



# The Sunflower

supporter newsletter

Issue No. 04  
Autumn 2024

Will you help  
protect hospice  
care in the future?

**Plus**

How we're celebrating 30 years in our shops

Hear about the launch of our new strategy

**St Margaret's  
Hospice Care**

# Welcome

Welcome to the Autumn edition of our Sunflower Newsletter. I hope you have enjoyed your summer. Thank you to everyone who has supported St Margaret's Hospice so far this year. Whether you have opened your garden during our Glorious Gardens campaign, volunteered at, or visited one of our amazing shops, or organised an event in your local community, we really value your support. **Thank you for making a difference.**

In this issue we share how we celebrated Hospice Care Week, between 7 - 13 October. We shine the spotlight on our shops, three of which are celebrating their 30th anniversary this year. We also share stories from Lynda and Simon - whose loved ones were cared for by the hospice.

Thank you once again for your continued support. We hope you enjoy this newsletter and look forward to seeing some of you at one of our events soon.

With best wishes,

*George*

Supporter Care Manager



## Contents

Thank you	3
Shops – Celebrating 30 years	4-5
Hospice Care Week	6-8
Our care in numbers	9
Lynda's story	10-11
Your gift is our future	12-13
Volunteers Cate & Josh	14-15
Looking ahead	16-17
Simon & Vicki's story	18-19

## A huge thank you

A heartfelt thank you goes out to everyone who has donated money, time or goods to St Margaret's Hospice over the past six months. We are so lucky to be part of such an incredible community of people who go above and beyond - here are just a few examples of the support we have received in recent months.



**Lisa Manning** and her salon clients donated beauty goody bags for those on our In-Patient Unit.

**Cookie Patel** organised a cricket workshop with Queen Camel Cricket Group. He spent time with three age groups, helping them bat, bowl and field, raising **£314!**

**UK Hydrographic Office staff** have chosen us as their charity of the year for 2024 and 2025.

**Somerset County Cricket Club** supported the Big Somerset Cricket Bash by providing tickets to a County Championship match.

**Roz and Duncan Meikle** raised a fabulous **£1,681** from donations in lieu of gifts for their golden wedding anniversary.

**Count and Countess de Salis** opened the grounds of their beautiful home, and hosted the Yarlinton Opera, raising over **£26,000**.

**All our amazing Glorious Garden** owners who kindly opened their gardens for us helping to raise over **£30,000**.



**Nigel Cox and his team** created a wonderful garden at the Bath & West Show to support St Margaret's Hospice. Their 'Sensory Recollections' design, sponsored by Queens College Taunton, won **GOLD** and the plant sale raised an impressive **£655!**

**Kenny Crouch**, a long-term supporter whose annual bingo evening in memory of his late wife Annie, who we cared for, raised a remarkable **£2,513!**

**Thank you** for your continued support. We couldn't continue our important work without you!

[st-margarets-hospice.org.uk](http://st-margarets-hospice.org.uk) | [supportercare@st-margarets-hospice.org.uk](mailto:supportercare@st-margarets-hospice.org.uk)

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Chard

## Celebrating 30 years



Burnham-on-Sea

St Margaret's has 31 well stocked charity shops that bring a unique flair and character to high streets across the county. Since our first shop opened, 37 years ago, the demand for preloved clothing, accessories, and furniture has continued to grow as consumers look for local and affordable alternatives to mainstream big brands and high street chains.

This year, our shops in Burnham-on-Sea, Castle Cary and Chard all celebrate their 30th anniversaries. From opening their doors in 1994, each shop has gone through a unique journey, with hundreds of thousands of people entering their doors to shop, volunteer, donate, or even just to say hello.

Pearl has been volunteering at the Burnham-on-Sea shop since it first opened, and shared with us:

"I have experienced 30 years of watching the shops and hospice services change, all while meeting lots of different but amazing people. At St Margaret's we all need and support each other, and we all have a place that we fit, like puzzle pieces. And even though cultures have shifted over time, we have always helped each other to support our communities."

