

# Friends of Willen

Your supporter magazine  
Autumn 2024

A photograph of two hospice workers walking along a paved path in a park-like setting. The worker on the left is a woman in a blue uniform, holding a clipboard. The worker on the right is an older woman in a blue shirt and dark trousers, carrying a blue bag. They are surrounded by large trees and greenery.

## Care at home? Who cares?

Join our fight for fairer funding  
for Willen at Home

### In this issue

A Hospice wedding • Christmas events

The logo for Willen Hospice, featuring a stylized 'S' shape that resembles a wave or a ribbon.

Willen  
Hospice

# Play our Winter Draw

Top prize £3000\*

Every entry helps  
support our Willen  
at Home services

£1  
a play



GambleAware®

18+

FR

registered with  
FUNDRAISING  
REGULATOR

Willen  
Hospice

Lottery

Closing date for entries: 31 January 2025 Draw takes place: 13 February 2025.

Chances of winning: 21,772 tickets were entered into our last Winter Draw (February 2024) with the option of winning 12 prizes. Prizes available\*: 1st prize £3000, 2nd prize £500 and 10x £50 prizes to be won. Only those aged 18 or over are eligible to enter or play. Winners will be notified by post within seven days of the draw date. Promoter: Willen Hospice Ventures Ltd, Milton Road, Willen Village, Milton Keynes, MK15 9AB. Responsible Persons: Nigel Birch and Richard Alsop. All net proceeds donated by deed of covenant to Willen Hospice (registered charity number 270194). Registered with the Gambling Commission ([www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk](http://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk)) under the Gambling Act 2005, account number 4988. For full terms and conditions visit our website. ©Willen Hospice 2024. We are a registered charity (number 270194) and a registered company (Willen Hospice Ventures Ltd - number 1231909) in England and Wales.



## Winners every week

There's £1,000 every week to be won,  
plus a chance to win up to £5,000 in  
the Rollover!

Weekly lottery chances of winning: in 2022/2023 there were, on average, 7,403 lottery players per week. Prizes available: 1st prize: £1,000, 2nd prize: £100, 3rd prize: £50, 4th prize: £50, plus 20 prizes of £10, rollover increases by £200 weekly to a maximum prize of £5,000. To play, you must be 18 or over. Promoter: Willen Hospice Ventures Ltd, Milton Road, Willen Village, Milton Keynes, MK15 9AB. Responsible Person: Nigel Birch and Richard Alsop. All net proceeds donated by deed of covenant to Willen Hospice (registered charity number 270194). Registered with the Gambling Commission ([www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk](http://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk)) under the Gambling Act 2005, account number 4988. Full terms and conditions are available on 01908 303065 or at [www.willen-hospice.org.uk/lottery](http://www.willen-hospice.org.uk/lottery)

Willen  
Hospice

Lottery

# Welcome

to your autumn magazine

Dear Friend,

I can hardly believe it's only been six months since I wrote my last message to you, when I was still settling into this role. Since then, we've had an incredibly busy summer!

Our Midnight Moo in July was a huge success, with more than 1,000 walkers collectively raising £140,000. This is our highest total since before the pandemic. If you were there on the night, lighting up the streets of central Milton Keynes with your flashing hats, glowsticks and determined smiles – thank you.

Much of the summer was spent preparing for our Willen at Home campaign, which launched in September. I hope you've seen some of our advertising for this? Many local people don't know we provide our specialist care in people's homes, as well as in our In-Patient Unit. As you'll read on page 7, we receive no NHS funding for this vital community service, so we rely on the generosity of local fundraising to pay for it. As a Hospice supporter, I hope you'll talk to friends and family about the campaign, to help us spread the word and show your support for the Willen at Home team.

We've also welcomed a new Chair of the Board, Rachel Medill, who founded local



charity Ride High, and a new Commercial Director, Ranjit Singh, who will be helping increase the income we get from our shops and our fundraising. Both Rachel and Ranjit are already very well respected members of the community, so I know they'll be valuable additions to our Willen family.

