



SPRING/SUMMER 2021

# News

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## Your support helps families through the worst of times...

Last year was a difficult time for many of us, for different reasons. For Joanne, the pandemic made life a whole lot worse but St Gemma's was there for her husband and family when they really needed it. Joanne explains:

"My husband Matthew started having headaches each morning, we didn't think anything of it. But by spring, he was really suffering and ended up in hospital. He was eventually diagnosed with a brain tumour. They operated and began treatment, but we later found out that this cancer was aggressive, untreatable and terminal. It was an enormous shock for the whole family. He was 46 when he was told he wouldn't live for much longer.

As a family, we had experienced the cancer journey before. But the pandemic restrictions made it so much worse. Under normal circumstances, your family and friends can support you in hospital and visit you at home. But Matthew didn't have this. When he was having his treatment in the hospital for hours and I sat waiting in the car park outside, we both felt so isolated.

Matthew's condition deteriorated and in December we were referred to St Gemma's. On our initial visit from Natalie, our St Gemma's community nurse, it was clear he was getting worse and that caring for him at home was becoming too difficult. Natalie stayed with us for several hours that day, making sure we were ok and planning his admission to St Gemma's In-Patient Unit. I really appreciated her kindness. After Matthew's lonely journey throughout his cancer treatment, it was so

important to us that I could stay right by his side the whole time, and St Gemma's enabled this.

St Gemma's made it clear that it wasn't just about supporting Matthew - it was about supporting all of us. It wasn't just the nurses, doctor, consultant



and healthcare assistants who cared - it was literally everyone on the ward, including the lady who made me cups of tea - I drank A LOT of tea!

The staff encouraged me to walk around the Hospice gardens if I needed some air, but I mainly stayed with Matthew. Our children were able to visit when Matthew was awake. Matthew loved Star Wars and was able to watch the last episode of The Mandalorian with our son, so that was really special.

On Christmas Day it was just me and Matthew. They made Christmas dinner and brought a little hamper for us both - which was so thoughtful. They even brought in a bigger bed so I could lay next to him and watch Christmas TV together. He sadly died in the early hours of 27th December.

Since then, Jade from the family support team has provided vital support to our children and we've all been offered bereavement support. The whole team have been a lifeline. We feel very cared for through what has been the worst of times.

It's clearly been a difficult year for everyone and you could see it was harder than usual for the staff - having to work in protective equipment and being unable to offer their usual hugs. However they somehow still managed to focus completely on the personal care we received. I really felt that was their ethos; it was very much centred on us."



## Give a gift to St Gemma's

Your name:

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone:

Email:

Please tick to receive occasional updates and marketing by email.

I would like to give a monthly gift of £ \_\_\_\_\_



Starting on 1<sup>st</sup> or 22<sup>nd</sup> (please circle)  
of \_\_\_\_\_ (month) of \_\_\_\_\_ (year)

**Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit.** Please fill in the whole form and send it to: St Gemma's Hospice, 329 Harrogate Road, Moortown, Leeds, LS17 6QD

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society:

Service User Number

6 4 8 7 0 4

To: The Manager

Bank/building society

Address:

Postcode:

Name(s) of Account Holder(s)

Bank/Building Society account number

Branch Sort Code

Reference (for office use only)

**Instruction to your Bank or Building Society**

Please pay St Gemma's Hospice Direct Debits from the account detailed in this Instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this Instruction may remain with St Gemma's Hospice and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Signature(s)

Date:

Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit Instructions for some types of account.

Or, make a one-off donation overleaf →

Give a single donation by cash, cheque or card

I would like to make a donation of £\_\_\_\_\_

I enclose  cash  cheque made payable to 'St Gemma's Hospice' or please debit my card detailed below:

Grid for card details

Valid From: [ ]/[ ]/[ ] Expiry Date: [ ]/[ ]/[ ]

Issue No: [ ] Security No: [ ] (last three digits on back of card)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please ensure you have also completed your name and address overleaf so we can process your donation.

