

# HospiceMatters

SPRING/SUMMER 2025 NEWS AND STORIES FROM ROWCROFT HOSPICE

**INSIDE**  
GOVERNMENT  
RESPONSE  
TO FUNDING  
CHALLENGES  
**UPLIFTING CARE  
AT ROWCROFT  
HOSPICE**



**Caring  
beyond  
limits**

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



**rowcroft**  
hospice



# Welcome

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

I'm sure you've seen in the press that the past year has brought huge financial challenges for UK hospices. Following the Budget announcement in the autumn, Rowcroft is facing an additional £225,000 in annual costs, due to increased National Insurance contributions and rises in the national living wage. While we support salary increases for our dedicated staff, the escalating costs place a strain on us as a charity, making it harder to deliver our vital, compassionate care that our families deserve.

We warmly welcomed the government's announcement in December of additional funding for hospices in England. However, it still remains unclear how much of this funding will reach Rowcroft, or if it will be enough to cover the financial impact of the recent Budget changes. The generosity of our community – people like you – has never been more critical, enabling us to support three



out of every four of our patients. Regular donations in particular make a powerful difference, enabling us to plan ahead and directly support our teams to continue delivering exceptional care to local families.

*“Thank you for being there. Together we will ensure that patients and their loved ones receive the dignified care they deserve.”*

**Mark Hawkins**  
CEO, Rowcroft Hospice

## Contents

Ben and Jake's story.....	3
Hospice news .....	4
Gareth's story.....	6
News from our shops.....	8
Celebrating our volunteers .....	9
From dancing star to mentor .....	10
On top of the world.....	11
It takes all sorts! .....	12
Rowcroft events calendar .....	14

## Keep in touch

- 'Rowcroft Hospice'
- @RowcroftHospice
- 'Rowcroft Hospice'

**blog:** rowcrofthospice.org.uk/blog  
**email:** info@rowcrofthospice.org.uk

Rowcroft Hospice, Ella's Gardens,  
Avenue Road, Torquay TQ2 5LS,  
Registered Charity No: 282723  
© 2025 Rowcroft Hospice.

# Sons of football legend Paul Holmes share story of loss

Supporting bereaved loved ones with their mental health is key as they navigate their journeys through loss and grief. Ben and Jake, 22-year-old twins from Newton Abbot, talk about the loss of their dad, Paul Holmes, and the support the family received from the hospice.



"Losing Dad is the worst thing that's ever happened to us," says Ben. "Men often struggle to confront their grief, but I've

realised that half the battle is talking about it. Hiding your feelings is the worst thing you can do."

Paul, a celebrated local football legend known for his time with Torquay United, passed away last year at the hospice following a diagnosis of bowel cancer. The twins are full of praise for the specialist care Paul received from Rowcroft. Initially supported at home by the hospice's Community Team, Paul later spent his final weeks in Rowcroft's Inpatient Unit.

"There's no price you can put on the care we received," said Jake. "Rowcroft didn't just care for Dad; they cared for us as a family. They made us feel at ease and supported us through every step. We don't know what we would have done without them."



Will you consider sponsoring a nurse to help Rowcroft care for local families? Your monthly donation will enable the hospice to continue delivering vital care for patients and their loved ones across South Devon. Visit: [rowcrofthospice.org.uk/nurse](http://rowcrofthospice.org.uk/nurse)



## How you can help:



give



support



shop



volunteer



pledge



get involved



# Hospice news

News in brief from around Rowcroft

## Serving up success

Devon Farm Kitchen, the social enterprise delivering hand-cooked frozen meals across South Devon, has added two more prestigious accolades to its growing list of awards! At the Food Drink Devon Awards last autumn, they proudly took home the Sustainability Pioneer Award and a Gold Award for Best Online Retailer.



By enjoying Devon Farm Kitchen's delicious meals, you're supporting locally sourced, sustainable food and helping to generate long-term income for Rowcroft Hospice. Visit: [devonfarmkitchen.co.uk](http://devonfarmkitchen.co.uk) or call: 01803 217477.



