



Hospice News

Autumn/Winter 2025



Smiles and support for Maisie



Living Well for all | Pg 8



Finding joy again | Pg 16



Our festive schedule | Pg 12

Welcome to Hospice News!

About Hospice News

Thanks for picking up Hospice News – your support continues to make the difference. The backing of you, our community, is essential to the care provided for adults and children with life-limiting and life-threatening illnesses, and their loved ones. In this edition, learn about our exciting plans to improve the Pembury site, hear from the patients and loved ones benefitting from our range of services, and discover more about our upcoming events and amazing shops. As always, please do share your stories and feature ideas with us for next time. Thanks again for your loyal support.

Josh Puttock

Communications Manager



Front Cover image: Maisie, who is supported by our children's team, being read a story on a visit

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Registered Charity No. 280276



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Nick Farthing, Chief Executive
at Hospice in the Weald

Welcome from our Chief Executive

Welcome to this Autumn/Winter edition of Hospice News. As the seasons turn, I'm struck by how much warmth, generosity and resilience shines through our Hospice community. This issue is full of stories that reflect exactly that, from the ways we're **Shaping our Future**, to the **inspiring people who give their time, talents and support**.

A big part of our journey right now is preparing for the **exciting transformation of our Pembury site**. With the help of staff, volunteers, patients, families, and expert partners, we've developed a vision that will create the very best environment for care. As work begins, in-patient care will temporarily move to our Five Ashes site, meaning we continue to provide excellent care while making vital improvements for the future.

This edition also shines a light on the people at the heart of what we do.

You'll meet **Maisie**, whose family share how Hospice in the Weald for Children brings joy, reassurance, and the chance for her to enjoy the childhood she deserves. You'll also hear **John's uplifting story** of finding connection and laughter again through our Living Well services, a reminder that hospice care is about living life fully, not just managing illness.

We celebrate the dedication of our volunteers, like **Jayne**, who has given more than 30 years of her life to supporting others. And we **mark the achievements of our workforce**, from **Assistant Practitioner graduates** to welcoming our new **Chief Clinical Officer, Steve Beaumont**.

Our shops, events, and campaigns continue to show the power of community support. From **Love Your Labels** to our **Camino walkers**, from **festive celebrations** to **Light Up a Life**, every moment of fundraising and every act of kindness helps ensure our care remains free to all who need it.

I'm especially proud of our **I'm Still Me campaign**, which has helped challenge perceptions of hospice care and highlight that people remain themselves, with passions, families, and stories, no matter their illness.

As we head into the festive season, thank you for everything you do to stand with us, whether by volunteering, fundraising, shopping with us, or sharing your own story. **Together, we can ensure that everyone in our community receives the care, dignity, and compassion they deserve.**

Nick

Hospice updates

Hats off to our graduates

Congratulations to **Louise Nash, Tracey Hodgson, Angela Towner, Colleen Fell, Tracey Webb and Lindy Turner**, graduates of the first stage of the accredited **Assistant Practitioner development programme**.

Their role bridges the gap between healthcare support workers and registered nurses/paramedics. They are enjoying applying their new skills and deeper knowledge of palliative healthcare to benefit patient care, ahead of completing the second stage of this foundation degree-level qualification.



Love Your Labels gets Mayor's seal of approval



More than 200 shoppers bagged high-end bargains at our first summer **Love Your Labels** event held at our **Tonbridge Superstore** – even the Mayor of Tonbridge and Malling didn't want to miss out! Opened by the Mayor, Councillor Chris Brown, **the event raised an incredible £8,000** thanks to the generosity of those who donated and bought designer and high-street items.

We are delighted that the Mayor, who also recently visited our Pembury site, is supporting Hospice in the Weald as one of his mayoral charities this year. Visit our website to find the latest shop updates!

Shaping our Future:

Creating the best care in the best environment

We are excited to begin a major transformation to ensure we continue delivering outstanding care in the best possible environment for years to come.

Thanks to the ideas and enthusiasm of our staff, patients, families, and the expertise of **KKE Architects** and **Elaine Lewis Designs**, we've shaped an ambitious vision for the future.



Our vision

We are refurbishing the ground floor of the Pembury building, including the in-patient ward and Living Well area; re-opening in-patient care at our Five Ashes building; and creating a new centre for children and young people.