### Add 25% to the value of your donation with Gift Aid

I am a UK taxpayer and I would like St Gemma's Hospice to treat any donations I have made in the past 4 years, today and any future donations as Gift Aid donations, until I notify you otherwise.

Gift Aid is reclaimed by St Gemma's Hospice from the tax you pay for the current tax year. Your address (provided overleaf) is needed to identify you as a UK tax payer.

### Did you know, gifts in Wills care for one in five patients?



Tick here if you would like to receive more information about leaving a gift in your Will to St Gemma's Hospice

Please return to:

St Gemma's Hospice, 329 Harrogate Road, Moortown, Leeds, LS17 6QD

Alternatively you can donate online at:

[www.st-gemma.co.uk/online donation](http://www.st-gemma.co.uk/online donation)

We take your data and privacy seriously. To update your information or change how we contact you, ring 0113 218 5555, email [supportercare@st-gemma.co.uk](mailto:supportercare@st-gemma.co.uk) or visit [www.st-gemma.co.uk/privacy](http://www.st-gemma.co.uk/privacy)

## Melvin, Rest in Peace

Back in December, we were devastated to share the news that St Gemma's Head Chef and long-term colleague, Melvin Williams had died as a result of Covid-19 complications. Melvin was a much-loved friend and colleague who was committed to providing a great catering service to patients, staff and visitors. We will remember him as a real character, proud of his Jamaican roots and always keen to prepare his favourite Caribbean food for colleagues at the Hospice. Melvin, 53, was a part of the St Gemma's family for 16 years and the news left many of us shocked and distraught. He will be greatly missed.



## Trustee Focus

The Board of Trustees at St Gemma's are all volunteers, and they are collectively accountable for the governance of the Hospice. The Board, and its committees, ensures that St Gemma's is effectively, safely, legally and properly run and is meeting its overall purposes. In this Newsletter, we focus on two long-standing Trustees, Hilary Barrett and Angus Martin.

Hilary has been a Trustee for four years. She gained over twenty years' experience of sales, marketing, retail, and business development in the private sector, before starting her own business working with major charities and other not-for-profit providers. Hilary uses these skills and experience to work closely with the Income Generation and marketing teams at the Hospice, who value her support immensely.

Hilary has a personal connection with St Gemma's as her Dad was looked after by the St Gemma's community and In-Patient Unit teams and she is proud to give something back.

Angus joined the Board in 2014 after retiring from a career with accountants Deloitte where he worked for 33 years. Angus is the Chair of the St Gemma's Finance and Business Committee.

Spring is a significant time for the Hospice as Angus explains: 'The Hospice's finances are under constant review. But at this time of year, we scrutinise and finalise our plans and budgets for the financial year ahead, starting on 1 April. We look at how much it will cost to run the Hospice in the next 12 months and beyond, we look at where we may need to invest and we consider how much we can raise. Clearly the past year has thrown us many financial challenges, but as a local charity relying on voluntary income, we always plan for unprecedented circumstances to ensure sustainability at times such as this. With the generous people of Leeds behind us, St Gemma's is in a strong position for the future.'

We would like to thank Hilary and Angus, and all our Trustees, for giving their time and expertise to St Gemma's.

More information about our Board of Trustees can be found at: [www.st-gemma.co.uk/patrons-trustees](http://www.st-gemma.co.uk/patrons-trustees)



## Lockdown trading

At the time this Newsletter went to print, we still don't know when our chain of charity shops will reopen, but rest assured that we are busy planning so that we can reopen safely when the time comes.

Behind the scenes, the team have been working hard to generate funds by listing and selling hundreds of items on our eBay shop. ([www.ebay.co.uk/str/stgemmahospiceshop](http://www.ebay.co.uk/str/stgemmahospiceshop)). Our relatively new Depop shop ([www.depop.com/stgemmasshop](http://www.depop.com/stgemmasshop)) is also going from strength to strength with some amazing items on sale. Check out our online shops today and support your favourite Hospice.

