



Specialist Care for the
people of St Helens
and Knowsley

Together we are Willowbrook

Your local hospice newsletter

Registered Charity No. 1020240
AUTUMN/WINTER 2024/25



*Light Up
A Life*

SATURDAY 14TH DECEMBER
4PM AT WILLOWBROOK HOSPICE

Highlights inside...

- Meet new Staff Nurse Adele
- Find out how we have supported bereaved children
- Read some inspiring stories from our fabulous fundraisers
- Find out about our Christmas events and join the lottery!

Call the Fundraising Office on **01744 453798**
or e-mail events@willowbrookhospice.org.uk



www.willowbrook.org.uk



Welcome...

Welcome to the latest edition of our Willowbrook Newsletter.

As a supporter of the hospice, you may have read recently about the sad situation in which some hospices across the country find themselves. The uncertainty of our times makes supporting charities not an easy decision for many people and this, alongside the current reductions in Government funding for end-of-life care, means that hospices are finding it difficult to be able to keep delivering these crucial services. Willowbrook is not in that position, largely because of you – one of our amazingly dedicated supporters. With the help that everyone in our St Helens and Knowsley communities has been providing, we have been able to keep offering our care to everyone who needs us.

On behalf of all our patients, we want to thank you for your continued support. Together we can ensure that Willowbrook is there for all of us when it is most needed.

Alun, Lynda and Paula
Executive Leadership Team



Paula, Alun and Lynda.

Regular Giving

Your support will enable us to continue to provide first class, holistic and specialist care to our patients and their families.

CLICK
HERE

4 Easy Steps to Setup:

1. Scan the QR code, top right, to take you to our donation page.
2. Tell us how often you would like to give.
3. Choose how much you would like to donate.
4. We will just need a little bit more information from you...

Thank you for becoming a regular giver and making a big difference!



Patient story: Judith Sergeant

This is the story of why the Sergeant and Birchall family were chosen to switch on our Christmas Tree lights this year...

“Our lovely mum Judith was diagnosed with a brain tumour in early 2018. It shattered our world because it all happened so quickly. She also suffered a stroke, we were told that she would only have six weeks left to live (but we didn’t tell her this), however, she surprised us all and lived her life well despite some setbacks.

In December 2023, she was starting to deteriorate. My sister and I both work in the NHS and a colleague suggested we look into seeing if Willowbrook Hospice could help support us. We were in a bit of denial and felt like she wasn’t at that stage yet, but it was only when a district nurse advised this too that we reached out.

Our first thoughts initially was “Willowbrook? Why does she need to go there, if she goes in, she won’t be coming out.” We all cared for our Mum at home but it was getting to the stage where we couldn’t physically do it anymore. Dad was getting exhausted and anxious, it was a relief to have this help finally so we could spend her last days together. By coming to Willowbrook, we knew our Mum was in the safest hands, whilst we as a family could be ourselves again. To be a husband, a daughter, a Nan. When I had to bring in my children, the staff went above and beyond for them too.

Mum was in Willowbrook for a total of six days before she passed away, we were all so grateful that the Doctor had kept us informed all the way through, and made sure we were with her until the end.

We had experienced care previously from Willowbrook when our lovely Auntie Anne had been a patient eight years ago, and we knew she had received the best care and support. But despite this, nobody ever expects that they will need hospice care until it actually happens. We can’t speak highly enough of the team, nothing was ever too much trouble for all of us, not just Mum.



Judith in London.

From the call we had from the Bereavement Team to ask how we were, to the chef who made us bacon butties the morning after Mum had died (which really were the nicest butties we had ever had!). The whole family were so well looked after. The little touches that they give has stayed with us.

We were all given little crochet hearts, it is now one of our most treasured gifts. They literally thought of everything. The hospice was the opposite of a hospital, it was peaceful, and we could be with her as long as we wanted to be without having strict visiting hours. We never felt sad to leave her when we had to go home as we knew the staff would be there with her at all times.

We are really excited to be switching on the lights on this year’s Christmas tree. We initially asked if we could donate trees to all the patient rooms, because Mum loved it when we did this when she was in. Following a chat with the Fundraising Team, they went one step ahead and invited us to be part of the Light up a Life celebration instead. It will be just over a year since we lost Mum, and she absolutely loved Christmas so it really will be so special for us. We are forever grateful to Willowbrook Hospice and will do all that we can to help fundraise so that others can also receive the care that we did.”

Meet a nurse

Staff Nurse Adele has recently joined the Willowbrook Hospice Clinical Team, moving over from Marie Curie. Find out about Adele and why she loves what she does.