We can't wait to see what the next 30 years will bring for our charity shops.



Castle Cary

### DID YOU KNOW?

#### 30 years ago...

- With no electronic tills, the staff **used a paper system** where every item sold had to be written down with the amount
- **Steamers were a luxury** - staff had to rely on a good old fashion iron and ironing board to ensure clothes were shop floor ready
- Shop windows were used to **display the goods they had** - window displays weren't even a thing back then!





Paul

## What is Hospice Care Week?

**This October, we joined over 200 hospices across the country to mark Hospice Care Week. With the NHS stretched to its limits, hospices are playing a vital role in ensuring patients and their loved ones are receiving the best possible care in their time of need.**

Hospice Care Week gave us an opportunity to shine a spotlight on the critical care we deliver on a daily basis. Sharing the special stories of patients and their families as well as providing a voice for our staff.

This year's theme was hospice retail - hospices across the UK are facing increasing financial pressure, when the demand for our care is growing. Hospice UK are highlighting the fact that hospices now receive more funding from selling second-hand goods in their shops than they do from government.

While it is brilliant that hospice shops provide affordable everyday items for our communities, raising millions every year, Hospice UK are asking the government to provide further financial support, so that we can all be here for future generations.

## What does Hospice Care Week mean for St Margaret's?

We took the opportunity to get out and about, engaging with our community, and talking to people in Somerset during Hospice Care Week. Often when people hear about St Margaret's, they think of our hospice buildings in Taunton and Yeovil, but in fact we offer so much more...

## We provide our compassionate hospice care in many ways:



Building relationships with local health professionals to ensure a patient is referred to us as quickly as possible.



Our dedicated community nursing team travel the length and breadth of Somerset to provide critical care in the comfort of people's homes.



Our Sunflower Centres provide patients and their families with respite and often reinvigoration. Whether that is taking part in arts and crafts or seeking comfort with fellow patients, the Sunflower Centres provide day hospice care that is fun, peaceful and supportive.



Our committed complementary therapies and physiotherapy teams provide support to help ease aches and pains as well as ensuring a patient's mental wellbeing is prioritised.



Our In-Patient Unit in Taunton provides a home away from home for those patients who need round-the-clock care. We help patients to feel as comfortable as possible so they can return home or spend their remaining moments at St Margaret's peacefully with their family.



We also provide bereavement and spiritual support to family and friends of all ages. Whether that is supporting a family with young children or providing care and comfort to someone who has just lost their partner. We are here to help ease the burden of loss and help celebrate their loved one's life.

**All our services are integrated, and they currently cost just under £15 million a year to deliver. We receive £2.9 million from the government to help run our services. The rest is very kindly donated by you, and others like you. You work tirelessly through the year attending our events, organising collections, buying raffle tickets and purchasing items in our shops to help fund our care.**

**You invest the time to care for us so we in turn can care for our patients. Thank you for your unwavering support.**

Throughout Hospice Care Week, we asked some of our staff to share their thoughts on why hospice care is important.



Anna Saunders,  
Senior Sister

“Birth and death are the two guarantees in life. What isn’t guaranteed is how long we live – hospices provide a safe, supportive environment for our patients and their families when they are facing the most challenging time in their lives. **I am proud to work with the most compassionate, caring and professional staff** who keep the patients and families the focus of everything we do.”



Caroline Slocombe,  
Gardener

“Hospice Care is so important. When people talk to me about their experiences, **they talk about how much of a relief it is to be supported by experts** with the ability to guide and support people through the toughest times. In the garden we try to create a space where people can enjoy the plants and wildlife, where people can sit in peace, and where people can spend time with their friends and family.”



Zoe Capon,  
Supportive Care  
Services Lead

“Hospice care is so incredibly important as it helps individuals live as fully and as well as they can. I love how supportive and welcoming colleagues are within the hospice. **Everyone always goes above and beyond to help, and nothing is ever too much bother.** People are just so genuinely caring, and it shows in everything that they do.”