You can find out more about our leadership and how we're run on our new website at [www.willen-hospice.org.uk/about-us](http://www.willen-hospice.org.uk/about-us).

Thank you for everything you do for the Hospice, whether you're making a purchase in one of our shops or volunteering at our events. Big or small, your contributions help us continue caring for local people and their loved ones.

Kate Broadhurst,  
Chief Executive



PS We're going digital in 2025 – please do read the flyer we've included with your magazine to find out more. Reducing our printed communications will help us save money, which we desperately need to carry on caring for local people affected by life-limiting illness.

# 5 minutes with...

## Manisha Parmar

### Medicines Optimisation Technician

#### What does your average day look like?

When a new patient is admitted to the In-Patient Unit, I record their medication history, so I'll check to see what they've been taking prior to coming into the Hospice. This helps us to optimise their medication and see if there's anything they might not need anymore. For example, at end-of-life stage, a patient might not need blood pressure or cholesterol tablets.

I go to see patients at home too, to answer any medication queries they have. If a patient has just been discharged from hospital, I make sure they understand any changes to their medicines. If they're struggling with managing their tablets then I suggest getting a weekly pill organiser made up by a pharmacy. This can make medication a lot less stressful for patients and carers to manage.

#### What else do you get involved with?

I monitor the medications we keep in stock and make sure we don't have excess. Because if something goes out of date, that's a cost we're incurring. I check that all medication is stored at the correct temperature, and that any expired or unwanted medication is recorded and disposed of correctly.

I'm also responsible for checking the nationwide alerting system for medication. It may be that a specific batch is recalled because there has been a problem during manufacture, or the accompanying leaflet might have been printed with incorrect information. If we have any of the affected batches, I make sure they're dealt with.

#### What's your background?

I did two further education qualifications in Pharmacy many, many moons ago and then worked in retail at Boots. I applied for a job at the hospital and rotated in all areas of the pharmacy there. I worked on the wards seeing new patients, taking medication histories and ensuring people had the medications they needed.

From when I started my career to now, the role and opportunities have changed so much. At the beginning I was literally just dispensing prescriptions.

#### What's the most challenging part of your job?

Recently there have been a lot of shortages of medications, so I often phone around

chemists to find out if they've got any stock. Shortages can be particularly difficult for patients if they've been taking something for a long time, or are trying to manage their symptoms. It's hard to change to something else. I try to make sure they've got enough to keep them going.

### **What do you love most about your job?**

I'd say the people. Everybody here is just so caring, and it's nice to be part of that team.

We work very closely together, so we can bounce ideas off each other. I usually sit in the Willen at Home office and I've learned a lot from the nurses there.

Talking to patients gives you a different perspective. They're grateful for our help and our input. It's sad when you see a patient and just a few weeks later they've deteriorated so quickly. But it's rewarding knowing that you've helped to make their journey a little bit more comfortable.



You can find more information about our care, both in the Hospice and at home, at [www.willen-hospice.org.uk/for-patients](http://www.willen-hospice.org.uk/for-patients)

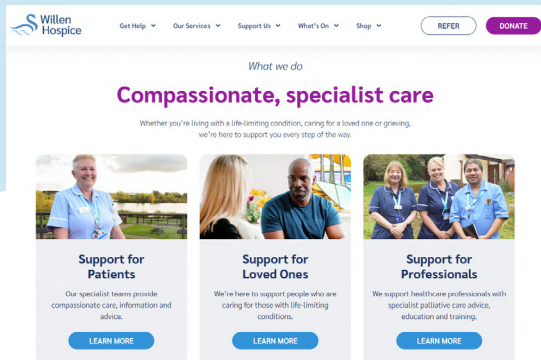
# Hospice news

## A Willen wedding

In June we had the honour of hosting a wedding for Lucy, who was staying in our In-Patient Unit, and her partner, Gareth.

Our Lakeview Room was transformed into a dream venue thanks to the hard work of our Clinical, Retail, Catering, Maintenance and Marketing teams. Our amazing nurses became make-up artists for Lucy, and Receptionist Nicola arranged the flowers.

