HospiceMatters

SPRING/SUMMER 2026 NEWS AND STORIES FROM ROWCROFT HOSPICE



Caring around the clock

INSIDE

IT'S ALL THANKS TO YOU

SARAH'S STORY

rowcrofthospice.org.uk

rowcroft hospice

Registered Charity No: 282723

Welcome

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



Every day and night, my colleagues and I have the privilege of being there for people across South Devon when they need us most – bringing specialist care, comfort and compassion at the end of life. Whether we're visiting someone in their home in the small hours, supporting families on our Inpatient Unit at first light, or quietly holding a hand as the sun sets, it's an honour to do what we do – caring around the clock every single day.

But none of our care would be possible without you. Your generosity, kindness and belief in Rowcroft mean that we can keep caring – 24 hours a day, seven days a week – for people across our community.

> *"The incredible success of our Every Moment Matters Appeal in February has shown just how much our community cares."*

You've helped to make every precious moment count, and for that, we're truly grateful.

From all of us here at Rowcroft – thank you. Every visit, every smile and every moment of peace we provide is all thanks to you.

Holly Hayman
Nurse at Rowcroft Hospice

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Keep in touch

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70 champions, countless moments, one remarkable community!

Thanks to the incredible generosity of our supporters, our Every Moment Matters Appeal in February was a phenomenal success. Raising £211,000 in just 36 hours, it became one of the biggest and most successful appeals of its kind in Rowcroft's history!

"I was blown away by the warmth and generosity of our community," says Alison Upton, Appeal Manager. "Every single gift, every share, every message of support made a real difference. Seeing people come together with such passion for local hospice care was truly moving. It reminds us just how much our community cares."

A huge thank you to our 70 brilliant champions, whose energy and enthusiasm inspired their friends, family, and colleagues to donate. Thanks also to the generous local businesses and individuals who match-funded donations, doubling every gift and motivating others to give.

Because of this remarkable support, our teams can continue delivering specialist care and comfort to local people facing life-limiting illnesses, helping them to make the most of every moment.

From all of us at Rowcroft: thank you for stepping up, believing in our work, showing the power of community and helping to fund our vital care. You make every moment truly matter.

Every Moment Matters APPEAL



How you can help:

give · support · shop · volunteer · pledge · get involved

Hospice news

News in brief from around Rowcroft



Refreshing our Inpatient Unit

With the help of a government-funded capital grant, we've been busy enhancing our Inpatient Unit to make it even more comfortable, welcoming, and accessible for patients and their families. Our improvements include a brand new single room with ensuite, a new en-suite shower room for Hawthorne (a single room, pictured left), more storage, better accessibility, refreshed décor, a new kitchenette in the front lounge and family room for families to use, and improved garden access for beds – helping patients enjoy the outdoors more easily.

Devon Farm Kitchen wins big at the Food Drink Devon Awards

We're thrilled to share that Devon Farm Kitchen (DFK) scooped four awards at the Food Drink Devon Awards 2025/26!

Gold Sustainability Pioneer Award
Gold Online Retailer Award
Gold Producer Award (Chocolate and Walnut Pudding)
Silver Producer Award (Lancashire Hot Pot)

They also won a Taste of the West Award for their Turkey and Ham Pie.

DFK delivers frozen meals across South Devon, generating long-term revenue to support Rowcroft Hospice – and we couldn't be prouder! Order your meals at: devonfarmkitchen.co.uk or call: 01803 217477.





Future planning for pets

For so many of us, pets are an integral part of the family. That's why it's important to make future plans for our pets, for when we can no longer care for them ourselves. Our new online resource, 'Future planning for the care of your pet', complete with a short film, gently explores why future planning matters and how a few practical steps now can offer real reassurance later on. Visit: rowcrofthospice.org.uk/planning and see our Pet Care and Comfort Guide at rowcrofthospice.org.uk/pet-guide

Rowcroft highly commended at the Great British Care Awards



After being shortlisted for three categories at the Great British Care Awards (South West Region) in November 2025, Rowcroft received 'highly commended' recognition in the Putting People First category. This category shines a light on those who truly listen, adapt, and empower people to have a say in the care and support they receive.

