

Spring 2026



St Michael's  
Hospice

# Caring Times

## Welcome to your first Caring Times newsletter for 2026.

Inside these pages, you'll find stories, updates and moments from across your Hospice—made possible because of you.

Before anything else, we want to say thank you. Your kindness and generosity are at the heart of everything we do. Because of supporters like you fundraising, donating, volunteering, leaving gifts in Wills and raising awareness, we can be there for people across North Hampshire facing some of life's most difficult times: living with a life-limiting illness, approaching the end of life, or coping with bereavement.

Every day, your support helps create moments that truly matter. A patient is cared for with dignity and family is given time and space together. Someone facing loss finds

comfort. A given time to be Someone finds

# Welcome

understanding and support. These moments happen because of you.

In this edition, we're proud to share more about the services you help make possible—from our MND clinic and Young and Widowed group to our Meerkats Child Bereavement Service, supporting children and families when they need it most.

It may come as a surprise that only a small proportion of our funding comes from the government. Yet hospice care is essential, not a luxury. To continue providing our services, we must raise an additional £15,000 every single day.

Any support you can give helps ensure more people can access palliative, end-of-life and bereavement care. And because of you, we can continue to bring comfort, compassion and dignity to every person we care for—today, tomorrow and for many years to come.



If you'd like to support us, please consider becoming a Regular Giver or donating to our appeal by completing the donation form included in this pack, visiting our website or call us on 01256 848848. Thank you.

**Scan the QR code to find out more!**



# St. Michael's Hospice Meerkats

Guiding children and young adults through the journey of loss.



Thanks to an incredibly generous donation, we are delighted to be launching Meerkats, our new Child Bereavement Service, this year.

Meerkats will offer specialist emotional support to children and young people who have a significant adult (such as a parent or grandparent), who is using the Hospice due to a life-limiting illness or, who have been bereaved of an adult close to them who used the Hospice services.

We will work alongside families with children up to the age of 18. Anyone over the age of 18 will be supported by our Bereavement or Family and Patient Support teams at St. Michael's Hospice.

Every child's experience is different, and we will work closely with families to understand and respond to each child's individual needs.

## Why support like this matters

Children have the capacity to cope well with loss providing they have appropriate support. However, we understand that it can be difficult for family members to provide this; the balance of wanting to protect children alongside knowing the 'right'

thing to say can feel impossible at times.

Even when family members encourage open conversations about what is happening, children might hold back due to worrying that asking questions will increase others' distress. Sometimes, children simply can't find the words to explain how they're feeling.

Talking about illness and dying can feel frightening and uncertain for everyone.

## How Meerkats will support families

Our support will be tailored to each child and family, and may include:

- Guidance and reassurance for parents and carers

*Greif turns your world black and white - monochrome. Meerkats brought colour back into our lives.*



**New service for 2026**

# Child Bereavement Service

- Advice and support for schools and other agencies
- One-to-one therapeutic support for children, where appropriate
- Group sessions throughout the year for bereaved children—offering opportunities for connection, shared experiences and fun

## Children and grief

All children are different and their responses will vary depending on the individual child, their age and their experiences. It is important to know that children's expression of grief is different to the way in which adults grieve.

Children may be upset, angry or could even appear uninterested; this does not mean they do not care but it can take time for children to understand and process what has happened.

They may know they can speak to a parent or another trusted adult but finding the words can be difficult; children are more likely to demonstrate their emotions through their behaviour.

## How can I support a child going through bereavement?

There are many ways to support a child through bereavement:

### 1. Reassure them that their feelings are normal

Children may experience many different emotions. Let them know there is no

“right” or “wrong” way to grieve.

### 2. Let them see you're grief

Sharing your feelings can help children feel less alone, while reassuring them that they are safe and cared for.

### 3. Create opportunities to talk

Offer chances to talk, but let the child lead how much they want to share.

### 4. Find other ways to communicate

Writing, drawing, texting or journalling can help children express feelings they may struggle to say out loud.

### 5. Reassure them they are not to blame

Children can sometimes feel responsible for what has happened—gentle reassurance is important.