"My Nanna had dementia whilst I was growing up and I helped care for her and this was where my passion for nursing started. By the time I was 18 I started my nurse training. Most of my placements were at Aintree Hospital and I worked there for seven years once I qualified. During my time as Deputy Ward Manager, I found frustrations with the lack of support for patients with palliative care needs, poor difficult conversations and the lack of education about the use of medications for symptom control. This is when I realised that I am passionate about getting it right for everyone at the end of their life. I took a promotion as a Senior Nurse for Marie Curie Community team in Liverpool but wanted more patient contact so started working in the Marie Curie inpatient unit in Bradford. When I saw Willowbrook were recruiting for a Staff Nurse I immediately applied. I still work one day a week for Marie Curie because I enjoy it so much!

Palliative care can be sad, but I know that what I do makes a difference. I am supporting a patient and their family when they need it the most. Although I can't fix a patient who is going through end of life care, one thing I can do is be able to give holistic care. A patient is seen as a person, not a condition to treat. The one on one care is what I enjoy the most in a hospice setting, you get to know the patient and their loved ones well, which enables us give them the quality of care that they need.

I feel I make a difference by being open and honest with the patient and their family. I make sure I take the time to talk to them, explaining anything they are unsure of, and to help them make lasting happy memories during their time here, rather than them thinking a hospice is a sad and scary place.



For example, a patient had family who came up from down south for the day. We had lovely weather but the patient wasn't sure about going outside. We suggested that we put together a little picnic for him and his visitors including his young Grandchildren, which he agreed to, and ended up having a really special time together. He said afterwards that it was actually amazing to be out in the fresh air, and didn't realise it at the time, but it really was what he needed. Giving patients a sense of normality is so important.

I am grateful that the team here are fantastic to work with, we all work really well together and the team are very supportive of each other."

Adele loves to do activities that can be seen as scary, for example recently she did a sky dive over Dubai Palm to raise money in memory of her Nephew. Adele looks forward to participating in future fundraising activities for Willowbrook.

We asked Adele to tell us some of the common misconceptions about hospice care:

"A syringe driver is scary and will end my life" –

A syringe driver is just a small pump to deliver continuous medication to a patient when they can't take medicine orally or if taking the medication orally is not effective enough to control their symptoms. We provide lovely hand sewn fabric bags made by volunteers to carry the syringe driver in, so they can move around with it safely.

"They can't hear me so there is no point talking to them" –

We encourage family to speak to their loved one, as they would have done normally, even if they think it is silly to do so, we believe that people can still hear their loved ones, even if they cannot respond.

FC Willowbrook

Luke Grounds, Willowbrook's Community Champion, had a dream to play just one charity football match in memory of his late Dad, Andrew who was cared for by our hospice. Luke has been an incredible fundraiser over the years, but has now taken it to the next level!

His dream has become more than a reality, not only did he organise one match, he set up FC Willowbrook and this year saw four matches played and just under **£2,000** raised!

North West Community Stars has been a massive support to the team from the very beginning. Together with family and friends, the backing from the local community has been wonderful to see.

Luke said: "I really am so overwhelmed with the support FC Willowbrook has been



given. Seeing an idea in my head come to life is amazing. It is such an honour to put on my FC Willowbrook jersey and play in memory of my Dad. I will always be grateful to everyone who has donated to this charity which means so much to me and my family. My aim has always been to raise awareness of Willowbrook, and raising funds is a bonus. I am so grateful to all our incredible sponsors for helping making this all possible."

Art project targets child bereavement

Our Outreach Services team were involved in a project with World of Glass, Child Bereavement UK and Wonder Arts. We invited some children who have a connection to Willowbrook Hospice to be part of this.



This project – **'How to Look After a Grieving Elephant (and other social animals)'** – involved children working with artist Jenny Gaskell over a series of workshops to become animal investigators and learn some of the ways that social animals show signs of grief. Armed with

notebooks and safari hats, they created tips on how to look after grieving elephants, giraffes, whales and wolves.

Along the way, they took part in creative activities and had conversations exploring how we may look after ourselves and

each other when bereaved.

These helpful tips will be used to create an audio artwork which will be shared with others, encouraging children and adults to talk about grief, death and dying and how we might care for each other.

Volunteering news

Vic, Maintenance Volunteer

"Five and a half years ago, my Brother, who lived in Oldham, sadly died. It was around this time that I decided that I wanted to give back to my local community. I saw Willowbrook were looking for volunteers so I got in touch and met Ian from Volunteering. Even though I didn't have a connection with the hospice, I knew this was the right place for me to volunteer.