## A special place for children

Inspired by a young mum of three who was cared for by Rowcroft last year, we're creating a new outdoor space for children visiting the hospice. This carefully designed area in our gardens will give children the chance to play, read, or sit quietly and reflect, offering moments of comfort and joy during what can be a difficult time.

## Spiritual care for all

At Rowcroft, we strive to support people of all faiths and none, in a way that honours their beliefs and values. Our 'Sanctuary' is a quiet and welcoming space for all, for reflection, meditation, prayer, worship, remembrance, or rest. Thanks to generous donations from local faith and belief groups, it's equipped with multi-faith resources, including scriptures, holding crosses, prayer mats, meditation cushions and also non-religious books that might offer comfort or inspiration. We're pleased to add a new Qibla compass, enabling Muslim visitors to pray facing Mecca - the holiest city in Islam.

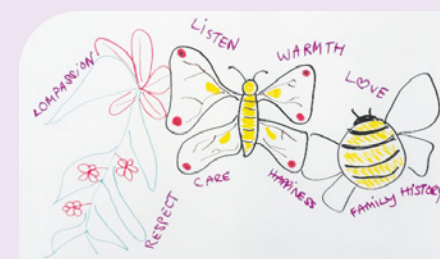


## Rowcroft's ambassadors inspire change

An innovative project at Pendennis Care Home in Paignton, led by one of Rowcroft's ambassadors, Dominic Sojin Pinhero, is a shining example of the incredible ripple effect of Rowcroft's education work. Developed as part of Rowcroft's end-of-life care ambassadors programme, Dominic's project is transforming the lives of residents living

with dementia, enabling them to relive cherished memories by visiting places from the comfort of their armchairs through a virtual reality style headset. Dominic's work illustrates how the hospice's ambassadors, supported by Rowcroft's Education Team, are making a tangible difference far beyond the hospice walls.

## Planting the seeds of inclusive dementia care



In collaboration with the EMPOWER dementia network, Rowcroft recently hosted a creative workshop led by Rowcroft nurse Anna Cawrse and Dr Gill Home, Programme Director - Care Services. Local participants with experience of dementia shared ideas on shaping inclusive, high-quality care using a garden metaphor - creating 'pollinators' for positive and beneficial things, 'tools' to assist, and a 'compost heap' for unhelpful practices. Their insights will inform a UK-wide manifesto, helping to make dementia care more inclusive and equitable for all.

This work aligns with Rowcroft's efforts to contribute to the dementia agenda for Devon. On 25 March 2025, the hospice is hosting its second Dementia and Palliative Care Conference, highlighting the vital role of palliative care in enhancing the lives of those living with dementia.



Gareth Wynn was cared for by the hospice before he passed away in Rowcroft's Inpatient Unit in February 2024, aged 39. Here, Gareth's sisters share the story of his journey and the difference Rowcroft made during his final weeks.



Gareth was deeply committed to his family and was known throughout Torbay as a local radio station executive and DJ. Following a cancer diagnosis, and with his health fast-declining, Gareth saw his life expectancy rapidly shorten from years to months to days – all within just a few weeks. This was a heartbreaking reality that was incredibly difficult for his family and friends to come to terms with, but Rowcroft's care helped to make those final days easier to navigate.



Gareth's sister, Nicola, remembers the immediate comfort that Rowcroft's staff provided when he arrived at the hospice:

"It was such a difference from day one when he arrived. His journey hadn't been the most comfortable and after a

quick conversation, a haircut, a shave and a change of clothes, Gareth was back. My brother was back.

"The staff helped us too, because we wouldn't have got through without them. They helped us to help him and nurse him, and we were able to stay overnight – and that was really important to us.

"Late into the night when he died, we were listening to music and he was surrounded by us and the staff, who had such an empathetic way of explaining what was happening and why."

Lauren, Gareth's twin sister, added: "Rowcroft had a real sense of home, rather than a hospital feel. He had music on in the background which helped him relax. I can't tell you enough, how the hospice experience was absolutely second to none.

"Since Gareth passed, we support Rowcroft through fundraising and events because we want other families to experience the same peace and care that Rowcroft gave to us."

