Friends of Willen

Your supporter magazine **Autumn 2023**



In this issue

Sara's story • Midnight Moo gallery • Hospice news





Give £5 or £10 a month

Your **monthly donation** helps us to provide free, compassionate care to local families affected by a life-limiting illness.

Sign up today at www.willen-hospice.org.uk/regulargiving



Welcome

to your autumn magazine

Dear Friend,

It's fantastic to be able to share with you details of the new service we're offering through our Willen at Home team. Anyone who has a palliative diagnosis and is registered with a GP in Milton Keynes can now call our advice and support line, open 24 hours a day. This extra layer of support will make a real difference to our local community (page 10).

This will be my last message to you, as I leave the Hospice in October. I wanted to say what an immense privilege it has been to work for Willen Hospice. I will be very sad to leave an organisation that I love, but I know I leave it in safe and committed hands, and I feel really positive about its future.

My passion for the cause and the fantastic services provided at the Hospice is mirrored in all my talented, innovative colleagues. Staff and volunteers alike work tirelessly here in support of our patients and their loved ones.



The Hospice has developed hugely over the past six years, and I'm proud and delighted to have been a part of that journey. It's so important to remember that without our local partners, our community and our supporters, such as yourself, standing beside us, we would not have been able to achieve such significant strides forward in patient care.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart. You are all amazing and I will miss you greatly.

Peta

Peta Wilkinson, Chief Executive



An update from our Chairman, Paul Davis

On behalf of the trustees, I'd like to thank Peta for her successful leadership over the last six years. I'm delighted to announce that our new Chief Executive, Kate Broadhurst, will be starting on 2 January 2024. Kate brings a wealth of experience from her 22-year career at the John Lewis Partnership.

I'm also pleased to report that Richard Alsop, an experienced local healthcare leader, has been appointed as interim Chief Executive between Peta's departure and Kate's arrival.

Hospice news



Next phase of building works begin

Since the opening of our building extension in late 2022, we've been readying ourselves for the second phase of our building works. Starting this autumn and continuing until spring 2024, contractors will be making repairs to our Grade II-listed main building and renovating the areas around this.

"We want to be here for the community for another 40 years and beyond, so we need to make sure our buildings are futureproofed," says Kathy Smith, Clinical Project Lead for the building works. "None of this work will affect our In-Patient Unit, except that our reception area has been temporarily moved to the back of our site, near the Wellbeing Centre. At the end of this second phase we'll have more parking, a more welcoming reception area, refurbished spaces for patients' families to use, and refitted, modernised offices for our staff."

Hospice User Group

Our Hospice User Group (HUG) is an open forum for patients, carers, family members and friends who have experienced our services. The group provides valuable feedback to our leadership team to ensure we can continuously improve the quality of care we provide and develop our services.

To find out more about the group, or to ask about joining, please contact to Adams on 01908 663636.

Donated bladder scanner aids diagnosis

Thanks to one of our philanthropic supporters making a donation in spring 2023, we now have a bladder scanner for our clinical staff to use.

This portable, ultrasound device provides a virtual 3D image of a patient's bladder, so that staff can very quickly and accurately decide whether their bladder needs to be drained, to avoid discomfort and potential infection.

Both the In-Patient Unit and Willen at Home teams will benefit from this important diagnostic tool worth £3,150. We've already been using it for around four patients each week.

Children feeling their way through grief

As part of our art therapy programme, we held a session in August for a group of children, some of whose grandparents had recently passed away at the Hospice. Our Art Therapist, Kàren Clements, used a 'sensory pathway' for the children to walk barefoot along and feel different sensations. Trays of petals, sand, herbs, gravel and water-based beads, as well as pieces of soft bamboo and bark, made up the path.

"The idea of the pathway is to help children connect with their thoughts and feelings in relation to their experience of grief and loss."

says Kàren. "The children were encouraged to walk the path slowly and mindfully, and to notice any memories that surfaced in connection with the loss of their family member.



"One child shared that the sunflower petals held fond memories of time spent in his granny's garden."

In future, we're hoping we can expand our use of the pathway to patients and carers too. The pathway was kindly loaned to us by Northamptonshire-based wellbeing practitioner, social worker and florist Hannah Taylor-Slaymaker, who runs Iberis, an eco-friendly floristry.



