one of ten UK teams to explore how technology can enable new approaches to care at home and in the community. Rowcroft's technology project aims to develop a wearable device (or an app) that's particularly suitable for those who are not always able to express or communicate when they are in pain or distress, such as people with dementia.

The technology will potentially monitor pain levels, vital signs (for example, temperature, pulse, respiratory rate, oxygen saturation), levels of distress, movement, and possibly fluid intake, and will alert a Rowcroft staff member of any changes.

# Supporting people with complex needs

At Rowcroft we know how important it is for patients with complex needs to get the right kind of care and support, and we do this by tailoring our specialist care for each unique patient. Karen Wilson explains how we supported her inspirational sister Dena who died in 2019.

Born with Down's syndrome and a learning disability, and in late 2014 diagnosed with Alzheimer's (a disease that causes dementia), Dena developed incredibly complex needs. Day-to-day life started to become exceptionally challenging, not only for Dena but also for those closest to her, yet Rowcroft was able to deliver expert specialist care that was sensitive and compassionate, and that helped them all through the toughest of times at the end of Dena's life.



"In spite of multiple health issues Dena was a multi-talented and confident young woman who charmed everyone she met," says Karen. "She attended a local day centre twice a week for music, art and pottery, and she was regularly given the microphone to lead the singing! Her simple child-like faith and trusting, loving nature had something to teach all of us in a cynical world.

"Dena's condition deteriorated significantly in 2018 and seizures became a big part of her life. With several emergency dashes to Torbay Hospital, she earned the nickname 'Houdini' as she always seemed to recover from illness at the eleventh hour.

*"Rowcroft is like a family that embraces you in the darkest times. It wraps its arms around you when you need it most."*



"There are no words to describe the debt of gratitude we feel towards Rowcroft. They allowed us precious time to be just a family with a dying loved one. It meant the world to us to be able to sit with Dena knowing her needs were being met and that she could die in her own bed in her own room at home, just as she had wanted. It was a very peaceful time for everyone and if there is such a thing as a good death then this was it."



"I eventually made the decision to contact Rowcroft and we soon had support from a palliative care social worker, a specialist community nurse, and a Rowcroft consultant who was like Wonder Woman! In less than a day she had set up a co-ordinated approach to Dena's care, and got her medication altered so that Dena didn't have any further seizures and this made her quality of life so much better.

"When Dena later developed a major chest infection, sadly there was to be no Houdini act this time. Rowcroft's Hospice at Home team offered care and support and helped to make her comfortable."



Rowcroft's **No One Alone Appeal** will raise vital funds to help deliver specialist care for more patients with complex needs in our community.

# News from Rowcroft's shops



## Showstoppers at Ella's Vintage!

Ella's Vintage, Rowcroft's online shop on Etsy, Vinted, and eBay, is emerging as a star in the world of sustainable fashion. Raising vital funds for the hospice from the generous donated items from our local community, Ella's Vintage offers a meticulously curated collection of vintage clothing and accessories.

With the collection spanning from the 1920s to the early 2000s, items from our store have been featured in many shows including Diana's striped cardigan in 'The Crown', a men's suit in 'Star Wars' and 1960s overcoats in 'Sherlock'.



**Check out Ella's Vintage at: [rowcrofthospice.org.uk/shoponline](http://rowcrofthospice.org.uk/shoponline) or donate your vintage items by calling 01803 217369.**

## New year, new look

Donating your unwanted items to our shops is a great way of helping us generate vital income to care for our patients and those closest to them. We welcome donations of good quality clothing and accessories, as well as homeware, books, toys, DVDs, electrical items and furniture. To book a free furniture collection please call: 01803 210832

## News from Preston

Our new lifestyle shop and café in Torquay Road, Preston, has been a roaring success since its launch last year, and the café is now open Mondays to Saturdays. Browse the wonderful range of pre-loved clothing, books, homeware and furniture or indulge in delicious home-made treats or a scrumptious lunch.



# A guiding light in grief

Rowcroft's bereavement support volunteers help to build an important bridge between grief and healing. Their dedication ensures that nobody has to face the daunting journey of mourning alone.

When grief seems insurmountable, these volunteers extend a steady hand, a listening ear, and a safe haven for those who have lost a loved one.

Nick Coffey is a trained bereavement volunteer who provides advice and support to the bereaved relatives of those who were cared for by Rowcroft. Nick says:

"My role involves listening to and supporting bereaved relatives in the Torbay and South Devon area. It's very rewarding work and it's wonderful to see people making progress by starting to talk about their future and being more positive. I'm pleased that I can help them on that journey."