Opened in 1998, Pembury needs modernisation. We're aiming for a warm, welcoming hospice with a brighter entrance, improved Living Well space, and more comfortable in-patient rooms. This is possible thanks to generous community support and recent Government funding.



What to expect

Work begins later this year and is expected to be completed by the end of next year. We will continue to offer our compassionate care throughout, with some changes along the way.

Here's what's coming up soon:

• In-patient care:

From mid-November, all new in-patient care will be offered from our site in Five Ashes to enable work to begin on the in-patient ward at Pembury.

• Living Well:

Programmed activities will continue at Pembury, temporarily moving to the lower ground floor at the end of this year.

• Counselling and Support:

The same support is available from the team's temporary new base at Hawkwell Business Centre, nearby.

We look forward to bringing you more details in the next edition. In the meantime, **see the latest developments via our website and social media updates.**





Maisie's story

Eight-year-old Maisie is supported by Hospice in the Weald for Children and loves music, arts and crafts, and being outdoors. Here, her mum, Jess, shares more about the benefit of this support, the value of reassurance, and how Maisie can enjoy her childhood doing things that bring her joy...

"Maisie is a happy little girl, she's quite chilled out most of the time and anything to do with balloons makes her smile. She loves being outside, anything sensory, and bubbles. We all go to the park, and although she can't do a lot, she just likes to be involved, be around her siblings and have the wind blowing in her face.

We started getting support from the children's team in March 2024 and they ease the stress of everything.

The support is for all of us, and Maisie's siblings are occupied and join in too. When someone from the Hospice is here, I can do what I need to do without interruption and things don't take anywhere near as long. If I need to nip out, I can nip out, I don't need to worry about getting the wheelchair in the car, the suction machine, the meds. Brianna, one of Maisie's siblings, also gets counselling at school from the Hospice, and it was offered to me as well.

It enables her to have a normal childhood because she can do the things that other kids do.

Most importantly, Maisie gets her time to do what she wants to do, it's her world and we're just in it! She loves arts and crafts, and they always bring a heap of toys and activities that she enjoys. She likes having the one-to-one attention, which brings her out of her shell. Then there are all the lovely extras and events, like the Christmas party at the Hospice.

Maisie was four months old when she had a seizure, we didn't know anything was wrong up until then. At the hospital, they were asking if she was premature, but she wasn't premature, she wasn't dropped, she wasn't shaken. Then they did an MRI scan and found out that she has Lissencephaly, a rare birth defect.



When I found out, it was white noise in my ears. I could see the doctors' mouths moving but I didn't know what they were talking about. I was only young then, just turned 23 and Maisie was my first baby. It was fight or flight, I knew that she needed me more than ever.

It's not that they just come here to do their job, they interact with Maisie, they care about her and really take the time to get to know her.

It affected my life, but I wouldn't change her at all because I get to see things that other parents don't get to see. I get to see my other children be gentle with Maisie and accept her for who she is. Other kids don't always have that level of empathy in them. The first time I heard of hospice care, my heart broke a little bit, and I thought it would be all clinical, but it's not like that. There is fun and smiles and it's almost like a family.

Don't panic at the word hospice, their support gives me a break. I know I can pick up a phone and someone will be at the other end of the line. I'm thankful I can ask for help when I need it, it's reassuring."

Scan here to discover care and support for children and young people.



Something for all at Living Well

From acupuncture to singing, and now with new groups run from our Pembury hospice, there's something for everyone at Living Well.



Words Group

Second Wednesday of the month, 1.30pm - 2.30pm

Express yourself and have fun with words at our new writing group. No experience is needed and there's no requirement to share your writing.



Acrylic Painting Group

Mondays, 1.30pm - 3pm

Join us to explore acrylic painting. Suitable for all levels, including those who don't think they are creative.



Exercise and Well Being Group for Carers

Tuesdays, 10.30am - 11.30am

Carers are invited to enjoy gentle exercise and a little 'me' time. Meeting others and improving your well-being may help you better manage your caring role.

Do you look after a loved one?

3 in 5 of us will care for someone in our lifetime. Yet more than a third of UK adults caring for a loved one don't consider themselves 'carers'. A carer is any of us who cares, unpaid, for a loved one who, due to illness, disability, or other challenges, requires additional support.

Help us improve our support for carers

We are developing the support we offer carers – and would love to hear from you. If you have experience looking after a loved one, we'd welcome your ideas to help us better meet carers' needs. To get involved, please get in touch.