“The wedding was just one of those moments I thought I’d never have,” said Lucy afterwards. “It was absolutely beautiful. We’ve been engaged for about four or five years but hadn’t gotten around to getting married. Almost all my family could make it. I couldn’t have asked for a better day.”



## Check out our new website!

[www.willen-hospice.org.uk](http://www.willen-hospice.org.uk)

## Listening to our service users

Our Hospice User Group (HUG) was created to give us a chance to get feedback from patients and their loved ones specifically about our patient information. Earlier this year we reviewed the group and decided we needed a much less restrictive format, which would give people the opportunity to speak more openly and in more detail about their experience of our care.

HUG has now evolved into a focus group taking place every two months. Each group is facilitated by a member of Hospice staff, who guides participants through different topics related to their care journey with the Hospice. We've held two sessions so far and had some really useful feedback. We're already working on actioning suggestions we've received around how we communicate and our facilities.

# Care at home? Who cares?

**Did you know that our community service, Willen at Home, receives no NHS funding? Many people don't even know that we offer care at home.**

We're raising awareness of the vital work our Willen at Home team does – taking our specialist care and support out to patients in their own homes – in the hope that you can help us secure its future.

Although as a hospice we're well-known for our lakeside In-Patient Unit, the majority of our care happens in the community. 86% of our patients are cared for in the place where they live, by our Willen at Home nurses. That could be in a house, a nursing home, a caravan, a canal boat – anywhere that the patient calls home. When our patients share with us where they would prefer to die, if possible, two-thirds choose home.



Willen at Home is the only service of its kind in Milton Keynes and it's completely free of charge. During home visits and regular calls, our team use their specialist knowledge to help alleviate symptoms, give medication advice, arrange any necessary equipment and provide emotional support, to carers as well as patients. We can create an environment in a patient's home where they are safe, more comfortable and surrounded by the people and things they love.

This expert care and support costs us £1.4 million each year to provide, and with no NHS funding, the cost is entirely covered by charitable donations. Hospice funding really is a 'postcode lottery' – in neighbouring counties, community services like Willen at Home are entirely paid for by the NHS.

Unless we can get a fairer level of NHS funding and increase our fundraising, we may have to take the heart-breaking decision to cut back our core services, like Willen at Home.



**Turn over to read  
Barbara's story**



# Barbara's story

Barbara is 81 and lives on her narrowboat in Milton Keynes. She's spent most of her life outdoors, through her work as a landscape gardener, Scouting with her two sons and in later years navigating the canal network.

Having been so active, Barbara is finding it hard to cope with the severe breathing difficulties caused by her lung condition, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). She's being supported by our Willen at Home nurses to stay on her boat, as she wishes, and live as well as possible with her symptoms.

I've been on this boat 20 years. One of my brothers wanted to live on a narrowboat. We went on holiday from here to almost the Lake District, visiting boatyards all the way. And he got one. I thought I'd love one for myself. Anyway, he changed his mind and I said, 'I'm not bottling out – I'm gonna buy a boat.' And that's exactly what I did.

I went round the whole canal system of England and Wales on my own. You can start and stop where you like. Your life's your own. People said to me, 'Won't you miss your gardening?' I said, 'No, the whole country's my garden and I don't have to dig it!'

I've got half a lung on one side and the other side's got a big hole in it. They said I had cancer, so they took part of my lung out. But I hadn't. I've never quite got over that.



It's got worse as the years have gone on. I mean, 81's not old, but I feel 181 when I'm trying to do anything.

My chest has gradually got so bad that I can't get up the stairs to leave the boat now. I can get myself to bed, but I've got to sit on the bed for quite a while before I can actually get my legs up and shuffle in. By then I've had it.

A few months ago, a lady from the hospital came to assess me. She phoned the Hospice on my behalf. Then Anita from the Willen at Home team phoned and said she was coming to see me. She gave me a fan for the heat and some different medication. They're just absolutely all very nice, lovely ladies. They come and visit you and talk to you. They're not in a hurry to go, telling me what's available.