"It's an honour and a privilege to volunteer for the hospice. My decision to become a bereavement volunteer was the best decision I've ever made!"

Nick Coffey



Following the loss of his beloved wife Mary in 2020, Keith Howard received bereavement support from Rowcroft. He says:

***"Eighteen months after Mary's passing, I realised that my mental health was declining rapidly so I sought help from the Bereavement Support Team at Rowcroft. The ten weeks of care and friendship that I received, I believe, saved my life."***

Thanks to all our devoted bereavement support volunteers who make the world of difference to those who have lost a loved one. If you are interested in becoming a bereavement support volunteer, then please call Anastasia on 01803 217403 or email: [bereavement@rowcrofthospice.org.uk](mailto:bereavement@rowcrofthospice.org.uk)





# Remembering John through Meadow of Memories

“My very own Peter Pan” is how Cynthia McAlpine remembers her dear husband John who passed away in 2006. One of 11 siblings, John loved children and was a natural entertainer; and he was adored by Cynthia’s three children - Mark, Neil and Lisa. While deeply missed, John is honoured each spring when the family dedicates a wildflower in his memory through Rowcroft’s Meadow of Memories. And every year, the family attends the Meadow of Memories celebration with their grandchildren, to remember happy times with the man they loved. Here Cynthia reflects on their journey.

“John was never ill. Then one day he turned and slipped off a pavement and wrenched his shoulder. The doctors gave him painkillers but it didn’t get any better so we went to see a specialist

and were given the devastating news that it was bone cancer”.

**“I cared for him as much as I could, but then a miracle happened: Rowcroft!”**

“John went to Rowcroft’s Inpatient Unit in Torquay and he felt so relaxed in their care. He particularly enjoyed the massage, and the care was second to none. Families were always welcome anytime. John loved sitting in the garden under the bird box watching the blue tits; he had always loved wildlife, especially owls. That was my John. I miss him so much. But Rowcroft was our second home and I have happy memories of our time there. I can never thank Rowcroft enough for the care we received.”



To dedicate a flower in memory of someone you love, please go to: [rowcrofthospice.org.uk/meadow](http://rowcrofthospice.org.uk/meadow)



## Patrick’s pledge

Patrick Joyce, a local councillor for Wellswood, is backing Rowcroft’s No One Alone Appeal to help make sure that Rowcroft can be there to provide specialist care for more patients with life-limiting illnesses across South Devon.

Patrick’s direct experience of Rowcroft - when his late husband Alex was cared for by the hospice - has also led him to pledge a gift to Rowcroft in his Will.

Following a diagnosis of oesophageal cancer, Alex was cared for at home by Rowcroft’s Community Team, and later in Rowcroft’s Inpatient Unit. Reflecting on those difficult days, Patrick says:

*“I’ve never been in such a dark place in all of my life. And it frightens me to think of the consequences if Rowcroft hadn’t been there to pick up the pieces when I needed them.”*



▲ “We made a decision to leave a legacy to Rowcroft as we wanted to give back to the organisation that left the biggest footprint in our lives,” says Patrick (right).

“As a charity, Rowcroft is there for our community, ensuring that the people of South Devon are loved and embraced in our darkest days. We need to make sure that we nurture and protect our hospice, and support it so that it’s fit for purpose for generations to come. Everyone can play a part in that.”



One in five of Rowcroft’s patients are cared for by gifts in Wills. Why not support the hospice by leaving a gift to Rowcroft in your Will? You can make or update your Will by taking part in our Make a Will Week during 13-17 May 2024. Find out more at: [rowcrofthospice.org.uk/legacies](http://rowcrofthospice.org.uk/legacies) or contact our Legacies Manager Rebecca on 01803 217405.

# Our fantastic fundraisers across South Devon



My name is Debbi and I've been working in Community Fundraising here at Rowcroft Hospice for over ten years. I never cease to be amazed by the things our wonderful community do to raise vital funds for us - from coffee mornings to concerts, sponsored walks to jumping out of a plane - with a parachute, of course!

We rely heavily on the funds raised through these events to continue to provide care and support to 2,500 people every year. In the last six months, almost 500 individuals, groups and schools have held fundraising events in aid of Rowcroft. Amazing people who have taken time out of their busy lives to support us and, in turn, our patients and their loved ones.