## Our care in numbers



**100%**

of the care and support we provide is free of charge to patients and their families. Sadly, the hospice sector is hugely reliant on charitable donations - no other area of the healthcare system relies so heavily on charity.

Your unwavering kindness and generosity allow us to provide vital care and support to families across Somerset.

### Did you know...



**4,833** people across our community were supported by St Margaret's last year alone



**102**

is the age of our oldest patient



**350** staff are employed to ensure care is delivered where it's needed across Somerset



is the age of the youngest person our family support team has helped



**24%** of people referred to us were under 65

**45<sup>th</sup>**  
Anniversary

St Margaret's will be celebrating **45 years** in 2025



## When hospice care feels ‘like nectar from heaven’

**Lynda and David were ready to embrace a well-deserved retirement after David’s 45-year career as a dentist. Their plans took an unexpected turn when David was diagnosed with prostate cancer just days before a dream trip to New York. Despite this, they made cherished memories on that trip, facing the future with determination and hope.**

“I felt very sad on that trip as I knew we had something ahead of us, but David faced his illness with great dignity, and never moaned” shared Lynda. “We continued to enjoy life throughout his illness, but I could tell that he was gradually getting more ill.”

As his condition worsened, the family reached out to St Margaret’s for help, and a couple of days later Angie, a Community Nurse Specialist, entered their lives.

**“It was like nectar from heaven, help was here”** Lynda said.

Angie explained how the hospice could help David and the family face this time together, from the provision of equipment so he could stay at home, to medication to tackle his pain.

“Angie was amazing, she visited David and I regularly to make sure we had all the support we needed in the comfort of our own home – **it was like she was part of the family.**”

A key part of hospice care is the attention we place on helping people live well, and we do this by asking what matters most to them. Often this focuses on a desire to spend precious moments with family and friends and in David’s case it was his determination to walk his daughter, Delia, down the aisle at her wedding.

“We told Angie about our daughter’s upcoming wedding and David’s wish to walk her down the aisle. She jumped into action and made a plan to make it happen.”

Angie suggested David came to the Sunflower Centre – St Margaret’s day hospice.

“David wasn’t initially keen on going to meet new people, but Angie made this place sound absolutely heavenly, and he agreed to give it a go. When he came out of each session, I actually felt a bit jealous as he seemed to be having such a wonderful time.”

At the Sunflower Centre David not only met with people going through similar experiences, but he had access to a physiotherapist, who gave him exercises to help build strength in his legs. He also received the necessary medical support to help him work towards his goal.

As David’s health continued to deteriorate, Lynda explains how the family prepared for the worst. “With the wedding getting close Delia became anxious - every day she was saying should I get someone else to

walk me down the aisle. Is dad going to make it?” Delia even considered bringing the wedding forward as they feared he wouldn’t live to September.

However, thanks to the collective efforts of Angie and the team at our Sunflower Centre, and the sheer determination of David with the love and support of his family behind him, he did achieve his goal. Not only did David walk Delia down the aisle but she describes him as giving the “most articulate, and beautiful speech a daughter could ever wish for” and recalls fondly as he danced with his family that night.

**“My father was an exceptionally kind, clever, stoic and humble man. I miss him very much but am eternally grateful to the hospice for [enabling] Dad to be part of our wedding and say goodbye to our family and friends.”**

David died a month after the wedding, but their last wish as a family to have this cherished time together was fulfilled.

**Once someone receives a terminal diagnosis, we know we cannot change the end of the story, but with good hospice care we can influence the final chapters and help families make the most of the time they have left together. We’ve been doing this for generations and must continue to be there for families like David’s in the future.**





David & Lynda

# Your gift is our future

**We've been caring for generations. A gift in your Will can ensure we're here for many more.**

For over 40 years, we have championed a simple but important belief - that individuals deserve the best possible personal care and compassion at the end of their lives and should be able to spend their final days in comfort.

Whether at home or in one of our hospices, we strive to ensure a person's environment is as

comfortable as possible, for them and their loved ones; enabling them to make the most of their precious moments together.