I soon started at the hospice, doing odd jobs, helping with joinery and woodwork and then going to the shops to do painting and decorating. I was based at the hospice for two years before moving over to The Living Well site, if there's anything that needs doing, I'm there.

I love the variety that each week brings. I look forward to the banter with the Maintenance Team, it gets me out of the house and helps break up the week.

My advice to anyone considering volunteering: do it! I was told that after retirement, I could go on month long breaks if I wanted to, but that wasn't for me, I need to keep motivated and keep my mind busy. Meeting new people each week is fantastic, going out and about between the shops and warehouse is great, and I highly recommend it to anyone who has some time to spare!"

Thank you Vic, we are so grateful for the time that you give to Willowbrook.



Volunteers needed!

We need volunteers in all our retail shops, online shops and The Living Well Café! We also have other opportunities that might be of interest to you. Click the link button or visit www.willowbrook.org.uk/volunteer

CLICK HERE

Chatty Cafés supporting local people

Willowbrook Hospice in partnership with St Helens Central and North PCN, are running Chatty Cafés across the Borough.

Come along for a brew and chat, designed to help support people living within St Helens and Knowsley who are feeling isolated.

Phone **01744 453798** for more details or visit our website www.willowbrook.org.uk



Fundraising events

Click the button for our latest events

CLICK HERE

Our **Annual Charity Golf Day** took place on 10th May at Houghwood Golf and was once again a fantastic day was had by all!



21 teams entered, and between them, just under **£5,000** was raised! We would like to thank our sponsors: **Wain Homes, Stapleton Derby, Panorama Kitchens, Horizon Business Group, MB Heating, Cheshire Soils, GSU Landscapes, Steven Cartwright** and **MVKelly Civil Engineering** for supporting the day and to everyone who donated raffle and auction prizes. Join us for next year's golf day will take place on 14th May 2025.

500 participants attended this year's **Colour Run** at Victoria Park, St Helens, raising an outstanding **£14,000!** The morning started off drizzly but once the whistle was blown at the starting line, the rain stopped just in time for the 5k run. Huge thanks goes to our sponsors of the event, **Alliance Connectivity**. This Colour Run wouldn't have been possible without the support of St Helens Council and the Active Lives & Sports Development team. Save the date for next year: 28th June 2025 where the run will be open to even more participants to make it our biggest Colour Run yet!

We had a new challenge this year, the **Velocity Zipline at Zip World**, North Wales. 10 fabulous fundraisers soared



over the Penrhyn Quarry Lake, including our very own Fundraiser, Bev. Between them, they managed to raise a superb **£5,500!**

Our **Summer Open Gardens** took place on 7th September, where we opened up our award winning gardens to the public. Visitors were able to have a look around our beautiful gardens whilst enjoying a drink and cake, buy new plants and meet our gardening team who work tirelessly to create a beautiful calming space for our patients. Together, we raised **£1,600!**

Moonlight Walk The annual event so many supporters look forward to finally went back to the roads, after a four year absence. Setting off after sunset on 14th September, our participants walked together on a 6k route from The Living Well to the hospice and back, raising a magnificent **£12,000** in the process! It was a great opportunity to reflect and remember loved ones. Thank you to **Britannia Taxi's** for sponsoring the walk. Registration has opened already for 2025, visit our website to book your place.

Another challenge this year was the **Anfield Abseil**. An incredible **£4,000** was raised between 16 amazing



fundraisers who took part in the Anfield Abseil on 22nd September. The team varied from a teenager to an 83 year old dare devil who loves adrenaline rushes!

Don't forget to check our socials or our website www.willowbrook.org.uk for upcoming events.

Fabulous fundraisers

Click the button for our latest events **CLICK HERE**

May

A group of daring fundraisers gathered together at Black Knights Parachute Centre to complete **skydives**, raising a magnificent **£25,000** between them.



The annual **Rainhill Gala** took place on 27th May. Despite the heavy rain it didn't stop the crowds from gathering to enjoy the event. A fantastic donation from the Rainhill Gala Committee was received for **£2,250!** Plus a further **£1,100** was raised on the day from our 'Non Stoppers' stall, Hazel's teddy tombola and donations from our bucket collection.

Rainford Cricket Club players, members and supporters raised **£2,658** following their challenge of a 24 hour relay walk, covering 82.4 miles. The funds were shared between Willowbrook Hospice and the Standing Tall Foundation.



Congratulations to **Cathy** and her friends who completed the Aintree 10k on Saturday 25th May and raised **£505**. Cathy started fundraising for Willowbrook since October 2023 after her mum received so much love, care and support from the team at Willowbrook. Cathy said: "The team are like angels on earth and there is no way I could ever



repay them. The only way I could show my gratitude was to help raise money so they can continue the amazing work they do."