You can find the most up to date list of our shops and their opening dates, times and addresses at [www.st-gemma.co.uk/shops](http://www.st-gemma.co.uk/shops)



# "Out of the darkness comes light and love"

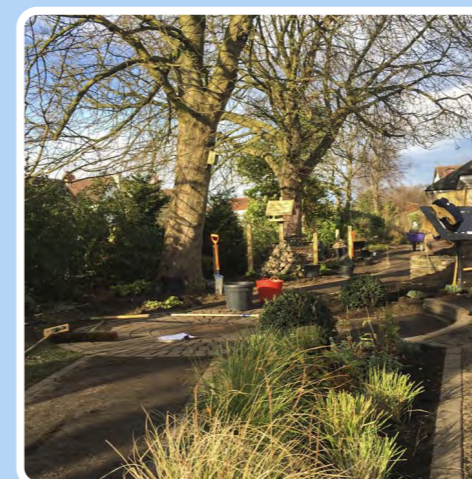
The Path of Life remembrance garden at the Hospice provides a space of quiet reflection and remembrance and is home to many of our Walls of Light. Thanks to a grant from HSBC, we have been able to work with local garden designers Lemon Balm, to carry out some improvements to the Path of Life over recent months.

We know the Path of Life is an important space for many of you, so last year we sent out a survey asking for your thoughts to help shape the space and ensure it is fit for purpose as a tranquil place of remembrance. The survey was completed by people who have bricks on the Walls of Light along the Path of Life, and others who had recently supported the Hospice in memory of someone.

Based on this valuable feedback, Lemon Balm came up with a plan to improve the Path of Life. A few key improvements were identified from your responses: more seating for people to spend time in the garden, more privacy from the car park and Hospice buildings, and a need for more depth and colour in the planting.

Work began on phase one in November - creating the welcome garden and woodland wildlife garden.

To see the full vision for the Path of Life and to take a video tour, please visit [www.st-gemma.co.uk/blog/path-of-life-improvements](http://www.st-gemma.co.uk/blog/path-of-life-improvements). We look forward to when the Path of Life can be enjoyed by many once more!



- A wild flower meadow sown, ready to bloom in spring
- A skilfully-crafted bird house
- A habitat tower built from reclaimed pallets and materials
- Stone cairns to mark the way through the path
- New seating topped with locally-sourced larch wood
- This beautiful mosaic created by Seagulls paint with input from St Gemma's staff and supporters. The mosaic is something truly special to the Hospice and a unique focal point in the remembrance garden.

## We're a Top 50 Inclusive Employer

We're delighted to share the news that St Gemma's has been ranked in The Inclusive Top 50 UK Employers List for the second year running. At St Gemma's we are committed to the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion.

We value the diversity of our workforce and the range of perspectives our staff bring and we are so proud to be ranked at number 44 on this year's list.



# Thanks to you...

Every achievement of St Gemma's is only possible thanks to you, our amazing community of supporters. The way you stood by the Hospice in 2020 was absolutely incredible and allowed us to not only continue caring for local patients and families, but to adapt and improve our services.

Here are some of the things we achieved together in the first six months of the pandemic. You can read more on our blog: [www.st-gemma.co.uk/blog/covid-reflection](http://www.st-gemma.co.uk/blog/covid-reflection)



Continued care for patients including those with Covid-19

260 patients admitted for In-Patient care



1,733 face-to-face consultations with patients at home

Video assessments and telephone consultations with patients at home and in care homes



Established a Covid-19 family support line for Leeds

Supporting a regional bereavement helpline

Virtual meetings to support children facing a bereavement

Developed a Covid-specific funeral planning pack



Day out at Flamingo Land for bereaved children and their families (pre-lockdown)

Continued to provide bereavement counselling and support to adults



## Our new STAR team

Over recent months our new STAR team (Support, Therapy and Resources) have been busy developing new ways of providing support to patients who would previously have attended our Day Services.