To watch the video about Gareth's journey, go to Rowcroft's website at: [rowcrofthospice.org.uk/gareth](http://rowcrofthospice.org.uk/gareth)

*"Throughout Gareth's time there and in his final hours, the staff showed such compassion, helping us to understand what was going on every step of the way – and for that, we will always be grateful."*



### Leave a legacy for the future

Leaving a gift to Rowcroft Hospice in your Will helps to support families like Gareth's. Your kindness endures long into the future, ensuring that the hospice can continue to care for our community for generations to come. To learn more, call 01803 217405 or see: [rowcrofthospice.org.uk/legacy](http://rowcrofthospice.org.uk/legacy)





# News from Rowcroft's shops



## Vintage vibes

Following the successful launch of Ella's Vintage at Rowcroft's Totnes and Brixham shops, our Babbacombe store has become the third location to offer this exciting collection that features affordable vintage clothing and unique treasures. The Babbacombe shop also includes a fun photo area that's available for selfies with vintage finds.

"With this particular shop offering a beautiful emporium-style experience, it is the perfect place to offer this new and exciting retail concept," said Nichola Thomas, Online Sales Specialist at Rowcroft.

Ella's Vintage is also available online on Etsy and eBay where you can browse a specially curated selection of higher-end, exclusive items. Go to: [rowcrofthospice.org.uk/ellas-vintage](http://rowcrofthospice.org.uk/ellas-vintage)

*"Whether you're a vintage enthusiast, sustainable shopper or just like to stand out from the crowd, there's something for everyone."*



## Rowcroft's new house clearance service, coming soon!

Rowcroft is on the brink of launching a new house clearance service, designed to complement our existing furniture collection service. Our team will sensitively clear the entire contents of your home, sorting items for resale in our shops and online to raise vital funds to care for local patients with life-limiting illnesses. Unsaleable items will be responsibly disposed of, and we'll carry out basic cleaning after the clearance. Whether downsizing or managing a loved one's belongings, we will handle everything with the utmost care and respect. Further details are available on our website at [rowcrofthospice.org.uk/house-clearance](http://rowcrofthospice.org.uk/house-clearance)



## Celebrating our volunteers

### Nickie's journey into spiritual support

Nickie Aven joined Rowcroft Hospice as a spiritual care volunteer in March 2023, offering a compassionate presence to patients and loved ones during end-of-life journeys. With a background as a homoeopath and Interfaith Minister, Nickie's role involves supporting and listening to patients and families when they need it most, helping them find comfort and strength through sources that give their lives meaning.

Nickie describes her volunteering as deeply rewarding, saying, "When I work with patients and family members, I hold a space for

them and I listen. Sometimes the conversation is just a general chat about anything at all – their lives, families, memories – and other times it's about what is bothering them or making them anxious; the interactions vary."

Nickie also leads the Threshold Choir in South Devon, a group of female singers who sing for people on the threshold of life and death. Their gentle songs bring peace and comfort to patients and families at the hospice, as well as at various Rowcroft events, such as Meadow of Memories and Light Up a Life.



### Fancy joining our team?

Volunteers are vital to Rowcroft Hospice, bringing kindness, understanding and dedication. Volunteering in a wide range of roles from supporting patients to raising funds in our retail team, every volunteer's contribution helps us provide exceptional care to those facing life-limiting illnesses. If you'd like to volunteer in one of our many roles, please get in touch with Clare for an informal chat. Telephone: 01803 210852 or email: [volunteering@rowcrofthospice.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@rowcrofthospice.org.uk)





# From dancing star to mentor



Jackie Coles from Torquay first became involved with Rowcroft in 2019 through her participation in Dancing Stars when she was crowned the competition's champion! Despite no prior dance experience, Jackie's love of a challenge drove her to master the waltz and cha-cha-cha with her professional partner, Stuart.

"I jumped at the chance to participate," Jackie explained. "It was a fantastic opportunity to try something I'd always dreamed of while raising money for a vital cause. When you went out on the dance floor, you could feel that everybody in that room was wanting you to do well. It's one of the best things I've ever done!"

Dancing Stars will return as 'Strictly Rowcroft' on Saturday 17 May, at The Princess Theatre in Torquay. Jackie will mentor participants during their training and present the winner's award on the big night.