Read our 2022/23 impact report

Our latest impact report explains the difference we've made for local people in 2022/23, thanks to your fantastic support. You can read an update from each of our teams within the Hospice, as well as hearing directly from patients and families about their experiences. www.willen-hospice.org.uk/impact-report

5 minutes with...

Louise Pauley,Philanthropy Manager



What's your background?

I started in the charity sector about 13 years ago. I've worked my way up through fundraising departments at some really high-profile national charities, as well as smaller ones. Most recently, I was at a prison reform charity who work with young men returning to London from prison and help them build stable, rewarding lives.

What attracted you to a role at the Hospice?

This is the first role I've had where my work directly benefits my family, my friends and my neighbours. I grew up in Buckingham and we had a Hospice shop on the high street, so I've always known about Willen Hospice. I've had family use the services here too. I just saw this role and I thought that's something I can do that completely benefits my community.

What does your role involve?

I work in the Business Development team, helping to bring in vital income to sustain the specialist care the Hospice provides. My role involves stewarding our philanthropic donors, as well as our relationships with dignitaries, patrons and ambassadors.

A lot of my work is around raising restricted funding, where people who have a strong connection to the Hospice want to make a lasting contribution by funding a specific piece of equipment or building work.

What's your average day like?

I'm often talking to and meeting with long-term supporters of the Hospice, to update them on what we're doing and talk them through their options of how they can financially support us. These people kindly give sizable donations towards our work and I'm their main point of contact.

I also look for prospective supporters who may have moved to the area and haven't supported us before but want to. I do a lot of networking, engaging with communities and meeting influential people in the local area.

What is philanthropy?

The word 'philanthropy' and what it means can often be quite alien to people, but in essence philanthropists carry out acts of charitable giving for socially useful purposes. They have a desire to promote and improve the welfare of others.

Philanthropy is most often associated with large donations from those who have the financial means. You might think of people with personal foundations and financial advisers, and who have an ambition for their donation. However, philanthropy isn't all about donating money. It can take the form of extra determination and voluntary action for the common good. Philanthropy can mean lending your time, skills and knowledge in any capacity.

How does philanthropy help the Hospice?

The impact of philanthropy here is hugely important, because the time and the funding we are given by supporters secures the upkeep and future of the Hospice. Thanks to the generosity of local philanthropists, we were able to complete our recent building extension and buy much-needed specialist clinical equipment for use in our In-Patient Unit and out in the community.





Toby Porter, Chief Executive of Hospice UK (above left), speaking at our recent Philanthropy Afternoon event, attended by the Deputy Mayor, Marie Bradburn (below left), supporters and staff







If you're interested in talking to Louise about how you might be able to support the Hospice through philanthropic giving, you can email her at louise.pauley@willen-hospice.org.uk or call her on 0739 441 6000.

From founders to **fundraisers**



Embedded in the history of the Hospice are the Jell family, descendants of our co-founder, Dorothy Jell (left). In recent years the family have

outdone themselves by bravely taking on a range of fundraising challenges - thank you to them all!

Peter Jell, Dorothy's son, raised sponsorship by abseiling down the 418-feet tall National Lift Tower in Northampton. "With a little apprehension, I stepped backwards over the edge but straight away felt completely safe in my straps and harness," says Peter.



"From there on I was trying not to rush the experience and take in the amazing views and just enjoy it."

Peter also took part in the 2020 Moo walk during the pandemic with his children, Hazel and Aaron. Together they raised over £1,000 in sponsorship. Their 10-mile route started in Furzton and included Willen Lake for a photo stop at the Hospice.



Hazel Jell, Dorothy's granddaughter, is taking part in one of our challenge events to climb Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania in early 2024. "I'm really excited about the whole experience – I've never done anything like it," says Hazel. "The first day in the rainforest I'll be looking out for what animals I can spot, and I'm excited for when we get above the clouds. Obviously I'm most looking forward to reaching the summit, even though I think summitting at night

will be the toughest part! I'm also looking forward to getting to know the rest of the Kili trekkers, and joining such a big team doing the challenge for Willen." As part of the preparations, in June Hazel met up with the group she'll be travelling with. Between them they climbed the height of Kilimanjaro at Climbquest in Milton Keynes.