We have supported generations of people across Somerset, and we are committed to doing whatever it takes to ensure we will be there for anyone who needs us in the future.

But we can't do this on our own.

**One in three of our patients are cared for thanks to gifts left in Wills.**



Teresa, one of our Legacy pledgers

## Will you help us be here for future generations?

**Every gift that is left to us in a Will is special and personal. Behind these generous gifts are supporters, many of whom have a special connection to St Margaret's, and Teresa is no different.**

**"I started supporting St Margaret's with a regular donation, but I knew I wanted to do more so I decided to leave them a gift in my Will. I want to ensure that future generations can benefit from the amazing care they provide, and this was the perfect way for me to do it."**

Will you make a pledge today that will help us continue to care for generations? Pledging a gift in your Will to St Margaret's Hospice will help to protect our future. To find out more about how a pledge today can make a difference tomorrow please visit our website or contact Kim Gaylard on **01823 365609** or email [kim.gaylard@st-margarets-hospice.org.uk](mailto:kim.gaylard@st-margarets-hospice.org.uk)



**of our patients are cared for thanks to gifts left in Wills by our generous community.**







## Volunteers Cate and Josh

Cate and Josh first volunteered for St Margaret's last year when they heard about the Santa Abseil. They knew all about the hospice as their grandad had received care on the In-Patient Unit nine years ago, so for them it was an obvious cause to support through volunteering.

### What inspired you to volunteer?

**Josh:** St Margaret's helped so much with my grandad at his end-of-life, and it's left such an impression on the family, it was so important.

**Cate:** I feel like we were too young to help, but St Margaret's were there to help our family. So, we're giving back to them because I guess they did what me and Josh couldn't do because we were too young.

### Tell us about the Santa Abseil

**Cate:** At the Santa Abseil I was handing out the medals once the Santas reached the ground. It was freezing but it was still fun, and it was good seeing people achieve their goal – it seemed like it was a big goal for a lot of people.

**Josh:** The Santa Abseil was amazing, wild and random! There's a bunch of Santas abseiling down the gorge in such a beautiful location. I did the photography side of it. I'd heard that they needed photographers at some events, and I thought that's something I could help with.



### What would you say to anyone thinking about volunteering?

**Josh:** If you can, do it, it means so much more than you think, you can make a massive difference. Having one more person to help is amazing - also it's fun, it's important and it helps so many people.

**Cate:** It's absolutely necessary, charities need volunteers and St Margaret's treat their volunteers so well.

**Volunteers are an essential and valued part of our team; our events couldn't happen without them.**

Last year the Santa Abseil raised a total of **£12,650**. This could help to fund our advice line for over 500 hours, providing the only 24/7 phone service in Somerset dedicated to end-of-life support.

Our Fundraising Team are always looking for volunteers, whether you have a few hours to spare or regular time to give, there are plenty of ways for you to get involved.

Contact the Volunteering Team on **01823 333822 / 01935 709480** or email **volunteering@st-margarets-hospice.org.uk**

Or visit our website:  
**st-margarets-hospice.org.uk/volunteering**



## Events calendar



### SANTA ABSEIL

Sunday 1 December **2024**



### New Year's Day Charity Dip

Wednesday 1 January **2025**



### Christmas Tree Collection Saturday 11 & Sunday 12 January **2025**



### Icelandic Trek 27 – 31 August **2025**

To find out more  
visit our website:  
**st-margarets-hospice.org.uk/events**







Sylvia at our Yeovil Hospice

## Looking ahead

### Launching our new strategy

2025 is a special year at St Margaret's as it marks our 45th anniversary - over four decades of providing critical, person centred care to patients and their families in Somerset. As well as celebrating all we have achieved together, we will set out a new five-year strategy. This will enable us to ensure that St Margaret's is delivering the very best care for the evolving needs of our community, as well as innovating how we can resource and fund hospice care for the future.