While we can't currently run our Day Services as usual, the team have set up a successful virtual Breeze group, where patients receive

breathlessness, fatigue and anxiety management online. Our regular drop-in service has gone digital with weekly Zoom sessions. The carers' group is happening over Zoom too, and we're running virtual activities such as Zumba Gold.

Patients who can't be supported virtually are receiving support to manage their symptoms either by telephone, face-to-face home visits or we recently began providing Out-Patient appointments in Day Services once more.

## Hospice care... everywhere

Despite the ongoing pressures of managing a pandemic, St Gemma's has continued to innovate and reach out to groups and individuals in the community who may need our care but can't easily access it. We have identified that people experiencing homelessness rarely receive palliative or end of life care despite often having complex needs and health problems. In response to this, we have launched a project aimed at improving palliative care support for homeless people across Leeds.

Leading the innovative project for St Gemma's is Senior Nurse, Nicky Hibbert who explained: "Homeless people are particularly vulnerable when it comes to accessing healthcare. Many of them are relatively young and may die of diseases which are preventable or treatable such as tuberculosis or pneumonia. Their deaths may be sudden and they generally do not receive end of life care. Their deaths may lack any dignity.

"We have found that many people experiencing homelessness don't engage with healthcare services. Many of them are unwell, but it's not easy to assess them, give a clear diagnosis or predict how their condition might develop. It might even just be a challenge making an initial contact with someone. We were really keen to tackle this inequality, and ensure that anyone needing our care would be offered it.

"We have been working with a whole range of other organisations supporting homeless people across Leeds including local hostels, charities and support groups. We've been building lasting relationships with them, providing training and support to give them confidence to help identify

anyone particularly vulnerable and know how to contact us quickly if they need us. We have also made it clear that St Gemma's care is not just in the hospice building, which some may find intimidating – we provide most of our care in the Leeds community wherever people live, whether that be at someone's home, in a care home, in a homeless hostel, or sadly on the street.



"So far, we've made good progress. In one month alone, more homeless people were referred to our services than we'd had in the previous 5 years. The project team has worked with patients in a number of ways including: helping with pain and other symptoms, supporting people to regain contact with loved ones, assisting individuals to receive benefits, supporting them to attend for hospital treatment, recording their end of life wishes and preferences and ultimately supporting them to die in a safe place of their choice.

"It is truly humbling when we can give someone the care they need when they need it the most."

The project is kindly being supported by Hospice UK and the Gwyneth Forrester Trust.

**LEEDS  
BIG SLEEP**

Our annual Big Sleep took place on a cold February night, raising valuable funds for St Gemma's Hospice and our friends at St George's Crypt and Leeds Rugby Community Foundation. Participants usually sleep overnight together on the terraces at Headingley Stadium, but this year's lockdown challenge was to spend a night in the most unusual, uncomfortable place they could find to raise much-needed funds in support of our city's most vulnerable people. Over 100 people took part, raising over £10,000 for the three charities. Participants slept in gardens, their garages and even a skip.

Well done and thanks to everyone involved.



# Raising funds to support patient care...

Heartfelt thanks to everyone who has continued to support St Gemma's vital care over the past year, and into 2021. Many of our fundraising activities have been impacted, but we are hopeful that we will be able to resume our exciting calendar of events in the near future. We will, of course, continue to follow the local and national guidance and every activity will be thoroughly risk assessed and carefully planned to ensure a Covid-secure environment. Things are changing regularly, so please contact us or visit our website for the latest status on all events listed.