For more information, visit the Living Well website pages, speak to the Living Well team, call 01892 820 500, or email living.well@hospiceintheweald.org.uk

Our shops in numbers

So far, 2025 has been a year to celebrate for our shops and there is plenty to look forward to in the future, all thanks to you, our incredible supporters. Read on to discover the highlights, the impact we have made so far, and the power of shopping second-hand...

The year so far

Through a variety of popular events attended by pre-loved shopping enthusiasts, including our first ever **Summer Love Your Labels Lock-in**, **Angel Centre Outlet Sale**, and **Sevenoaks High Street Tabletop Sale**, we raised an astounding **£20,800** for people facing life-limiting and life-threatening illnesses, and their loved ones.



Exciting updates

Our newly refurbished **Camden Road Shop** and **Tunbridge Wells Superstore** are already proving a hit with shoppers! With brighter, more welcoming spaces, refreshed layouts, and even more choice of sustainable treasures, they're the perfect places to hunt for a bargain whilst supporting hospice care.

The power of pre-loved

Together, we've rehomed **104,501 items**, with the number growing every day, saved more than **6 million kg of CO₂ emissions**, the equivalent of planting millions of trees, and given **thousands of pre-loved treasures** a second life, from clothing and bric-a-brac, to furniture, homeware, and more.

Summing up the year to date, Jemma, Commercial Office Manager, said:

“Every purchase makes a real difference, and we can't wait to welcome you for more fantastic finds and events in the months ahead.”

Want to continue supporting our shops? Scan here to buy our Christmas cards and bring joy to those important to you this festive season.



I'm Still Me...

Even in the face of a terminal or life-limiting illness, people remain who they are. Hospice in the Weald's I'm Still Me campaign shone a light on the people at the centre of hospice care – not as patients, but as individuals with passions, routines, and stories worth sharing. Their words highlight that identity doesn't disappear with illness.

Celebrating identity

Running from late June to August this year, I'm Still Me used real stories and visuals to spread awareness of the reality of hospice care. Through bold billboards, social media posts and more, it hoped to increase understanding of hospice care, highlighting the people at its centre.



I'm Still Me billboard at Tonbridge Station

Many still associate hospices only with the very end of life - but our care starts long before then. The Hospice supports people across West Kent and East Sussex to live well, stay connected, and remain themselves. Whether at the Hospice in Pembury or Five Ashes, or within people's homes.

I'm Still Me gave a platform to the voices and stories of people accessing hospice support – not as patients, but as the unique individuals they are. Artists, bakers, dog lovers, gardeners, grandparents – each person receiving support from the Hospice is unique and deserves to be celebrated.



Sarah, who discovered a love of pottery in Living Well

Meet Ophelia and Emma

Emma's four-year-old daughter, Ophelia, is supported by Hospice in the Weald for Children. The team is trained to meet Ophelia's medical needs, giving Emma peace of mind – and a moment to breathe.

"She loves interacting with other people," Emma said. "That's where Hospice in the Weald have come in. It's great because they come to our house and they just play with her. They do some arts and crafts with her, and it's great because she's, well, quite complicated."



Emma and Ophelia at our children's Easter party

From home visits to inclusive family events, the care Ophelia receives helps her stay connected, expressive, and – most importantly – herself.

Our promise

Through our services, the Hospice is here to ensure that:

- Care, advice and support is provided for everyone in our community living with a terminal or life-limiting illness, together with their loved ones.
- People are empowered to celebrate life and make the most of the precious time they have for living.



Ella, who organised a festival, Ella Fest, in her last weeks

Discover real stories like Sarah's, Ella's and Emma and Ophelia's at hospiceintheweald.org.uk

Help us spread the message that identity matters... always.

Celebrate Christmas with the Hospice!

This festive season, we invite you to share in the joy, warmth, and community spirit that make Christmas so special.

We begin with our **Christmas Market**, taking place from **28th - 30th November** at our **Hospice in Pembury**. Enjoy a magical weekend, complete with a visit to Father Christmas in his enchanting grotto, a hands-on Wreath-Making Workshop, and a host of seasonal stalls, festive treats, and joyful cheer.

Christmas Market



Wreath-Making Workshops



Can't make it to the market? You can still take part in the festivities by joining us for one of our **Wreath-Making Workshops** at the **Hospice in Pembury** on **2nd, 3rd, and 4th December**.