Andy Aldridge, Dorothy's grandson, ran the London Marathon in April 2023 and raised more than £3,600. "I'm so pleased that I got to run my first marathon raising money for the Hospice," says Andy. "For me the marathon was as much about the many months of training as it was about the day itself. On all of my long training runs, often in the cold and the dark, I would always remember how much the Hospice meant to me and my family. That kept me going. On the day of the marathon I experienced just about every emotion. Somehow I managed to run all the way. The crowd made the difference, especially the moments I saw my family and the Willen supporters cheering me on - it gave me such a lift."



Maurice Aldridge, who is married to Dorothy's daughter Gloria, is a keen guitarist. He organised two busking sessions near our Off The Record music shop in central Milton Keynes this summer to raise money for our work. "I played a variety of songs, mainly from the 1960s, 70s and 80s," says Maurice. "I had people stopping to listen which was encouraging. I haven't busked alone before but I'm used to playing solo at open mic nights in pubs. I've also joined with a couple of other musicians in the past. This all helped me find the courage to stand alone outside The Point for the Hospice!"



New Hub offers palliative support across MK



In August we were thrilled to launch The Milton Keynes Palliative Care Community Hub, run alongside our Willen at Home community service. This new advice and support line will offer our palliative care to a much wider audience than ever before.

The patients under our care are usually referred to us by their GP or the hospital, but we know there are other people in the community who have a palliative diagnosis themselves, or know a loved one who does, and they need our support. That's why we've launched the The Milton Keynes Palliative Care Community Hub.

The Hub is an advice and support line open 24 hours a day, run by our specialist palliative care nurses. Anyone who is receiving palliative care and is registered with a GP in Milton Keynes is eligible to call. Carers, family and friends of eligible patients are also welcome to use this service.

Callers receive practical help and support with any aspect of palliative care, such as ordering equipment, chasing prescriptions, crisis advice, emotional support and arranging for a palliative care coordinator to visit them at home if needed. Working closely with healthcare providers, including GPs, the hospital, community nursing teams and paramedics, the Hub will support

The Hub is an advice and support line open 24 hours a day, run by our specialist palliative care nurses.

patients both on discharge from hospital and at home. The team will also refer or signpost people to other services they might need.

This new way for our community to access expert help is a huge benefit to the city.

It's something we've been talking to our local healthcare partners about over the last year, with the aim of opening the Hospice's doors more widely, to reach more people with our



palliative and end-of-life care services. Willen at Home Lead Nurse, Amy Malburn (below right), is in charge of the Hub and has already seen its impact first-hand.

"The Hub gives palliative patients and their carers a single phone number to get the help they need," says Amy. "Often this can be something as simple as having



someone to listen to their concerns and provide support. It can be really frustrating and distressing to have to call numerous teams to resolve an issue, so The Hub will help to minimise this."

In preparation for the Hub launching, the Willen at Home team rearranged their working patterns so that each day some staff will be allocated to the Hub. This helps to separate planned work, which is patient appointments that have been booked in with the Willen at Home team, from responsive work, which is new callers contacting the Hub line, as well as more urgent situations.

Overnight, nurses from our In-Patient Unit will take over answering the Hub line.



To contact the Hub for advice and support, please call 01908 306962.

Retail news

Introducing The Hangout

Did you see us on ITV local news in August?

TV cameras, journalists and gamers were all present at the launch of our newest and most innovative outlet yet. The Hangout is on the ground floor of Xscape in central Milton Keynes, and is a specialist retro gaming arcade, shop and café.

This unique concept store sells donated video games, consoles and other gaming merchandise, while bringing awareness of our cause to a different audience. There are around 3,000 retro arcade games and consoles to play, as well as electronic dart boards (for over 16s) and traditional board games. Passes to play start from as little as £5 for two hours.





Book a slot online at www.willen-hospice.org.uk/thehangout



Shopping for an occasion?

Our Olney shop now has a dedicated occasionwear department and changing room upstairs, with plenty of mother of the bride outfits and posh party wear.

New location for Off the Record

Thanks to the loyal following for our Off The Record music shop, it has now moved from The Point to a bigger store in Midsummer Place in the city centre, opposite Sports Direct.

We opened Off The Record a year ago to sell pre-loved vinyl, CDs, instruments, accessories and memorabilia. With more space, new branding and a new prime location, we hope to attract even more music lovers through the doors.



Christmas arrives in our shops

Our Christmas cards are already in-store for you to purchase ahead of the festive season, with lots of designs to choose from. We also have 2024 Hospice calendars and diaries.