### 6. Maintain routines where possible

Familiar routines help children feel safe and secure during uncertain times.

### 7. Keep schools informed

This allows teachers to offer appropriate understanding and support.

### 8. Remember together

Creating memory boxes, photo albums or sharing stories can help keep connections alive.





This could really help our in-patient team bring profound relief at the most fragile time of life

# Help us create moments that matter

More than ever we need your help to continue running the vital services so many in our community rely on.

Every day, we witness extraordinary courage from people who are facing the end of their lives, people who are mothers, fathers, partners, siblings, and friends. People who still have stories to tell, hands to hold, and precious moments to share with those they love. Our role is to make sure those final days are not defined by fear or pain, but by comfort, dignity, and peace.

**£170**  
could help fund an hour visit from one of our Hospice at Home team.

**£100**  
could help towards the funding of 5 hours of Hospice Nursing care.

**£37**  
could help fund a bereavement counselling session for a patient's loved one.

**£25**  
could help fund a pain-relieving massage for a patient.

Donate to our appeal today by scanning the QR code.



# Jim's story

**Jim and Jan, shared their story and experience of being introduced to the Hospice through our Living Well Together service.**



We were both aware of St. Michael's Hospice, but we had never needed to step through the doors before being invited to the Living Well Service.

I went to the doctor for three years with concerns, but I was told it was 'just my blood pressure'. The pain continued to get worse, and eventually I had a scan for suspected kidney stones. Friday 13 November 2019 (days like these make the date stick in your mind), I received a call that explained they had found a tumour.

Everything moved quickly. I was seen by several doctors and underwent surgery, in the same hospital that I had spent over a decade working in. During the surgery they found the tumour had spread in the time it had taken to diagnose. The doctors removed as much as possible but were unable to extract it all due to its position in my body.

It was one of the hardest moments of my life, being told the tumour had spread and there was nothing more to be done. I'm in my 70s, and at my age you're aware that you have a certain life expectancy – but seeing it written in black and white hit me very hard.

When you get a terminal cancer diagnosis it affects your whole life, including your family. I feel there are two ways to take that kind of news, to sit and cry, or get on with it. We have a bit of both some days, but most of the time we keep smiling.

So, I must live with it – we as a family are living with it. My wife and family are such a support to me.

I think a lot of people have the feeling that a hospice is the end – but it's the opposite. It supports the patients and their carers. Jan has people at St. Michael's Hospice to help

her and it's important for me to have that peace of mind – that's what hospices offer and I don't think they are given the credit or support they deserve.

The Living Well Service explained the Hospice services such as complementary therapy, counselling and different medical support. We met other couples in similar situations to us. We were able to sit down and talk to other people going through similar situations. You know their thoughts and feelings are the same. We met as strangers but after the first session we became friends – we are still meeting up even though the course is finished.

"Coming to the Living Well Service and being shown around the Hospice, we saw what a lovely place it is. We thought it was only a place for your last days, but there is so much they do for you. From the minute I walked in I felt warmth and calm – I feel it every time I come back." – Jan, Jim's wife.

**I now can't imagine life without St. Michael's Hospice – and I don't think people realise how important it is as a living environment, not a dying environment.**

We don't know what is going to happen; the tumours will get bigger and will become a problem, but knowing these people are here to support, and can be contacted when needed is very reassuring for the future.

The hospital is only there to look after the patient. It's difficult as family members are often left while waiting for loved ones to have surgery. The Hospice is there for everyone.





# MND Support

## What is MND?

Motor Neurone Disease (MND) is a progressive neurological condition that affects the motor neurones (nerve cells) responsible for controlling voluntary muscles.

As the disease progresses, these nerves stop sending signals to the muscles, leading to increasing weakness, loss of mobility, and difficulties with speech, swallowing, and breathing. Although **there is currently no cure**, a multidisciplinary approach can significantly improve quality of life and support patients and their families throughout the course of the illness.