A huge well done to our clinical team, who show every day what it means to put people first. Their dedication to offering personalised, inclusive care – shaped around each person's wishes – helps ensure that everyone we support is treated with dignity, kindness and respect.

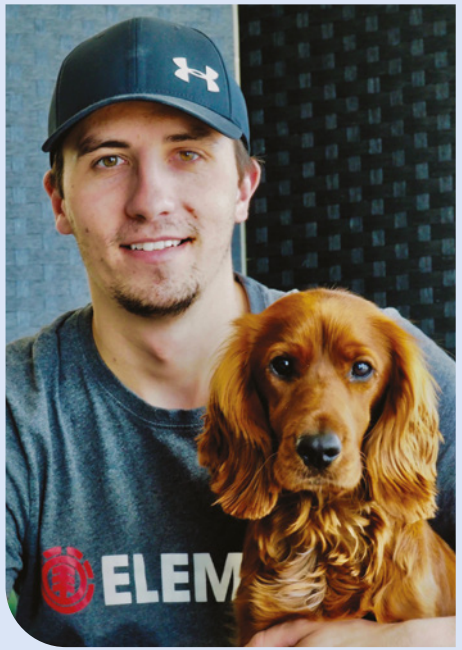
Sign language training for staff

We're thrilled to share that some members of our team will be learning sign language to better connect with people who are deaf or living with hearing impairments. At Rowcroft, we want everyone in our care to feel heard, understood, and supported – and this training will help us do just that. We're proud to take these steps to make our care more inclusive.



A mother's love: Sarah's story

In this moving story, Sarah shares how her son Harry received specialist end-of-life care from Rowcroft, enabling him to stay in the place he loved most: home



From a very young age, Harry Medwin from Shaldon was always thinking of others. "He loved to please," says his mum Sarah. "When he was at primary school, he would walk home and pick flowers for me from the hedge. He didn't have a bad bone in his body."

As he grew older, Harry spent his free time out on the water – wakeboarding, waterskiing, paddleboarding and having fun in the river with his friends. But in 2015, aged just 21, his life changed dramatically when he was diagnosed with a rare form of blood cancer that affects just one in a million people.

"At first, we just assumed he'd live," Sarah says. "We thought he'd have to have scans every six months, and everything would be fine."

For several years and through rounds of chemotherapy, Harry continued to work as an electrician, but in his mid-twenties the cancer returned far more aggressively. It was clear he needed specialist care – so Rowcroft's team stepped in.

"The Rowcroft team were just so lovely," Sarah says. "They would come out in the night if Harry needed pain relief – they were so quick to arrive, it was just amazing."

"At the door, they'd always give me a hug and ask, 'Are you looking after yourself too?'" says Sarah. "Sometimes I'd walk out to the car with them and have a little chat if something was worrying me. They did so much for me when I needed them."

Being able to stay at home meant everything to Harry. "He hated it when he was in hospital," Sarah says. "He was so much happier being here. From here, he could watch the boats in the river. It made so much difference to him – and to us – that he was at home."

Harry died at home in August 2022, aged 28. "It does actually give me comfort that he died here," says Sarah softly. "I know a lot of people wouldn't like it, but I just feel he's here with me. If he'd had to go to hospital, it would have been so much more traumatic for him."

Sarah is now an active supporter of the hospice and has raised an incredible £24,400 for Rowcroft through fundraising events at her home. "If you can give anything to Rowcroft, please do," she urges. "You just don't know when you might need them – and they're amazing."





Leave a legacy for the future

Leaving a gift to Rowcroft Hospice in your Will helps to support more people like Harry in the future. Through Rowcroft's Free Wills Service, you can now create a Will for free. Find out more at: www.rowcrofthospice.org.uk/legacy or call 01803 217405.