Everyone that I used to know has either moved on because they're young or they've sold their boats and gone into flats because they're old. I don't want to do that. I couldn't go back to bricks and mortar. People think my boat is claustrophobic

Nurse Anita with Barbara  
aboard her narrowboat



but I've got 11 big windows and a door at either end of it. I'd feel claustrophobic in a flat. I know I would. I've been outdoors and independent all my life.

**I don't know what I'd do without Willen at Home. Maybe a care home or something. This way, I can keep my little bit of independence I've got and just get on with it. All I've got to do is phone Willen if I'm desperate and they'll be here.**

I didn't know Willen at Home existed. I'd like it to keep on, not just for me, but for everybody out there who needs it and wants to stay at home. If I can stay here on the boat as long as possible, that'd be wonderful.

*Thank you to Barbara for sharing her story.*



We want to make sure Willen at Home can be there in the years to come, for more people like Barbara.

**Are you ready to help us?  
Turn over to find out how.**

# Pledge your support for Willen at Home

**We should all care about care at home. It's your community. They're your neighbours. It's our collective problem.**

Willen at Home is the only service of its kind in this area helping patients like Barbara, and yet it receives no funding. The people of Milton Keynes deserve better.

We're doing all we can to secure fairer funding from the NHS for the future, but it's not easy and it will take time – time we simply don't have. We need you to act now.



**Thank you for standing with us and showing you care about care at home.**

Ready to get started? Visit [www.willen-hospice.org.uk/whocares](http://www.willen-hospice.org.uk/whocares), scan the QR code or call our Supporter Care team on 01908 303050.



## 1 Pledge your support

We need to show that the people of Milton Keynes care about Willen at Home. Help us to reach 10,000 signatures by adding your name to our online form.

## 2 Make a donation

Until we can get fairer funding, we remain dependent on your continued support and generosity. We shouldn't have to be, but right now, we are.

A monthly donation gives us a regular income we can rely on. Think of it as an investment in your future, and the next generation's, so Willen at Home can always be a part of Milton Keynes.

If you're not ready to donate monthly, could you make a one-off donation?

## 3 Share that you care

By kindly sharing our message through social media and word of mouth, you're helping our Willen at Home nurses continue caring for local patients and families.

# Retail news



## New natural skincare range in store

We were thrilled to start stocking products by Naturally Tiwa Skincare in our high street and online shops in July.

The brand was founded in Milton Keynes by Shalom Lloyd MBE and has been widely praised – winning an industry award and attracting the attention of Vogue magazine.

All of the shea butter-based products are cruelty-free, vegan and made of 100% natural ingredients. Although the range is for all skin types, it includes options to help with common skin conditions and is popular with people who are going through cancer treatments, because of the dryness and irritation these can cause to the skin.



## Olney shop gets a facelift

Our shop in Olney Market Place was given a fresh new look in spring 2024. The shopfront was updated and we created more space on the ground floor for homeware. We're also now selling upcycled furniture in store.

## Christmas now in stock!

We have Christmas cards and 2025 calendars in our stores to help you get ready for the festive and New Year period. There are **12 designs** of card to choose from, and our calendar this year features beautiful aerial images of Milton Keynes and around.



# Thank you

So many of you do incredible things to raise money for us, so we can continue caring for local patients and their families. Here are just a few highlights from the past six months.

Thank you very much to **Alroy Pickersgill** who raised a whopping £26,000 for us this year through their charity golf day.



A talented team of **year 14 students from White Spire School** raised an awesome £1,600 for us by running two pop-up cafés to provide Bletchley community groups with refreshments.



You may remember 11-year old **Joshua** from our spring issue – a keen Scout who's been camping in his garden to raise money for us. On 30 June Joshua celebrated a whole year of 'Camping for Care', capturing the imagination of local TV and radio news, and the hearts of our generous local community. His fundraising now stands at £6,300 but Joshua isn't planning to leave his life under canvas behind any time soon!



The **townsfolk of Stony Stratford** came together for a spectacular summer of fundraising for us. The 15th annual Stony Classic car show kicked off proceedings back in June, raising £7,175 and bringing the event's fundraising total over the last 15 years to more than £100,000. Green-fingered residents followed suit a few weeks later with Stony Open Gardens, supported by local businesses, artists and volunteers to raise an amazing £16,650.