## How do we support MND patients?

Our service provides holistic, patient-centred care delivered by a specialist team including a palliative care consultant, specialist occupational therapist, specialist physiotherapist, and palliative care nurse.

We run a monthly MND clinic where patients are reviewed by a wider multidisciplinary team, including a neurologist, speech and language therapist, dietician, enteral nutrition nurse specialist, and an MNDA volunteer.

“In addition to the clinic, we support patients between appointments through home visits and outpatient reviews to ensure timely assessment and management of changing needs. We also work closely with the respiratory team in Southampton to monitor and support respiratory function, ensuring coordinated care for patients and their families throughout their MND journey.” – Emma, Therapy Lead

This financial year, we were able to continue supporting people across North Hampshire thanks to generous supporters like you, and funding from charities such as The James Tudor Foundation. Thank you for helping us to provide specialised care when it is needed most.



*“On the day of my husband’s diagnosis, our lives changed forever. We didn’t know what to do next or which way to turn. Then a phone call out of the blue from the palliative care consultant put our minds at rest. This continued as we were introduced to our support team. This included the Occupational Therapist, who became an important part of our life and journey. Someone who we regularly leaned on. The Complementary Therapists for a little relaxing time. They played an integral part in introducing members of the wider MND team, and enteral nutrition nurse specialist. What a team!*

*They encouraged us to do the travelling we wanted to do, supporting us each step of the journey and solving every obstacle that could have got in the way. Even providing reassurance whilst we were in Europe. Nobody wants that kind of diagnosis, but having their support and encouragement made a hard 13 months a little bit easier. I am forever grateful.”*

**Jo, wife of a Hospice MND patient**



# When life changes, so should your Will

***Look after those you care for while supporting your local hospice.  
Make or update your Will today.***

Life can change so quickly, from saying 'I do' to someone special, or 'hello' to a new member of the family or 'goodbye' to a loved one. Having an up-to-date Will can make a real difference to your family in the future.

1 in 5 patients cared for by St. Michael's Hospice are funded by the local community through initiatives like Make a Will. We have two easy ways for you to choose from to create or update your Will, to suit your needs and budget, whilst securing the future for your family and local hospice:

## 1. Farewill

St. Michael's Hospice has partnered with Farewill, a free Will writing service, that can help you write your Will from the comfort of your own home. They have experts on-hand who can answer any questions.

## 2. Make a Will

Thanks to the generosity of several local solicitors who have waived their usual fees for preparing simple single or joint Wills, you can donate the fee to St. Michael's Hospice instead. Appointments are limited, so we encourage you to contact the participating solicitors early to take advantage of this offer.

***For full information please visit  
[stmichaelshospice.org.uk/gifts-in-wills](http://stmichaelshospice.org.uk/gifts-in-wills)***

### ***All your solicitor needs:***

- Our charity name and address  
- St. Michael's Hospice (North Hampshire)
- Basil de Ferranti House, Aldermaston Road,  
Basingstoke, RG24 9NB
- Our registered charity number - 1002856



# Fundraising Spotlight

## Plumbase headshave

Plumbase went above and beyond with a charity head shave and raffle. A huge thank you goes to Brett House, Ricky Doyle and Kane Barber for bravely taking part in the head shave, and to Sharon and Suzie for organising the raffle, with prizes kindly donated by Plumbase and its suppliers.

“We’re absolutely thrilled to have raised over £2,500 which was matched by UKPS, making the total over **£5,000** from our charity head shave and raffle. We had a target of £1,000 and massively surpassed that thanks to the generosity of our local customer and suppliers. We at Plumbase pride ourselves on working and supporting such an important local charity that means so much to so many of us.” – Kane Barber, Branch Manager of Plumbase.



## Christmas Tree Collection

In January, our annual Christmas Tree Collection got the year off to a wonderful start. More than 500 trees were collected from homes across our local community, **raising an incredible £11,300** to support our work. This wouldn't have been possible without the dedication of our volunteer teams and corporate supporters, including Entrepreneurs Hub, Bunzl, EMCOR, Carson & Hughes, Epitome, Greenhouse Graphics, R W Armstrong and Kier. Their determination, time, and community spirit helped transform festive leftovers into vital funds, showing the power of partnership and community generosity in action.