[events.st-gemma.co.uk](http://events.st-gemma.co.uk)

Fundraising hotline: 0113 218 5555

## Summer Skydives for St Gemma's

Do something amazing and take part in an incredible tandem skydive, jumping from 15,000ft. Join us on Saturday 22 May, Saturday 24 July or Sunday 26 Sept. Other dates available. Contact Emma on 0113 218 5570 or email [emma-h@st-gemma.co.uk](mailto:emma-h@st-gemma.co.uk) for details.

## Wing Walk challenge

Take on this thrilling challenge like no other. You will be strapped to the wings of a bi-plane and take to the skies - swooping, looping and experiencing flight from outside the plane. We have two wing walk locations available; Brighton Airfield, Selby and Wickenby Aerodrome, North Lincolnshire. Contact Emma on 0113 218 5570 or email [emma-h@st-gemma.co.uk](mailto:emma-h@st-gemma.co.uk) for details.



## Run with us in 2021

Join Team St Gemma's and make your miles count. We have discounted places for the Yorkshire Marathon this October, which takes runners through the beautiful medieval city of York and its picture-perfect countryside. It is a very flat route and offers a great opportunity for a personal best or first marathon. Contact Emma on 0113 218 5570 or email [emma-h@st-gemma.co.uk](mailto:emma-h@st-gemma.co.uk) for details.

## Yorkshire Three Peaks Challenge

19<sup>th</sup> June

Registration is now open. Test your stamina and take on the peaks of Pen-y-Ghent, Wharfedale and Ingleborough, in under 12 hours. A challenge for individuals, groups of friends, work colleagues or family. It's a great way to get together outdoors, meet new people and raise vital funds whilst you take on the iconic Yorkshire Three Peaks. Contact Emma on 0113 218 5570 or email [emma-h@st-gemma.co.uk](mailto:emma-h@st-gemma.co.uk) for details.

## Tree-mendous achievement

It was touch and go whether we could run our usual Christmas tree sale last year and our popular Christmas tree recycling service in January. But with the support of some excellent volunteers and the kindness of our supporters, we decided to go ahead with both activities. And we're so pleased we did!

Over two weekends, we sold over 600 real Christmas trees via our new click and collect service. It all went smoothly and we look forward to building on its success in 2021. In spite of January's snow and ice, we collected over 2,150 trees from across Leeds for recycling. This was a big task but our amazing teams rose to the occasion.

Most importantly, over **£48,000** was raised towards the work of the Hospice - a truly tree-mendous total. Thanks to everyone who bought or recycled their tree with us.

We would like to say a huge thank you to: all of the volunteers who helped, Leeds Commercial Vehicle Hire who generously provided the vans for the tree collections, Aptean who planned the collection routes, Mone Bros and Leeds City Council who gave access to recycling sites and Yorkshire Tree Services who chipped the trees. Your generous support is greatly appreciated.



## Win £2,021 and support patient care

Don't miss out on your chance to win £2,021 in our New Year Raffle!

It's quick and easy to enter online at:

[www.st-gemma.co.uk/raffle](http://www.st-gemma.co.uk/raffle)

Alternatively, if you've received tickets in the post, simply return your entry by 24 March 2021 to take part.

The draw will take place on the 31 March and winners will be notified within two weeks of the draw date. Full terms and conditions can be found online.



## Raising money... differently

The coronavirus pandemic has not only affected the way we deliver care here at St Gemma's, but like most hospices and charities, it has significantly affected our ability to raise funds too.

While the care we provide is free for patients and families, last year it cost us around £10 million to provide these services, with 26% funded by the NHS and the rest raised through fundraising activities, donations from individuals and companies, Gifts in Wills and our busy network of charity shops.

In 2020 however, our fundraising was badly impacted, as we saw the closure of our shops during lockdown and the cancellation of our events. In the year ahead, this is likely to remain our biggest challenge and at the time of writing this, our shops are sadly once again closed.

It's not all doom and gloom though. We have been humbled by the wonderful response we have received to our appeals, which have raised tens of thousands of pounds to help make up for this lost income.

Many people told us that they were happy to be asked and were pleased to donate at this critical time.