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



Jackie's connection to Rowcroft deepened during the pandemic when the Hospice at Home team supported her grandfather, (Alfred) John Lipscombe (pictured above).

"What makes Rowcroft so special is the people," says Jackie. "The team's care was exceptional; his choices were respected and they took pressure off our family. But it isn't just about the physical support, they also provide emotional and spiritual support too."



# On top of the world

At Rowcroft, the sky is the limit when it comes to helping patients achieve their dreams



The spectacular view from the roof of Rowcroft's Inpatient Unit  
◀ Physiotherapy Technician Bev Tonks and Occupational Therapist Debby Hill

For one patient, Robert, a retired chartered surveyor, his wish was to climb to the roof at the top of the hospice – partly for the spectacular views of the sea, but mostly to admire the stunning architectural features of the historical building up close.

Rowcroft's Physiotherapy Technician Bev Tonks and Occupational Therapist Debby Hill carefully planned the climb, supporting Robert to navigate two flights of steps, including a very steep, narrow staircase near the top.

"It took huge effort on Robert's part," says Bev. "We ensured he had plenty of rest stops along the way and we monitored him closely to make sure he was safe."

"It was quite emotional for Robert and his wife Amanda when they got to the

top, and it was a privilege to be part of such a significant moment with them," shared Debby.

*"It's these experiences that remind us why we do what we do."*

"Robert was so chuffed to complete the climb, and the views were terrific," remembers Amanda. "The building absolutely fascinated him and he spent time looking at all the architectural features, including the old water tanks. He had always been passionate about historical buildings and he particularly loved 'behind the scenes' tours at National Trust properties.

"Now that he's passed, it's a lovely memory to reflect on. I always felt that the Rowcroft team did their very best to accommodate Robert's individual needs, and that made their care so special."





# IT TAKES ALL SORTS!

By Debbi Shotton, Rowcroft's Community Fundraiser

Someone asked me the other day, "What is community fundraising?" Well, I suppose the easiest answer is that it is when people in our community choose to put on their own event to raise funds for us. But actually, it is much more than that...



It's a 12 year-old girl who leaps into the freezing cold sea on Boxing Day, in memory of her great grandad, Ray Kendall, who passed away in the hospice just 13 days before. Oceana did just that and raised **£160** to thank what her mum described as 'the incredible angels' who looked after him.

It's Sarah Mason, who for the third-year running held a superb Christmas lunch in her house, in memory of her son, Harry, who was cared for by our Hospice at Home team. She raised **£5,246** on the day, bringing her total to an astounding **£14,347**.  
Wow!



It's Andrew Tinkler who, despite living with COPD, set himself the challenge in January 2024 to run 1000 miles during the course of the year. In addition to his other weekly runs, he took on the Torbay Half Marathon, The Plymouth 10k and The Wray Trail Half Marathon, raising over **£1,000!**



It's Brixham Cricket Club, who chose Rowcroft as their Charity of the Year again and raised a huge **£4,033** through raffles and quiz nights. This brings their total raised over the years to **£11,262!**

And actually, it's you. Our community. Behind us, supporting us, every step of the way. Thank you!

Please do get in touch if you have an idea of your own: 01803 210833 or email [debbi.shotton@rowcrofthospice.org.uk](mailto:debbi.shotton@rowcrofthospice.org.uk)

It's Team MT – the families, friends, and work colleagues of Tim Chant and Mike Steer, who passed away within three weeks of each other in 2023. Together, the team took on walks, runs and online fundraisers. And building supplier, Inter-Line, is undertaking a lorry-pull later this year. So far, Team MT has raised over **£15,000**, and something tells me they haven't finished yet!



It's the manager, colleagues and customers of the White Hart in Newton Abbot, pulling together to see Jason have his head shaved in memory of their good friend, Craig Stickland. With more people coming forward to face the razor, and a raffle on the night, they raised **£2,208!**



## WIN **£1,000** EVERY FRIDAY

## Rowcroft Lottery

For as little as £1 a week, you can join the Rowcroft Lottery to support our nurses to provide care and compassion to the most vulnerable people across South Devon. And every Friday, you'll be in with the chance of winning £1,000! Find out more at [rowcrofthospice.org.uk/lottery](http://rowcrofthospice.org.uk/lottery)

Play for just **£1** a week





# 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.



## All year

### BIG BAKE

Calling all cake lovers and star bakers! Whether you're a kitchen novice or a seasoned pro, it's time to roll up your sleeves, get creative, and host your very own Big Bake event. From coffee mornings to cake sales or bake-off parties, your support helps raise vital funds for Rowcroft. Ready, set, bake!