Carols at Christmas



Our cherished **Carols at Christmas** returns on **Sunday 21st December 2025 at Tonbridge School**. This heartwarming evening of music and reflection brings our community together in the true spirit of the season. We'd love you to join us for this special tradition.

Christmas Tree Recycling



And when the decorations come down, we'll be here to help. Our popular **Christmas Tree Recycling Scheme** returns in January, offering a simple, eco-friendly way to dispose of your tree. Collections will take place from **Saturday 10th to Tuesday 13th January 2026**.

Light Up a Life



This December, take a moment to remember someone special by dedicating a star in their memory.

Our **Light Up a Life** events offer a chance to come together in quiet reflection, to remember loved ones no longer with us, and to find comfort in shared remembrance.

You're warmly invited to our remembrance event at the **Hospice in Five Ashes**, on **Saturday 13th December** where a lantern of light will be lit during a collective moment of reflection and remembrance. Whether it's your first Christmas without someone, or many years have passed, **Light Up a Life** offers a space to pause, remember and feel connected.

You can also take part in one of our growing number of community remembrance events taking place across the area.



To find out more or volunteer at our events, scan the QR code or contact the fundraising team on **01892 820 533** or fundraising@hospiceintheweald.org.uk



Play the Autumn Raffle and help make moments matter

Be in with a chance to win big and make a real difference to local families.

1st Prize
£5,000

2nd Prize
£1,000

3rd Prize
£500

Plus 10 prizes of £50 to be WON

Help people like Jane and Howard

With every ticket you buy, you're helping to provide vital care and support for patients and their loved ones – like Jane and Howard.

"When my husband, Howard was diagnosed with cancer and became seriously ill, Hospice in the Weald were there for us in so many ways," shared Jane.



Important dates!

Closing date – 7th November
Draw date – 17th November



"I'm supporting Hospice in the Weald's Autumn Raffle to help continue the incredible care provided every day to families like mine.

"They didn't just care for Howard, they cared for both of us. They offered comfort, dignity and compassion at a time when everything seemed overwhelming. I will never forget that."



"Will you make a difference in your community by entering the Autumn Raffle?"

"You might not know who you're helping but, your kindness will mean the world to someone in your community both now and in the future."

By purchasing a book of 10 tickets at £40, you could fund a counselling session for a patient living with a terminal illness.

Terms and Conditions - The closing date for returning tickets is midnight 7th November 2025. Tickets received after this date will be treated as a donation. The draw date is Monday 17th November 2025. Promoters: Gemma Hill and Sarah Bowes, Hospice in the Weald, Maidstone Road, Pembury, TN2 4TA on behalf of Hospice in the Weald. Registered charity no: 280276. Hospice in the Weald is licensed by Gambling Commission under the Gambling Act 2005. Players must be 18 years or over and residents of the UK. A list of full terms and conditions can be found on our website www.hospiceintheweald.org.uk/raffle.



GambleAware

Help us make more moments that matter

A gift in your Will could help us ensure people like Jane and Howard receive comfort, dignity and compassion during life's most challenging moments. By letting us know that you intend to leave a gift to the Hospice, you can better help us plan for the future.

If you have made plans to remember the Hospice in your Will or would like information on how to make your Will for free, visit our website today.



Finding joy again – John's story

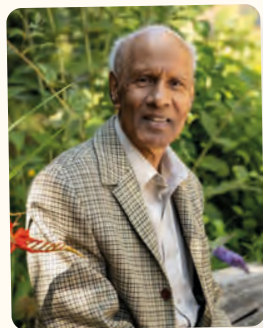
This summer, John found more than just support after being referred to Hospice in the Weald by his GP. Following his diagnosis, he expected quiet corridors and clinical conversations. Instead, he discovered the Living Well service – a vibrant, welcoming community of staff, volunteers and patients, all focused on living life fully.



“The team here sees me as John, not my diagnosis.”

“They’ve helped me enormously to cope with difficulties, but more than that, they’ve given me back joy,” John continued.

Over the past six weeks, John has taken part in a Living Well programme that includes weekly quizzes, creative workshops, gentle exercise and games like boules, and shared meals.



“It’s hard to meet people when you live alone,” he reflected. “But it’s been lovely to connect with others in similar

situations. Sometimes we sing, sometimes we just talk about our gardens or families.”