## Tesco Chineham Heroes

Our dedicated volunteers spent two days at the Tesco Chineham store, generously supported by the local team, **raising an incredible £2,455.27**. The collection was a wonderful example of the community coming together during the festive season to support St. Michael's Hospice.

Jane Stubbs shared her experience, saying, “It has been a real honour to support and volunteer for St. Michael's Hospice over the past years, from Xmas wrapping at Basingstoke (dressing up as a box), Light Up a Life serving the teas, coffee and mulled wine, supporting at the Moonlight Walk, and clearing up after an event at Oakley. Beyond volunteering, I have been pleased to donate raffle prizes when needed to yourselves and other events. Alongside myself and two of my managers, we gifted chocolates for your amazing staff and games for your family room that was collected through Tesco and Basingstoke Furniture Projects Toy Appeal.”



## Entrepreneurs Hub Golf Day

On 18 September, our corporate supporter Entrepreneurs Hub hosted their annual Golf Day at Sandford Springs Golf Club, bringing colleagues and supporters together for a friendly day on the course. The event combined teamwork, community spirit and a shared commitment to making a difference within our local community.

“Supporting St. Michael’s Hospice, is always an honour, as it’s a cause that is close to our hearts here at Entrepreneurs Hub. **This year we raised £4,610** at our annual golf day and knowing that this will help local people is very special to us.

It’s always a pleasure to work with the Fundraising team and we look forward to supporting again in the future.” – Katy, Executive Assistant at Entrepreneurs Hub



## Primary School Fundraisers

Local schools laced up their trainers and donned their antlers to take part in our Reindeer Run for Schools in December, **collectively raising £1,853**. We are incredibly grateful to Starlings Pre-School, Silchester Church of England Primary School, Alphabet City Day Nursery and Bramley Church of England Primary School for their wonderful support.

For Starlings Pre-School, this fundraiser was especially meaningful, held in memory of their friend and colleague, Kate, who was cared for by St. Michael’s Hospice. Lesley Rust reflected, “This fundraiser was very close to our hearts, as St. Michael’s Hospice cared for our dear friend and colleague, Kate. Kate will always be part of Starlings Pre-School, and we look forward to continuing to support the Hospice in the future.”

## Trusts and foundations

Grants and donations from charitable trusts and foundations are essential for maintaining our hospice services. In the last financial year, we received support from various trusts and foundations that **helped us raise over £250,000**, which is incredibly generous and vital to caring for our local community!

This support also enables us to undertake important initiatives, such as our Energy Efficiency Project. These initiatives are crucial in helping our hospice save costs, which can then be redirected to patient care and support, ensuring that we can sustain our services for many years to come.

If you know of any trusts or foundations that might be willing to support us, we would love to hear from you.

Drop us a line at [trusts@stmichaelshospice.org.uk](mailto:trusts@stmichaelshospice.org.uk)



**Feeling inspired? Find out how you can support us by emailing [fundraising@stmichaelshospice.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@stmichaelshospice.org.uk) or call 01256 848848.**



# 2026 Event Calendar



Support your local hospice!

APR 26

Woodland Walk

Farleigh Wallop Estate

JUN 14

Big Wheel

War Memorial Park

JUL 12

Summer Memories

Worting House

SEP 11

Golf Day

Test Valley Golf Club

SEP 26

Moonlight Walk

Festival Place

NOV 29

Reindeer Run

Alton

DEC 6

Light up a Life

Basingstoke

DEC 13

Reindeer Run

Basingstoke



Scan the QR code  
to sign up today!

Find out more: [stmichaelshospice.org.uk/events](https://stmichaelshospice.org.uk/events)



# Hospice at Home

## Offering choice when it matters most.

Our Hospice at Home team offers specialised management of symptoms and end of life support to patients and their families within a patient's home during the last two weeks of life.

We understand that for some people, the thought of going into a hospice can be unsettling, and for patients' families, it can often make a worrying situation seem even harder to deal with.