## Spring and summer

### OPEN GARDENS

Discover the beauty of glorious gardens across South Devon, as our green-fingered friends open their gates to their local community throughout spring and summer 2025.



## May

### 12-16 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.



### 17 MAY STRICTLY ROWCROFT

Our dazzling Strictly Rowcroft event at the Princess Theatre in Torquay will see 12 local individuals paired up with experienced dancers to compete for the coveted title of Strictly Rowcroft 2025 champion. Please do look on our website to see how you can be in the audience on the night which promises to be fab-u-lous!



## July

### 6 JULY MEADOW OF MEMORIES

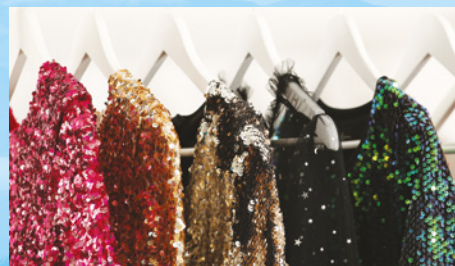
Each year, we plant beautiful wildflowers in the grounds of the hospice to celebrate the lives of the people we love and miss. Visit: [rowcrofthospice.org.uk/meadow](http://rowcrofthospice.org.uk/meadow) to dedicate a flower in memory of a loved one, and join us at our special celebration on Sunday 6 July.



## October

### 2 OCTOBER FASHION SHOW

Join us for Rowcroft's Wellswood Boutique's Fashion Show, held at Kents Cavern, Torquay. Enjoy an evening of glitz and glamour while supporting hospice care for our South Devon community.



To get involved or to find out more, contact our Fundraising Team today:  
Tel: 01803 217450  
Email: [fundraising@rowcrofthospice.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@rowcrofthospice.org.uk)

## Dates throughout 2025

### WINGWALK

Get sponsored and take to the skies on the wings of a 1940s Boeing Stearman biplane for an experience of a lifetime.



### SKYDIVE

Experience the exhilarating thrill of skydiving as you soar through the skies on a ten-minute ride.



## 2026

### MOUNT KILIMANJARO TREK

Take on the ultimate challenge in 2026 and trek up the highest mountain in Africa! Register your interest now by emailing: [hayley.townsend@rowcrofthospice.org.uk](mailto:hayley.townsend@rowcrofthospice.org.uk)





# FOCUSED ON YOU



We are here for you to put plans in place for you and your next generation. From passing on your wishes and wealth to assisting your loved ones with theirs. Equally we're here for you when life doesn't go according to plan with relationship breakdowns, accidents and financial difficulties.



LEGAL SERVICES

kitsonboyce.co.uk  
advice@kitsonboyce.co.uk



#### TORQUAY

Minerva House  
Orchard Way  
Edginswell Park, Torquay  
Devon TQ2 7FA

T +44(0)1803 202020

#### EXETER

Balliol House  
Southernhay Gardens  
Exeter  
Devon EX1 1NP

T +44(0)1392 455555

#### PLYMOUTH

Ashleigh Way  
Langage Business Park  
Plympton, Plymouth  
Devon PL7 5JX

T +44(0)1752 603040



## Helping you to achieve your personal goals



Planning for your future is imperative. Whether you are planning for your retirement or looking to protect you and your loved ones, our financial advisers can offer independent advice and tailored solutions.

- Pensions, Savings & Investments
- Life Assurance & Critical Illness Cover
- Mortgages & Equity Release
- Inheritance Tax Planning

**PAVEY**  
group

FINANCIAL SERVICES

[www.paveygroupfs.co.uk](http://www.paveygroupfs.co.uk)

To arrange a review contact us on

**01803 224888**

Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority