

# Connected

Summer 2023



ST.MICHAEL'S  
**HOSPICE**  
(NORTH HAMPSHIRE)



## Welcome!

**Welcome to our mini Connected Newsletter, keeping you updated on what's been happening here at the Hospice.**

Our year has been off to a busy start, with various projects across the Hospice. In this newsletter, you can learn more about these exciting developments.

Over the past six months, we have held our Get Moving in March virtual challenge, Walk for the Hospice, Movie Night, and Patient Comfort Appeal. Thanks to everyone who participated or donated, helping us raise vital funds to care for our patients and their families. We truly appreciate your support!

We have many more events planned for the year, and you can find more information on the back page of this newsletter.

Thank you for being a part of our community and helping us make a difference in the lives of those who need our care.

A glimpse at what your fundraising and donations have helped us do from January to the end of June this year:



**143** patients were admitted to our In-Patient Unit for care.



**826** visits were made to patients in their homes by our Hopice at Home team.



**279** face-to-face bereavement sessions were held for patients' families.

All of the services we provide are free to our patients and their families. As an independent charity, we need to raise £14,000 a day this year to provide our services - so every pound really does make a huge difference.

# Simon's story

Written by Sarah, Simon's wife.

My husband Simon was only 56 years old when he died. He was fun, kind, and dedicated to family and friends. He was also focussed, determined and a 'triathlete'. We ran, swam and cycled but during lockdown, like many others, had to make do with walking only. He was thrilled to be able to give his daughter away at her COVID limited wedding in September, still a joyful day. He was so proud of both his children and how they had grown into constructive, caring adults.

Then in January 2021, in the second year of COVID, he started experiencing some severe pain. Simon didn't tolerate being ill; there was always paracetamol and ibuprofen at hand before needing any medical intervention but this was so severe that he had to go to A&E at Basingstoke Hospital, where he was admitted.

His deterioration was rapid. The scans they had done immediately showed something was very wrong. It was only seven days after Simon arrived at the hospital when we discovered he had caecal cancer. He was given only weeks to live.

The next day our grown-up children, Chloe and Duncan, rushed to be with Simon. A downfall of snow on Sunday sent my daughter back to her home 2.5 hours away. My son left the evening before, both of them having spent the day with their Dad. They went home to sort things out in preparation for returning to Basingstoke; we were all thinking they had time. It was Sunday morning and by this time the nurse felt he needed to be admitted to St. Michael's to have the specialist pain relief he desperately needed.

She found Simon a newly opened bed at the Hospice. Despite the syringe driver they attached and the calmer atmosphere of the Hospice, it was hard to see him continue to be in pain for a while. I had to leave his room, unwilling to let him hear my distress at his condition, and the continuing kindness of the nursing staff led to one of the healthcare assistants asking whether I would like someone to support me.

The palliative care doctor warned me he was close to dying. We called the children and Simon was able to have a video call with them to say goodbye. The **staff found the right mixture to ease his pain, and were kind and gentle, fun and thoughtful** as we sat through our night vigil. The night staff were very professional and attuned to his final moments, as I was able to be with him and he died holding my hand.

They tended to my need for announcing his death to the family, and were gentle in allowing space to spend with him in the chapel before the undertakers took his body away.

**We received their full professional and human attention when we needed it most. I am full of thanks for their attention, humanity, and compassion.**

Sadly, 8 months later, Chloe, who was just 27, was diagnosed with stomach cancer. She returned to Basingstoke in November for Simon's memorial but it was only made possible by St. Michael's: she needed two nurses to come to our home to change her syringe driver or she could not have made the journey. Chloe died in spring 2022.

**"I am so grateful to everyone at St. Michael's, for all their kindness and professionalism. Thank you."**





# How your support makes a difference

Thanks to donations made by our community, we've undertaken some very exciting projects at the Hospice recently, including updating our family room. This space is now a welcoming and relaxing environment for when families come to visit their relatives.

We've also made some improvements to our children's area in the Conservatory, with new resources to help children with bereavement, and lots of books and games for when they visit.

## Memory Tree

You may have also heard, or seen, that we've updated our special Memory Tree after receiving supporter feedback. The tree has been relocated to a more poignant place in the Hospice, where families can come and reflect and remember their loved ones. We've also changed the leaves from green to silver, bronze and gold, and added a meadow of sunflowers at the base of the tree.

If you'd like more information on making a dedication to a loved one, visit [stmichaelshospice.org.uk/memorytree](http://stmichaelshospice.org.uk/memorytree)

Here at our Hospice, we believe in making everyone feel at home. We've already made a few changes to create an inclusive and welcoming environment, and we're continuing to work on improvements throughout the summer. We'll make sure to keep you updated on our progress.



## Breaking barriers

Students from The Hurst School recently participated in an art project organised by the Hospice and Hampshire Hospitals Palliative Care Service. The project aimed to break down barriers by bringing together a group of patients and young adults to work on an art-based project.

Ten children and ten patients met at the Hospice every week for four weeks. They were then tasked with creating their masterpiece with their partner. At the end of the fourth week, parents were invited to come in and celebrate the artwork and relationships created during the project.

Paul Hutton, Living Well Service Lead at St. Michael's Hospice said, 'It has been an absolute pleasure to welcome the pupils from The Hurst School to St. Michael's and to see the incredible interaction and creativity between them and some of our patients.'

Sara Conran, Head of Year 9 at The Hurst School said: "Our students have really enjoyed being part of this project, from working on initial design ideas, to creating some fantastic artwork. But more importantly, they worked alongside some brave, resilient and amazing patients, getting to know them and forming an understanding of what a hospice is and does. I would like to thank everyone involved for setting this up and inviting us to be a part of it."

The artwork is being displayed at The Hurst School for staff, students and parents to enjoy.





# Walk for the Hospice

On Sunday 23 April, more than 200 people gathered at Farleigh Wallop Estate to take on a 5.1-mile walk in aid of our patients and their families. Sponsored by local business Juniper Research, the walk took place in the exclusive grounds of Farleigh Wallop Estate. Walkers were treated to sights of the Hampshire countryside, including bluebells.

The event, which takes place every year, sees walkers take on the challenge, while raising funds for us. Events Manager, Becky Legate, said, 'Thank you to everyone who took part or supported our Walk for the Hospice event. It was lovely to see so many people from our community come together to help us provide vital care for our patients. Well done and thank you!'

We want to say a huge thank you to everyone who took part and volunteered at the event - all funds raised will help us make a difference to our patients and their families.

## What's on?

There are lots of ways you can get involved in helping raise much-needed funds to help us support our patients and their families.



**Golf Day & BBQ** - Sign up for our Golf Day, taking place at Sherfield Oaks Golf Club on **Friday 8 September**. Take part in our golf competition as a team of 4, followed by a BBQ lunch. Sign up now: [stmichaelshospice.org.uk/golfday](https://stmichaelshospice.org.uk/golfday)

**Moonlight Walk** - Light up the night at our 2023 Glitter and Glow Moonlight Walk on **Saturday 30 September**. Starting at 9pm from Festival Place, this is a 10k sponsored walk around Basingstoke. Sign up now: [stmichaelshospice.org.uk/moonlight](https://stmichaelshospice.org.uk/moonlight)

### Coming this Autumn!

You can find out more about other upcoming events such as our BRAND NEW **Firewalk**, Light up a Life and Reindeer Run by keeping an eye on our website!

### Shop with us - selected shops now open Sundays!

Did you know our Furniture Store and shops in Brighton Hill, Chineham and Wote street are open on Sundays? Don't forget to pop in to find some pre-loved treasures!

# Thank you

Registered Charity Number: 1002856