Our philosophy at St. Michael's Hospice is to always offer our patients a choice about

where they would prefer to receive our services. If they wish to stay in the comfort and familiar surroundings of their home, Hospice at Home will ensure that they get the necessary emotional, psychological and practical nursing support that they need.

It can be a difficult subject to talk about, but we believe that every person who is faced with life-limiting illness has the right to choose where they die. If that is at home, then we will do everything we can to fulfil that wish.



**"I want to thank all of you for looking after my sister in the Hospice and at home. You were all so kind, professional, gentle, and caring.**

**She died at home as she wished, after living with a brain tumour for 12 months. It was the hardest time for me and our family, too. We couldn't have coped as we did without your advice and reassurance. We'll support St. Michael's Hospice for the rest of our lives. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for all you did for us!"**

**St. Michael's Hospice patient's sister.**

**Did you know that our care is provided across North Hampshire based on your GP's location?**

**Find out more about our catchment area:**





# Patient & Family Support

**Thanks to you, our Patient and Family Support Team is able to offer practical, emotional, spiritual and social support to patients, their families and friends. Did you know we offer all the services below?**

## Complementary Therapies

Gentle treatments used alongside conventional treatment to relieve stress and tension and to aid relaxation. These therapies can provide emotional support and may also help with the relief of physical symptoms, enhancing wellbeing and quality of life. Our Complementary Therapists offer treatments on the In-patient Unit and in our outpatient facility, The Turner Centre.

## Counselling

Our Counselling service is offered to all those that are affected by a life-limiting illness and for those that have to cope with grief after loss. We provide one-to-one counselling sessions where patients and relatives can talk about their experience and what's important to them.

## Bereavement Support

The death of someone significant can be one of the most challenging and painful life experiences we face. Grief is often described as a roller coaster of emotions and it can be hard to make sense of our feelings and reactions and see a way forward after a loss.

Our Bereavement Support Services help people who have to cope with grief after loss.

While the support of family and friends can be invaluable, for different reasons, this may not always be possible.

We provide the following bereavement support to anyone if they have experienced the loss of someone who was being cared for by St. Michael's Hospice services:

## 1. Bereavement Evening

A one-off, two-hour informal group session providing information about grief and loss and an opportunity to meet with others experiencing loss, in a caring and supportive atmosphere.

It can be comforting for people to know that they are not alone in their feelings and to meet others who are facing a similar situation can be a positive step in coping with loss.

## 2. Bereavement Coffee Morning

Our bereavement coffee mornings offer a welcoming and friendly space to meet and talk with others going through something similar.

We host two coffee mornings - one in Basingstoke and the other in Alton to try and meet our community and support them where it is best for them.

Basingstoke Coffee Morning: Held the last Friday of the month from 11am to 12:30pm at St. Michael's Hospice.

Alton Bereavement Coffee Morning: Held the second Monday of the month from 11am to 12:30pm at Alton Maltings.

## 3. Bereavement Walk and Talk

We understand that for some, the idea of sitting and speaking is difficult. Our Walk and Talk sessions give everyone the opportunity to get some fresh air, gentle exercise and support.

Our walks take place on the third Friday of each month. We meet at the Hospice at 10.15am for a leisurely 40-minute walk followed by refreshments.

#### 4. The Bereavement Journey Course: A Place to Talk

For anyone who has been bereaved at any time and in any way.

Unlike our other bereavement support groups, the Bereavement Journey is a 7-week course with structured sessions to support people through loss. It is available to all those who have had contact with St. Michael's Hospice.

#### 5. NEW Young and Widowed Support Group (YAWS)

The death of a spouse or partner is one of the most stressful events in life. Younger widows and widowers in particular face unique challenges and may benefit from specific bereavement support as well as meeting those facing similar pressures.

Our new Young and Widowed Support Group is an open forum where those affected can meet with others in a relaxed setting for a casual coffee and chat, supported by a Bereavement Counsellor. Held on the second Wednesday of the month from 6.30pm to 8pm at St. Michael's Hospice, the group aims to provide peer-to-peer emotional and practical support to young, widowed people.