June

Emma and James Long hosted a community afternoon tea at the 8th St Helens Scout Hut, which was supported by the Explorers. Together they raised **£720**. On the back of the success of the afternoon tea, they are holding an Autumn Hotpot soiree on 2nd November too!

July

The event that all the dogs in St Helens eagerly look forward to each year – **Fur on the Field** took place on 9th July and raised a fantastic **£1,600**. There was a great turnout of keen sausage catchers wanting to show off their tricks and waggiest tails! Thank you to Sue Kirkham who generously gives up her own time to organise this annual event.

Huge well done to the family and friends of **Sue Feeney** for taking on the Yorkshire Three Peaks challenge in her memory. It was a tough challenge but together they did it and raised **£2,162**.



The **Rainhill Women's Institute** held an afternoon tea party, and raised **£800** for Willowbrook.



On 21st July, an amazing group of people came together to remember **Hughie Shacklock**. Hughie received the services of Willowbrook Hospice and in his memory they wanted to give back to Willowbrook and the L14 Community Centre, both causes very close to Hughie's, and their hearts.



Friends, family and supporters attended a fun day at The Black Bull in St Helens and raised an amazing £9000, of which **£7,000** was donated to Willowbrook. Hughie's family can't praise Willowbrook enough for the care and compassion he received and will be forever grateful for this. This is their way of giving back and saying thank you.

August

Steph Fisher presented Willowbrook with **£1,050** following the celebration of her Dad's life, Malcolm Roberts. Malcolm accessed the services at Willowbrook for six weeks before he sadly died. It was his wish that money was raised for Willowbrook in his memory. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this.



Steph couldn't praise the services of the hospice enough for the care her dad received from our clinical teams, as well as the catering team, housekeepers and all the staff and volunteers who also looked after Malcolm and his family and friends too. Malcolm's room became known as the 'party room'. This was a sentiment to his character and love for life.

Steph and her family have continued to raise funds and awareness for Willowbrook in Malcolm's memory, by also taking part in the Moonlight Walk!

September

Congratulations to **Mike Hitchen**, who took part in a 47 mile Ultra event and managed to raise a fantastic **£1,429** for Willowbrook Hospice! Mike took on this challenge in memory of his Mum, Ann who sadly died in late 2017. She was superbly looked after at Willowbrook Hospice, upon hearing about the lack of funding and experiencing deficits at some hospices in the UK, Mike didn't want Willowbrook to suffer too, so wanted to raise as much money as he could to help support us.



Andrew Humphrey ran the AJ Bell Great North Run (half marathon) in 2 hours, 1 minute and 8 seconds, raising **£1,290** (£790 and £500 matched by his employer Betfred) for Willowbrook! This was Andrew's biggest challenge yet, and one he is really proud of – what an achievement!



Katheryn White has regularly fundraised for Willowbrook Hospice since her husband Stephen received care from our team following his battle with a brain tumour. On 7th September, The Whitey's 100 Memorial Bike Ride took place where the team cycled two of the routes that Stephen would regularly ride. The team raised **£1,372** which was shared between Willowbrook Hospice and The Brain Tumour Charity, two charities close to their hearts.

Shops news

Furniture Appeal: We need your items!

We are short on furniture to sell in our shops. If you are updating your home,

CLICK HERE

please consider donating any unwanted furniture to us. We can also collect large items of furniture from you – absolutely free!

Please click the button above or visit www.willowbrook.org.uk to book.

Our collection stores are always able to help, please give them a call:
St Mary's 01744 417069
Sutton 01744 413112
Prescot 0151 541 7806

Willowbrook Shops

BILLINGE

216-218 Main Street, WN5 7PE ☎ 01744 893782

FOUR ACRE

Unit 8, Four Acre Lane, WA9 4BZ ☎ 01744 814121

KIRKBY

Unit 9, Telegraph Way, L32 8US ☎ 01551 459 3533

PRESCOT

Prescot Shopping Centre, L34 5GA ☎ 0151 541 7806

RAINFORD

16a Church Road, WA11 8HE ☎ 01744 886829

CLICK HERE

for full addresses and opening times.

Diaries for 2025!

Never miss an important date again! Our diaries are £2.50 each and we have four designs to choose from. They are available to buy in our branches listed below whilst stocks last!



RAINHILL

9 Dane Court, L35 4LU ☎ 0151 426 9940

ST MARY'S ARCADE

St Mary's Arcade, WA10 1AR ☎ 01744 417069

STOCKBRIDGE VILLAGE

12 The Croft, L28 1NR ☎ 0151 480 9796

SUTTON SHOP & DONATION WAREHOUSE

Sutton Road, WA9 3DZ ☎ 01744 413112

THE LIVING WELL

Borough Road, WA10 3RN ☎ 01744 646830

Corporate and community news

You can find Willowbrook Hospice on LinkedIn.