We have also seen many people take part in our virtual events or take on their own personal fundraising challenges to support the Hospice through these turbulent times. Your enthusiasm and efforts have been truly inspiring!

St Gemma's relies on your heartfelt support, so in 2021, we really hope you won't mind us reaching out to you again from time to time. We may send you raffle tickets, our latest appeal or ask for your support in other ways. We appreciate that you may not be able to help every time but anything you can do to help will make an enormous difference and will be truly appreciated.

Of course, if you feel like you're hearing from us too often, please do let us know. You can change the way we communicate with you at any time, or you can choose not to hear from us at all, although we hope this won't be the case.

Thank you once again for all your support in the past, and for any help you are able to give in the year ahead. We have never felt more privileged or grateful to be surrounded by such an amazing community of caring people.

# Make your Will... and take care of everything that is important to you

In 2021, Make a Will month is taking place in both March and October to give you an extra opportunity to have your Will written while supporting St Gemma's Hospice. – visit [www.st-gemma.co.uk/makeawillmonth](http://www.st-gemma.co.uk/makeawillmonth) before the end of March to have your Will written by a professional solicitor in exchange for a donation of your choice.

In addition to local Leeds solicitors offering appointments, we have teamed up with online Will writers Kwil. There is a helpline and dedicated online support available if you need any guidance. During March as part of Make a Will month you can use Kwil free of charge.

Last year over 100 supporters had their Will written, 25 of whom have left St Gemma's a gift in their Will. There is no obligation to leave a Gift in your Will to St Gemma's if you take part in Make a Will month. However thanks to these gifts left by generous supporters, we can ensure that for years to come, patients and their families will receive the expert and compassionate care they need. Find out how you can be a part of our future with a gift in your Will at [www.st-gemma.co.uk/yourlegacy](http://www.st-gemma.co.uk/yourlegacy)

**Lynne and Peter McDonnell** made their Wills during a previous Make a Will month: *"We had always intended to have a Will written, but never got round to doing it.*

*Given the current times, we decided that it would be wise to ensure that plans were in place for our children. But equally relevant to us was the opportunity to help St Gemma's, who provided care and support to both our Mums who had passed away in St Gemma's during the last few years. Making the Will was a quick and painless procedure. We are so grateful that the St Gemma's Make a Will month prompted us to finally do it!*

*St Gemma's will always hold a special place in our hearts, and we'll continue to support and donate whenever we can."*

For more details about making your Will in 2021, please call **Laura** on **0113 306 9170** or email [laurah@st-gemma.co.uk](mailto:laurah@st-gemma.co.uk).



## Your story is the story of St Gemma's...

We are so grateful when individuals share their personal experiences. You put things into words better than we ever could. Thank you to everyone, including Sinead, who has shared their story so far on our new online community – Hospice Stories.

Simply visit [www.st-gemma.co.uk/hospicestories](http://www.st-gemma.co.uk/hospicestories), share your story and tell our community how St Gemma's made a difference. You can read all the stories on there too.

Sinead's father Thomas was cared for on the Hospice In-Patient Unit in summer 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic. Sinead said: *"My father got taken in to St Gemma's at the start of July 2020. He was there for just over 2 weeks. The care and compassion the staff gave was amazing in the current situation with COVID-19, they looked after him with care and respect and made sure he was comfortable in his last days. I owe everything to St Gemma's and the staff who made him comfortable and they were as supportive to us as a family as they were to my father."*

We really want to communicate with you and keep you posted about news, events and updates from across St Gemma's. We also want to show you how your support benefits local patients and their families. But we respect your decision if you wish to change how we send you information, or choose not to hear from us at all. Ring us on 0113 218 5555, email [supportercare@st-gemma.co.uk](mailto:supportercare@st-gemma.co.uk) or update your preferences online: [www.st-gemma.co.uk/mydata](http://www.st-gemma.co.uk/mydata)