*"It's my safe space to talk to others who have gone through the same experience. This place is amazing, along with all the volunteers."*

**Bereavement Coffee Morning Attendee**



*"The hospital is such a rush - they just want to fix you up and send you home. The Hospice was such a relief. They give you the space and comfort to give dignity in your last days."*

**Walk and Talk Attendee**



*"When I first saw the list of services, I quickly ruled out the coffee morning and chose the walk instead. I was worried it might feel like a formal counselling session. I was wrong, instead, it felt like sitting in a coffee shop with a friend. Warm, comforting, and easy to talk."*

**Walk and Talk, and Bereavement Coffee Morning Attendee**





# Spotlight on Retail

Whether you're furnishing a new home or refreshing your wardrobe, you'll find something special in our shops—all at affordable prices.

In December 2025, St. Michael's Hospice proudly opened the doors to our new charity shop in Alresford. The Grade II listed building has been carefully restored to its former glory, with original features such as the traditional fireplace brought back to life, alongside a full makeover of the store.

Our Retail team has filled the shop with a wide range of beautiful preloved items—from women's, men's and children's clothing to accessories, books and bric-a-brac. We also warmly welcome donations from the local community, helping to fund the vital care we provide both in our In-Patient Unit in Basingstoke and in people's homes across North Hampshire.

Colin Tanner, Retail Business Manager at St.

Michael's Hospice, said:

"We are excited to introduce our new store to Alresford. We have a wonderful variety of items, all generously donated by our local community."

The new shop marks St. Michael's Hospice's twelfth store across North Hampshire, including our Furniture Store. Each of our shops is truly unique—no two visits are ever the same. You might discover hidden gems, from collectables and household items to clothing for the whole family.

At our Furniture Store, we have also introduced a range of new white goods, including washing machines and fridges, alongside duvets, pillows and small electrical appliances from well-known brands such as Hotpoint, Daewoo and Silentnight.





# Join our amazing team of **Volunteers**

**Our volunteers are crucial to almost every aspect of what we do. Without people generously giving their time and skills, we would be unable to continue delivering vital care and support to our patients and their families.**

Could you—or someone you know—help us make a difference?

By giving your time, you can help raise vital funds, be part of a supportive community and make a real impact for people across North Hampshire.

We offer a wide range of volunteering opportunities, so there's something for everyone. From helping in our shops to supporting events and collections, you can play a valuable role as part of our wonderful Hospice team.

Our events simply wouldn't be possible without our volunteers. And the best part? It's completely flexible. You can get involved as much or as little as you like—choosing

the events or collections that suit you, meeting new people and having fun along the way. There are also opportunities across our wider services, from supporting our e-commerce team within Retail to helping with Tai Chi sessions in our Living Well Service.

**Please call Voluntary Services on 01256 631889 or email [volunteer@stmichaelshospice.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@stmichaelshospice.org.uk)**

All volunteer opportunities and application forms are also on our website: **[www.stmichaelshospice.org.uk](http://www.stmichaelshospice.org.uk)**

Scan the QR code for our current volunteer opportunities →



## **Our volunteers dedicated**

**73,168 hours**

financial year 25/26

saving the Hospice  
**£914,258!**



# Your Impact



Last year, your kindness and generosity helped us to provide free, compassionate care to our patients and their families across North Hampshire. Your support helped us to provide:

We need to raise  
**£15,000**  
per day to run our services



**557 bereavement counselling sessions**

were carried out for the loved ones of our patients, including support groups

Patients and their families received their care and support free of charge:

**100%**

**317 patients**

were admitted to our IPU for care (including day cases)

Hospice at Home received  
**7,224 calls**

from families who needed advice or information



**730**

complementary therapy sessions were held for our patients and their carers



**1,193**

Occupational Therapy and physiotherapy visits to patients homes and on our In-patient Unit.



**634**

patients and their loved ones attended Living Well services



Our Hospice at Home team made

**1,916 visits**

to our patients in their homes



*Thank you!*