Corporate and Community Fundraising is a great way for businesses to support charities whilst also fulfilling their corporate responsibility. Here are some fantastic companies who have chosen to support Willowbrook Hospice.

Edge Fest – The local community at The Brown Edge in Nutgrove held a festival on August bank holiday weekend, and raised an astonishing **£3,091.10!**

Boars Fest – Thank you to everyone involved at The Boars Head, for coming together to host Boars Fest, raising **£1,610.75**. This really was a fantastic example of a community coming together for Willowbrook. From incredible acts to delicious food, the event was a huge success filled with energy and positivity. Plans are already in motion for Boars Fest 2025!

Communications Plus – A regular supporter of Willowbrook, this year they have raised **£2,000** through their annual Mike Roberts Memorial Charity golf day.



Paul Bazley from **Grand National Golf Club** raised a fantastic **£1,200** in his year of captaincy and donated it to Willowbrook!



St Helens Flooring, has very generously sponsored our hospice lottery. Their unwavering support makes a meaningful difference in our community and helps us continue providing essential care and services. We truly appreciate their generosity!

We would like to take this opportunity to introduce **Jane Ball** (right), our new Lottery Sales Lead. Her role is to help



Willowbrook to grow our lottery campaign. Jane previously worked for St Helens Star for 26 years, her knowledge and experience has already been put to use by securing the partnership with St Helens Flooring.

In recognition of our partnership with **St Helens RLFC**, we were invited to the Totally Wicked Stadium in August to raise awareness of what we do and to collect donations to enable us to continue providing vital care.

We are absolutely blown away to have raised a fantastic **£1,378.30**, from our generous community. We thoroughly enjoyed our evening (but think Brookie Bear enjoyed it the most!).

Huge thank you to St Helens RLFC for choosing us as charity partners, we are also proud to share that our partnership has been extended for another year!

We have had a great amount of support from Corporate Volunteers – **Currys, Sky, Lloyds, Co Op Bank, Alkegen, QVC, Aimia Foods and RSM UK (Liverpool)** (pictured right), who have donned their gardening gloves and tended to our award winning hospice gardens or spent time in our shops. Their help has been invaluable, with only a small gardening team at the hospice, every pair of hands makes a lot of difference.



Christmas tree recycling

Last year, we raised an extraordinary **£10,000** through recycling your real Christmas trees! Can you help us beat this amount? Let us collect your real Christmas tree and we'll take it to be recycled.

Collections will be made between **13th January 2025 – 17th January 2025** (10am – 5pm), and the deadline for booking is 11:59pm on Wednesday 8th January 2025. Please visit our website page to book your collection: willowbrook.org.uk/christmas-tree-collection-2025/

Postcodes we will collect from are: L14, L28, L32, L33, L34, L35, L36, WA9, WA10, WA11 AND WA12.





Lottery generously sponsored by www.sthelensflooring.com

Hospice Lottery

Just **£1** to play!

Play, win, support!

1st PRIZE
£1,000
PLUS a chance to win...
UP TO
£10,000
IN ROLLOVER

Quick and easy to join! Simply visit:
www.willowbrook.org.uk/hospice-lottery
Or scan the QR code.



Registered Charity
No. 1020240



WEAR IT WELL FOR WILLOWBROOK

Choose a day in December to wear something festive and donate £1 to Willowbrook Hospice!

Gather your friends, family, team mates, colleagues or class friends and don your best festive headwear or item of clothing to help raise vital funds for your local hospice.

For more information and to register, visit:
www.willowbrookhospice.org.uk

FAMILY FRIENDLY

£10

CHRISTMAS Singalong Bingo & Disco

Bingo with songs instead of numbers, with a Christmas twist & disco!

FRIDAY 13TH DECEMBER 7PM

Bishop Road Police Club, Bishop Road, St Helens, WA10 6SX

**Licensed Bar | Raffle | Music
Disco | Singing | Games | Laughter**

BOOK TODAY: **WE HELP RECRUIT**

www.willowbrook.org.uk

Willowbrook Hospice Every Contact Counts

COULD YOU HOST A CAKES FOR CARE

EVENT TO HELP RAISE FUNDS FOR YOUR LOCAL HOSPICE?

Get together with friends, family, colleagues and neighbours to host your very own cake based fundraiser!

Your cake sale can take place anytime of the year!

Visit www.willowbrookhospice.org.uk to find out more!