News from Rowcroft's shops

Thoughtful donations make a difference

We're so thankful to our community for donating items to our shops, helping to raise vital funds for the hospice. Unsaleable items, however, can incur a disposal cost. In the past, we received significant income from rags, but this has dramatically reduced due to market changes – making thoughtful, good-quality donations more important than ever.



"We're incredibly grateful for every good-quality item we receive. If you'd happily give it to a friend, it's perfect for us!"

Caroline Wannell, Rowcroft's Director of Retail

Rowcroft's House Clearance Service

Do you have a home to clear, or know someone in South Devon who does? Our friendly, professional team can take the pressure off by packing up the entire house contents – from furniture, kitchenware, books, electricals, soft furnishings and bric-a-brac, to wardrobes full of clothing, including modern day and vintage pieces. We take particular care with retro and collectible items, ensuring they are sensitively handled and given the best chance to be resold and cherished again, all to raise vital funds for the hospice.



We'll provide a free, no-obligation quote tailored to your home. Our service includes packing, removal, and basic post-clearance cleaning. Items that cannot be sold will be responsibly recycled to minimise waste. Find out more at: rowcrofthospice.org.uk/house-clearance or call: 01803 217400.



We're incredibly lucky to have Izzy as part of our Rowcroft team. After finishing university, Izzy decided to direct her energy and time into supporting a local charity.

"I wasn't sure what my next steps would be, but I knew I wanted to work for a meaningful cause," she says – and we're so glad she chose Rowcroft!

Izzy has been volunteering with our Marketing and Communications Team for two days a week for two years, and her contribution makes a huge difference. "My role has mainly involved writing content to support the hospice – from blogs sharing the stories of patients and supporters to press releases keeping our community informed." Her words bring Rowcroft's work to life and keep the hospice in the hearts and minds of our community.

Reflecting on her time with us, Izzy says, "The experience has been incredible. I work with a lovely team and have learned so much from them. I would wholeheartedly encourage anyone thinking about volunteering to go for it!"

Thank you, Izzy, for your dedication, warmth and creativity – we're so grateful for everything you do.

Fancy joining our team?

To find out more about our range of volunteering opportunities with the hospice, go to: rowcrofthospice.org.uk/volunteers or call our Volunteering Coordinator Clare Tanner on: 01803 210852.

Always loved



For Sarah Stickland, the word 'always' was at the heart of her life with her husband Craig. Their story began at an 18th birthday party. "From across the room I saw Craig, and from that moment I knew that he would always be by my side," she says.

Craig served in the army before they married in 1998 and went on to raise two children, Jade and Rupert. But in 2023, Craig was diagnosed with a devastating brain tumour. As his condition worsened, "Rowcroft came to us at a time of essential need," says Sarah. She recalls their arrival at the hospice:

"The sun was shining... it was like walking on air and the weight lifted off our shoulders. We could breathe again."

Craig spent two weeks at Rowcroft, surrounded by love. On Remembrance Day 2024, "The team pushed Craig's bed out into the garden as the sun rose... and he slowly drifted away."

"No words can be spoken to say how they made such a sad time into something special," Sarah says. "I can always feel Craig at Rowcroft when I go to the gardens. We will love him always."



Remembering loved ones

Rowcroft's Meadow of Memories celebration on Sunday 5 July offers a gentle space to remember and honour loved ones. By dedicating a wildflower, you help ensure hospice care is there for families – like Sarah's – when they need it most. Visit rowcrofthospice.org.uk/meadow



Teen trekker to scale Tanzanian giant in memory of his beloved nan

When 14-year-old Andrew Morgan from Babbacombe remembers his nan, Joy, his face lights up. "She was our Queen," he says proudly. "She was a force of nature – she was up for anything, and she was totally hilarious. No matter how bad your day had been, you'd forget all about it when you went to see her."