We've been overwhelmed by the support of **Charles Tyrwhitt** over the summer, raising more than £17,200 for us through staff sales, quizzes and other fundraising activities.



Local retired couple **John and Wendy** raised £9,000 for us during their epic three-month walk from Land's End to John O'Groats. We welcomed them back with an afternoon tea at the Hospice.

**Parker Fluidic Solutions** held fundraising bake sales, collected donations and secured a donation of £6,200 from their international fund. And they've put forward a team of six brave adventurers to take on one of our skydiving challenges!



A big thank you to **Trek staff** for their support with a range of two-wheeled projects in recent months! Not only did they help out at our MK to Paris and Cycle Sportive events this summer, staff have fundraised £2,144. They also kindly volunteered their time to help service and repair donated bikes as part of our new upcycling scheme at our Kiln Farm Donation Centre.

Don't forget to **tag our socials** when you post about your fundraising!

 /willenhospicemk

 @willen\_hospice

 /willen-hospice

# Everest Base Camp Challenge

Now boarding

Information evening

29 January  
6–7.30pm

Find out more



**Next October we'll be taking up to 20 local people from MK to Nepal on an unforgettable trek to Everest Base Camp. Are you coming?**

The challenge is 16 days in total, with 11 days of trekking. On the trek, you'll get the chance to witness some of the most breathtaking scenery, visiting the highest villages in the world and admiring sunrise over the Himalayan snow-capped peaks and the Khumbu Glacier. You'll also have the option to ascend to the peak of Kala Patthar, where you'll gaze up and see the mighty Everest summit right in front of you.

And the best part about the challenge? Long after you've come home, your fundraising will help us be there for those who desperately need our specialist care and support.

The challenge takes place 18 October–2 November 2025. See the full itinerary and fundraising options by visiting our website or attending our information evening.

**The trek is one of the best things I've ever done! I was very impressed at how well organised it was, from the local crew to our group leader and the two medics. I felt safe at all times and very informed about what was happening each day.**

Previous overseas challenge participant

This challenge is organised by Action Challenge, who have more than 20 years' experience. They are 100% ATOL (Air Travel Organiser's Licence) bonded – ATOL number 6296. Offers full financial protection by the CAA (Civil Aviation Authority) for clients who have booked package trips, including flights.

# Dates for your diary

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

[www.willen-hospice.org.uk/events](http://www.willen-hospice.org.uk/events)



**Sign up today!**

| What                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | When                      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Lights of Love                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Saturday 30 November 2024 |
| Santa Dash                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Sunday 15 December        |
| Christmas Grotto                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 14–15 & 21–22 December    |
|  A photograph of a white Willen Hospice donation truck. The side of the truck features the Willen Hospice logo, the text "Your local charity hospice since 1981", and a large message: "Donate today to turn your pre-loved items into life changing care". Below this, the website "willen-hospice.org.uk" is displayed. The truck's cargo area is visible, showing a yellow armchair, a small white side table with a plant, and a wicker basket. A person in a blue coat and hat stands next to the truck, holding a small evergreen tree. The background shows a residential area with trees and a building. |                           |
| Christmas tree collection                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 3–5 January 2025          |
| Everest Base Camp Challenge information evening                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Wednesday 29 January      |
| The Big Willen Hospice Quiz                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Thursday 6 February       |



Sunday 15  
December

# Santa *Dash!*

Support your local hospice  
and *run for a good Claus!*

[www.willen-hospice.org.uk/santadash](http://www.willen-hospice.org.uk/santadash)



Contact us: [www.willen-hospice.org.uk](http://www.willen-hospice.org.uk) 01908 663636



 **Willen  
Hospice**

©Willen Hospice 2024. We are a registered charity (number 270194) and a registered company (Willen Hospice Ventures Ltd - number 1231909) in England and Wales. Registered address: Willen Hospice, Milton Road, Willen Village, Milton Keynes, MK15 9AB.