Designer items now on Vestiaire

If you're shopping for designer clothes, shoes and accessories at affordable prices, check out our listings on Vestiaire Collective at www.vestiairecollective.com.

We'll be cherry-picking some of the more high-end items donated to our shops and adding them to Vestiaire's online site. This means our items are more likely to be seen by an audience who want to buy them, and we'll receive up to 85% of the money raised from each sale

Don't forget to Gift Aid!

By signing up to add Gift Aid to items you donate to our shops, we can claim an extra 25p for every £1 raised when we sell them. Find out more at www.willen-hospice.org.uk/giftaid or ask in-store.

Sara's story

Sara's dad spent the last weeks of his life being cared for in our In-Patient Unit, after a short but painful battle with kidney cancer. Sara is passionate about making sure more families have access to the amazing support that her family did.

My dad, Patrick (pictured right), lived a really active, healthy life. He walked about 20,000 steps daily and always had endless energy for his grandchildren. He'd pretty much never been ill, until he started experiencing some worrying symptoms in January 2021 that resulted in a couple of hospital trips. That spring, after lots of tests, a tumour was discovered on his kidney. By early summer he received the devastating news that his cancer was incurable.

Dad had no idea how long he had left to live, and he didn't want to know. But from that point on, his health deteriorated rapidly. He was in so much pain and it was all down to my mum to take care of him, 24/7. He was on so many different medications, which needed to be administered multiple times a day, at different times.

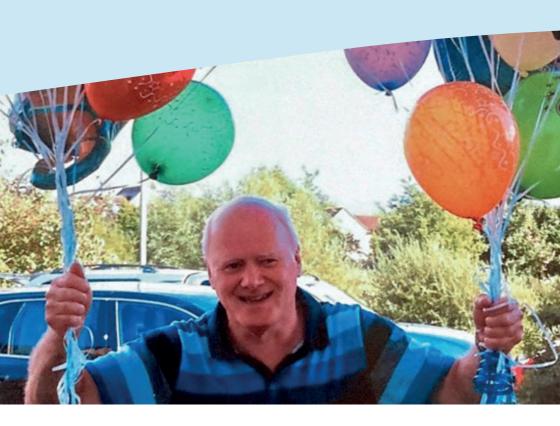
Mum took the best care of dad. He couldn't have asked for a better nurse, but it was such a massive strain on her and I know Dad hated that she was having to do so much for him. It was just an incredibly difficult few months.



Dad's condition was changing daily, so any pain management or care plan that was agreed would work for a short time, but then stopped taking effect and needed further review. We'd be waiting for more appointments while Dad was in agonising pain.

The memories of him being at the Hospice are peaceful and some are even happy.

Then in mid-September we were able to get him a place at the wonderful Willen Hospice, which felt like a huge weight being lifted. He was finally able to get the professional care he needed and the In-Patient Unit team were able to adapt his medication at any point. He was the most comfortable he'd been, and as a family we were finally getting the emotional support that we so desperately needed. This ended up being Dad's last couple of weeks.



The staff and volunteers at the Hospice showed so much compassion. They were really sensitive to what we were going through, remained upbeat and just kept smiling, even through the hardest times. They took the time to explain everything, multiple times if we needed it, and the volunteers were always putting their friendly faces around the door and offering us tea and cake.

Most importantly, being at the Hospice meant we could finally just sit with Dad,

hold his hand and enjoy those last special moments with him, rather than having to focus on what he needed all the time. It certainly helped me so much with the grief.

Some of the memories of Dad being so poorly at home are just too much to bear. and if that was all we had to remember about that time. I think I would have really struggled. But the memories of him being at the Hospice are peaceful ones, and some of them are even happy ones. I'll genuinely be forever thankful for that.



Can you help us by sharing your story?

Real-life stories from patients and their loved ones, like Sara's above, show the life-changing nature of our expert care and support. You can send us your own at www.willen-hospice.org.uk/share-your-story.

What's your ideal volunteer role?

There are so many different ways you can volunteer for us and be a part of the Hospice family. Some are ad hoc tasks that will fit around your life, and others involve more of a commitment to regular shifts.

In the community

Our community fundraising volunteers are out helping us run local events and collecting donations at all kinds of exciting venues and festivals. There are also more specialist roles, from driving our vans to photographing our biggest events of the year.