▲ T.E.S.C.O. sponsored walk in September £1746



▲ South Devon College sponsored walk £520



▲ Sue Saunders and volunteers at Glastonbury this year £3190



▲ Jago's ball-bouncing challenge £115

*"I am so pleased to highlight here just a few of the events and the fantastic fundraisers who organised them or took part."*

If you have a fabulous fundraising thought, would like to choose Rowcroft as your club's charity of the year, just can't wait to jump out of a plane, want to walk to raise funds, or would love to get involved and need inspiration, please get in touch!



▲ Raffles 2 Club fundraising day £3103



▲ Missin' Tackle at Brixham Singathon £2061



▲ Jump for Jen. Charlotte, Mims, Phoebe and Jenny £7260



▲ Torquay Golf Club Captain Gary Dubben's charity of the year £4700

Give me a call on 01803 210833  
or email [debbi.shotton@rowcrofthospice.org.uk](mailto:debbi.shotton@rowcrofthospice.org.uk)

And please email me photos from your own fundraising adventures.

# EVERY PENNY RAISED MAKES SUCH A DIFFERENCE



# Get involved!



We're delighted to offer a fabulous choice of fundraising events listed here, or if you have your own ideas, then we'd love to hear from you. To get involved or to find out more, please call our Fundraising Team today on 01803 217450 or visit [www.rowcrofthospice.org.uk](http://www.rowcrofthospice.org.uk)

## March

### 9 March THE BIG TACKLE

Starting and finishing at Torquay Rugby Club, our fabulous fundraising folk will take on an eight-mile walk around Torquay and will be welcomed back with a pint and a pasty to watch The Six Nations Rugby. Open to all over the age of eight.



## Spring & Summer

### OPEN GARDENS

We are very pleased to announce that we will once again be holding our Open Garden Programme in 2024. If you'd like to open your garden to the public to raise funds for Rowcroft, then please call 01803 210833 or email [debbi.shotton@rowcrofthospice.org.uk](mailto:debbi.shotton@rowcrofthospice.org.uk)



## May

### 13-17 May MAKE A WILL WEEK

During Rowcroft's Make a Will Week, local participating solicitors will waive their entire Will-making fee in return for a donation to the hospice.

## July

### 5-7 July JURASSIC COAST DISCOVERY

Join us for this two-day trek exploring the awesome Jurassic Coast, England's only World Heritage site. Dramatic coastal views and world-famous landmarks await!



### 14 July MEADOW OF MEMORIES

We invite you to dedicate a flower in our beautiful wildflower meadow, in memory of someone special, and to join us at our Meadow of Memories celebration at 2pm on Sunday 14 July in the hospice grounds.



## July

### 20 July WINGWALK CHALLENGE

Take to the skies on the wings of a 1940s Boeing Stearman biplane for an experience of a lifetime and a great way to raise funds.

## August

### 3-4 August

### SNOWDON AT NIGHT CHALLENGE

Make the most of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and trek up the highest mountain in Britain by moonlight.



## September

### 4-8 September

### THE ALPS TREK CHALLENGE

Discover the Alps in this breath-taking journey that will take you through the beautiful Mount Blanc region where you'll enjoy magnificent views of stunning cliffs, gorgeous waterfalls and striking glaciers.



**CORPORATE CLUB** We're thrilled to announce that over the last eight months, our fantastic Corporate Club members have raised a whopping £23,000 through some of the most incredible ways - from family fun days, selling invisible chips and even a kayathlon! If you're a local business looking to make an outstanding difference, we'd love to hear from you! Please email Lisa at [Lisa.whittaker@rowcrofthospice.org.uk](mailto:Lisa.whittaker@rowcrofthospice.org.uk)

## Dates throughout 2024

### SKYDIVE CHALLENGE

Experience an exhilarating freefall combined with the peace and tranquillity of a parachute ride in this tandem skydive that you will never forget.



### SUP – YOUR WAY

In this fun stand up paddle board event, you create your own route and paddle 5km, 10km or another distance of your choice at any time that suits you this year.



### RIDE FOR ROWCROFT

This event is perfect for cyclists looking to complete their first challenge, beat a personal best or simply enjoy a leisurely countryside ride. Set any date, choose your route, get sponsored, and Ride for Rowcroft!





# Catering for the caterer

A family run business with over fifty years of experience in the foodservice sector, specialising in frozen, chilled and ambient food, non-food goods and locally sourced produce from Devon, Cornwall and the South Coast



PROUD SPONSORS OF HOSPICE MATTERS  
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# Kitson Boyce

## LEGAL SERVICES

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