Between April 2024 and March 2025, 543 people like John were supported by the Hospice’s Living Well services – made possible by the generosity of our community.

“It’s not about illness, it’s about living.”

“This autumn, please consider making a donation to help someone like me keep living well,” said John. “Your support can help someone rediscover laughter, hope, and the feeling of being truly cared for.”

If 164 donors each donate £30, they could enable 5 people to benefit from our Living Well programme, enjoying a range of group and individual activities and therapies, typically over six months.



Volunteering: giving back, changing lives



For more than 30 years, volunteer Jayne Boorman has been part of Hospice in the Weald – supporting patients, families, and our workforce with warmth and dedication. From her early days working as a Healthcare Assistant on the ward to her current role welcoming visitors at reception, Jayne’s commitment has never wavered.

“I saw the Hospice being built and even helped raise money for it. It’s been a big part of my life ever since,” said Jayne. “People ask how I can work in a hospice, but it’s such a therapeutic environment. Everyone is kind and friendly – patients, relatives, and staff.”

“You give a lot but you get so much back.”

Jayne has volunteered in various roles since she was 12 years old, but said the Hospice holds a special place in her heart. “It doesn’t feel like work. Particularly on reception – we’re the first faces people see when they arrive, and that shapes their whole impression. That’s a very important role. But I love it so much.”



One of the best parts of her role is meeting people and making them feel at ease. “Sometimes you notice people who are hesitant to come in – maybe they walk up to the door, then back to their car. I’ll go out and offer to walk in with them. That small act can make such a difference.”

Could you join our volunteer family?

From a few hours a month to regular shifts, there’s a role for everyone. Visit hospiceintheweald.org.uk/volunteer or call 01892 820 500 to find out more.

Inspirational support

Whether big or small, your support touches the lives of those living with terminal illness and their loved ones at Hospice in the Weald. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who has chosen to fundraise or volunteer, including the amazing people mentioned below.

A big thank you to our **Hospice Community Choir**, whose beautiful voices lifted the energy of our walkers making their way along the routes at our Moonlight Walk back in June. The choir has raised **£522.50** so far from member donations at their rehearsals. They meet on Wednesday lunchtimes at the Hospice in Pembury, get in touch if you'd like to join!



Hospice Community Choir



SJM Group Golf Event

A huge thanks to the **SJM Group** who held their golf event at Nizel's Golf and Country Club at the end of June. They host an annual golf event in support of the Hospice, a cause close to their hearts. This year they raised an incredible **£4,700**, taking their overall total over the years to over **£15,000!**

Cranbrook Symphony Orchestra



The **Cranbrook Symphony Orchestra** is a friendly group who meet once a week and perform wonderful concerts throughout the year. Back in June, one of their concerts in Benenden raised an amazing **£538.30** for the Hospice.



Tunbridge Wells Fly Fishing Society



St John's Primary School

Thank you to **St John's Primary School**, who have raised **£809.51**. They got creative and made the longest trail of coins they could, thanks to pupils and staff bringing in £1 and £2 coins. A big well done to everyone for taking part and for their fundraising efforts!

At the end of April, **12 supporters** took on the final 67km of the famous Camino Frances in a three-day trekking adventure along the famous pilgrimage route. They covered rolling landscapes, and more. Together they raised over a staggering **£40,000**. Contact us on 01892 820 533 if you'd like to join our next trek in the Sahara desert!



Camino Walkers



Wednesday Wobblers

Cycling group **Wednesday Wobblers** took to the roads of Kent to raise money in memory of Mike Daniels, who passed away at the Hospice in January. Mike's last ride with the group was just two weeks before he turned 90, so in his honour they cycled 90km and raised **£2,543.76!** Clive from the group even had the privilege of riding Mike's bike.

Ana, who is just 12 years old, decided that she wanted to raise funds in memory of her neighbour, Eddie Butler. Together with her dad, she cycled from Bexhill all the way to Desvres in Northern France, covering over 100 km and raising a phenomenal **£2,264.34!** Look out for her full story which will be featuring on our website soon.



Ana Durling



Scan me!



Carols at *Christmas*

Sunday 21st December
St Augustine's Chapel
at Tonbridge School

Enjoy an **evening of festive performances** in the beautiful, candlelit chapel followed by **mulled wine** and a **mince pie**.

Buy your tickets online or contact our fundraising team on 01892 820 533 or fundraising@hospiceintheweald.org.uk