Joy was cared for by Rowcroft's Hospice at Home team before she died in August 2022. The experience left a deep impression on the then 11-year-old Andrew. "The Rowcroft team were amazing," he says. "They helped me understand what was happening and made it less scary. I genuinely believe at the bottom of my heart that Rowcroft is absolutely the best hospice."



Now, Andrew is taking on the challenge of a lifetime in Joy's honour. This September, he'll climb the highest peak in Africa – Mount Kilimanjaro – with his mum and dad, aiming to raise an incredible £5,000 for the hospice.

"I know Nan would be really proud," he says. "Rowcroft cared for her so brilliantly, and this is my way of saying thank you."



To sponsor Andrew and the family, please go to: justgiving.com/page/louise-lawrence-123

MY LAST HURRAH! SAYING GOODBYE WITH LOVE

By Debbi Shotton, Rowcroft's Community Fundraiser



After 13 years as a Rowcroft Community Fundraiser, it is time for me to hang up my lanyard, and hand over the reins. I will be retiring in May, and whilst I am looking forward to new adventures, I will really miss the wonderful relationships I have developed over my time here.



It has been amazing to support so many of you through your fundraising journeys across the years. Many people decide to fundraise for Rowcroft due to the loss of someone dear to them, and that they put their trust in me to guide them at such an emotional time, is an immense privilege.

From coffee mornings to crocheted Christmas trees, marathons to music events, quilting to quizzes, I have been constantly surprised at the lengths our community goes to for Rowcroft, and I know you will continue to support us with the help of my fabulous colleagues here in the Fundraising Team.

I am incredibly grateful to everyone who has contributed to my amazing experiences in this role, and I have learnt so much from every single one of you – supporters, volunteers, and colleagues alike.



"I will leave you with a few shining examples of fabulous fundraisers from the last 13 years. If you or your event are not in this collage, it is because I ran out of space, not love."

GET INVOLVED!

Here's a round-up of exciting events and ways to support Rowcroft – pop these in your calendar and help us continue caring for local people when it matters most. 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.

Spring and summer 2026

OPEN GARDENS
Our Open Gardens season is back in bloom! Take a wander through some of South Devon's most beautiful gardens and help support local hospice care. If you'd like to open your own garden for Rowcroft, we'd love to hear from you!



June

20 JUNE THE SLEEP WALK
Great news – The Sleep Walk returns to Torbay! Join hundreds of supporters on our eight-mile-walk, striding through the night to raise vital funds for the hospice.



July

5 JULY MEADOW OF MEMORIES
Dedicate a wildflower in our vibrant Meadow of Memories here at Rowcroft, and honour the people who continue to hold a special place in your heart by joining our wonderful celebration on Sunday 5 July.



September

20 SEPTEMBER
TORBAY HALF MARATHON & 10K
Pull on your running shoes and take on the Torbay Half or 10k for the hospice. Every step helps local families facing the toughest of times.



3–13 SEPTEMBER
MOUNT KILIMANJARO TREK
A group of incredible supporters are taking on the challenge of a lifetime – climbing the 5,895-metre peak of Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania in aid of Rowcroft.

November

29 NOVEMBER LIGHT UP A LIFE
Dedicate a light on our Tree of Light in memory of someone close to your heart, and join us for our remembrance event on Sunday 29 November at 4pm in the hospice grounds.

All year

ROWCROFT'S BIG BAKE
Mix, bake and share something delicious to support hospice care. From coffee mornings to bake-offs, it's all about raising sweet funds for Rowcroft!

2027

10–15 MARCH 2027 SAHARA TREK
Experience the magic of the desert on our unforgettable Sahara challenge. This awe-inspiring trek offers breathtaking landscapes and quiet moments under star-filled skies. The trek culminates at the top of the mighty Chigaga Dunes to watch the sunrise.





We are proud to support Rowcroft Hospice in their important end-of-life care on behalf of our community



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