Taking the time to care for our community, providing tailored and holistic support for patients and their families has always been, and will

continue to be, a guiding principle for us. We are also keen to break down some of the misconceptions about hospice care and convey our wider impact helping people not just to die well, but to live well for as long as possible. Earlier interventions, increasing access to our care, and sustainable ways to run our services will all be part of the strategic discussion as we look to protect hospice care for Somerset.

We are keen to share our new strategy with you early next year but if you have any feedback on how we can improve St Margaret's services please do get in touch at:  
[strategy@st-margarets-hospice.org.uk](mailto:strategy@st-margarets-hospice.org.uk)

## Will you be a hospice champion?

The cost of providing hospice care in Somerset each year is close to **£15m**. While St Margaret's receives some funding from the NHS it is not sufficient to cover the full range of services provided each year. Therefore, we rely heavily on the generosity of our community and alternative fundraising methods to meet the remaining financial needs.

To help get our new five-year organisational strategy off to the best start, we plan to launch a new campaign, asking for our community's support to be champions for hospice care in Somerset. Details are still being finalised, but the principle behind this campaign will be to build awareness of all that St Margaret's has achieved with you by our side,

spreading the word and celebrating all that is good about hospice care in Somerset. We will be looking for individuals, organisations and groups who are proud to be a part of the St Margaret's family and committed to helping ensure we are here for another 45 years.

Will you be a champion for St Margaret's and pledge to support this campaign?

**We hope so.**

Our champions campaign will launch in March 2025. To find out more please contact Hannah Roberts (Head of Fundraising) on [hannah.roberts@st-margarets-hospice.org.uk](mailto:hannah.roberts@st-margarets-hospice.org.uk)



Jan, who attended our Sunflower Centre



## Simon & Vicki's story

Prior to Vicki's admission, Simon had been her sole carer – taking care of all her needs and being there for her 24 hours a day. This had a significant impact on their relationship, as they were no longer able to share any quality time together.

**"We weren't husband and wife while I was caring for Vicki at home. I was her carer, and I was only focused on doing what I needed to do to look after her. Around that time, she didn't even really have the energy for talking, and so I couldn't even sit on the edge of the bed and enjoy a conversation with her."**

This is where St Margaret's care made such a difference to Simon and Vicki. With a team of specialist nurses now taking care of Vicki's complex needs, Simon was able to

take some time to rest and recover himself. This meant that he could just be there for Vicki as her husband, rather than her carer, and they could now focus on making the most of the precious time that they had together.

**"The care Vicki received made a massive difference to her. Previously when we were at home, just getting her in and out of the shower in the morning would wipe her out for almost the entire day - so she wouldn't perk up again until the evening, and by that point she needed to go back to sleep."**

**"So the care she received from the nurses meant that we could just enjoy our time together. Vicki had the sickest sense of humour, and we were able to laugh and joke like we always had. That gave me something that I needed as well, because I got to see that smile on her face again."**



**"St Margaret's care gave us precious time together before Vicki passed, as it meant that I could stop being her carer and just enjoy being her husband again."**



**When faced with a progressive life-limiting illness, every minute becomes so precious to our patients and their loved ones. It's such a poignant time, when often the simplest moments can matter the most.**

We know just how invaluable this time is for our patients, and we're determined to ensure that every individual within our care can continue to share those special moments with their family and friends, just as Simon and Vicki were able to.

**This is their time to cherish. Now is your time to care.**

It costs over £685,000 every month to deliver our vital end of life care across Somerset. Our incredible team of nurses work around the clock to ensure that patients and their families can make the most of the time that they have together - but they can't do this without your help.

**Could you pay for one minute of our care each month?  
Give patients and their loved ones a special moment to cherish.**

**£5  
a month**



Could help pay for hand prepared, delicious and nutritiously balanced meals for a patient on our In-Patient Unit.

**£16  
a month**



Could you pay for one minute of our care each month? Give patients and their loved ones a special moment to cherish.

**£25  
a month**



Could help pay for a family member or friend to spend a night in our hospice Sunflower Suite - ensuring that they remain as close as possible to their loved one.

**To set up your monthly gift** please complete the enclosed donation form or visit our website.





David

**Thank you for  
making a difference**