At our shops

We currently have 15 retail locations run by more than 400 volunteers and a handful of employed staff. If you enjoy working with people, there are a range of customerfacing roles. We're particularly in need of gamers and vinyl enthusiasts at our newer specialist shops, The Hangout and Off The Record.

Or if you'd rather not be on the shop floor meeting customers and handling money, we have volunteers working in the back, sorting donations and helping to despatch items bought from our eBay shop.

At the Hospice

We have more than 100 volunteers based at the Hospice, helping us with tasks including gardening, administration and running our new café.



Lisa (pictured above) has volunteered for us for many years in a variety of roles, from helping at our exclusive Ascot event to running our reception desk. Since October she's been a ward support volunteer on our In-Patient Unit, serving meals to patients and assisting with housekeeping tasks.

"I love it because I love the different characters," says Lisa. "I love being around other people.

"Some days I'll make 50 cups of tea. There's times when I've given a patient's family member a hug because they've been really upset. I'm working with everybody on the unit, and doing whatever's needed."

Find your ideal volunteer role and register your interest at www.willen-hospice.org.uk/volunteer or call us on 01908 306998



Make a Will month

Write your Will this **October** and our participating solicitors will waive their fees in lieu of a donation to Willen Hospice.

Call **01908 303068** or email **legacies@willen-hospice.org.uk** Find out more at **www.willen-hospice.org.uk/willmonth**



Care at **Christmas**

There are lots of ways you can support us this winter as part of your festive celebrations.

Christmas shopping

Online or in store

Shop sustainably and support the Hospice by heading to our shops and online stores. Visit The Hangout in Xscape for the gamer in your life. Off the Record at Midsummer Place for the music lover, Stony Stratford **Bookshop** for the bookworm and our **Olney** Boutique for your party outfits. Gift cards and 2024 diaries and calendars are also available from all of our shops.



Santa's Grotto



Saturday 9-Sunday 10 December Saturday 16-Saturday 23 December Willen Hospice

Meet Santa in his grotto in our tranquil gardens. Each child receives a free gift as a thank you for supporting us at Christmas.



Santa Dash!

Sunday 17 December Willen Hospice

Start your Christmas with a dash! Run, walk or jog a sponsored lap of Willen Lake North dressed in a Santa suit. All ages and abilities welcome. Well behaved dogs can join in, but must be kept on a lead at all times.





Christmas tree collection

Friday 5-Sunday 7 January Selected MK postcodes

Our Christmas tree-cycling will be back in 2024. Book a collection for a suggested donation and once the decorations are down, we'll collect and recycle your Christmas tree (real Christmas trees only).

Winter Draw

If you received this magazine in the post, you will have been given your own Winter Draw numbers. Follow the instructions in the letter and you could win £3,000! You can also purchase tickets online or in our shops - just ask for a Winter Draw ticket at the till*.

Christmas Scratch Cards

Add some fun to your Christmas dinner with our Hospice scratch cards on your table or hidden in crackers. Buy in store or online.

Donate to our Christmas appeal

Every year we capture the importance of our work here and the compassionate care of our staff through our Christmas appeal. Look out for this year's story from early November.

www.willen-hospice.org.uk/christmas

*Over 18s only. Closing date 26 January 2024. Draw date 8 February 2024. Full terms and conditions on our website.

Summer Draw winner



Could you be our next winner?

Enter our Winter Draw to find out! Top prize £3,000, second prize £500 and 10 x £50 prizes.

Well done to Janet from Milton Keynes who won £2,000 in our Summer Draw.

"I was just waiting outside work to pick my husband up and I saw the Summer Draw advert on Facebook," says Janet. "It was my first time playing and I bought five tickets. I was so surprised to find out that I'd won! We've not been on holiday since 2018 so we're going to use the money to book a holiday somewhere warm like Turkey or Tenerife. I wanted to support Willen Hospice as it's a local charity. We've done the Midnight Moo and we donate our clothes to the charity shops - anything to do with the Hospice and I'm there."

There are four ways to enter:



Follow the instructions on the letter you received with this magazine



Buy your tickets online at www.willen-hospice.org.uk/winterdraw



Visit one of our shops and ask at the till for a Winter Draw ticket



Call **01908 303065** and pay by debit card

Closing date 26 January 2024. Draw date 8 February 2024.

Terms and conditions:

Chances of winning. 18,399 tickets were entered into our last Winter Draw (Feb 2023) with the option of winning 22 prizes. Only those aged 18 or over are eligible to enter or play. Winners will be notified by post within 7 days of the draw date. Promoter: Willen Hospice Ventures Ltd, Milton Road, Willen Village, Milton Keynes, MK15 9AB. Responsible Person: M Rawlins. All net proceeds donated by deed of covenant to Willen Hospice (registered charity number 270194). Registered with the Gambling Commission (www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk) under the Gambling Act 2005, account number 4988. For full terms and conditions visit our website.



Do something unforgettable for you, and your Hospice

Discover our latest challenge events at www.willen-hospice.org.uk/challenges



Willen Hospice MIDNIGHT MO

2023



"The Midnight Moo is one of the most iconic events in Milton Keynes. It was amazing to see the strength of support from the community for our fantastic city this year.

"To have so many people supporting the event, raising funds and remembering loved ones was so touching.

"Everyone really liked our surprises on the route, so we're planning for it to be bigger, better and more fun next year."

Oli Hiscoe,
Willen Hospice Associate Director of
Income Generation

Proudly sponsored by

Specsavers



More than

1,210 sign-ups
to join the herd



More than £120,000 raised - thanks to walkers, sponsors and volunteers!



MKFM

broadcasted live from the start

Top fundraising team raised over

£3,300



Register your interest for the 2024 Midnight Moo at www.willen-hospice.org.uk/midnightmoo



Thank you!

A big thank you to all our amazing supporters. Because you care, we can. Here's just a selection of some of our fantastic fundraisers from the past six months.

Huge thanks to the brilliant Billy the Fish who, aged just seven years old, competed in his first triathlon to raise money for us.



We owe a **BIG** shout out to the incredible children of **Glastonbury Thorn School** who held their own Mini Moo fundraising walk around Shenley Wood and raised more than £3,000.





Massive thanks to local sisters Chloe and Lily who fundraised for us by walking 50,000 steps in one day over the summer holidays, in memory of their grandad.



Thanks so much to the Olney Open Gardens committee and the wonderful residents of Olney who opened their gardens in aid of the Hospice, raising £8,000.



Thank you to the Aspley Guise and Woburn Sands Golf Club for organising the Alroy Pickersgill golf day in June, which raised a fantastic £24,000.



We're grateful to our amazing Redway **Runners** for choosing the Hospice as their Charity of the Year and raising nearly £7,000 in the process.

Huge congratulations go to Laura Owen, who not only raised more than £2,000 by taking on a personal weightlifting challenge, but also came second place in the Oxfordshire StrongWoman competition.





Many thanks to Franklins Solicitors LLP, John Lewis and Partners, Hiller Hopkins LLP and Halo Resourcing for their fantastic efforts raising over £6,000 through the Franklins Challenge.



Huge thanks to the incredibly supportive team at Charles Tyrwhitt who raised more than £4,000 for us through their staff clothing sale.



We are so thankful to the amazing Paul Waterhouse, who cycled from Lincolnshire to Milton Keynes for us in memory of his dad.



Thank you to the brave team of cyclists who took on our Ring of Fire cycling challenge in Spain earlier this year, raising more than £32,000.



What an incredible achievement in the capital for our **London Marathon runners** this year, who collectively raised a whopping £70,000. Thank you!

Dates for your diary

We look forward to seeing you at an upcoming event to support our fundraising.

www.willen-hospice.org.uk/events



What	When	I'm in!
Lights of Love	Saturday 2 December 2023	
Santa Dash!	Sunday 17 December	
Santa's Grotto	9-10 & 16-23 December	
Christmas tree collection	5–7 January 2024	
The Big Willen Hospice Quiz	Thursday 1 February	
Gala Dinner	March 2024 (date TBC)	





Santa Dash!

Dress up like Santa and run, walk or jog around Willen's North Lake. Open to all ages. Well-behaved dogs welcome.

Venue: Willen Hospice
Date: Sunday 17 December

Sign up at www.willen-hospice.org.uk/santadash







Thank you

We can only provide our compassionate care thanks to the support of people like you. There are lots of ways you can help us. Visit our website or one of our shops to find out more.



Shop with us or donate items for sale



Put the fun into fundraising



Celebrate the memory of loved ones



Leave a lasting legacy with a gift in your Will



Play our weekly lottery for just £1



Give the gift of your time and volunteer

www.willen-hospice.org.uk/support-us



always there to care



Contact us: www.willen-hospice.org.uk 01908 663636

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