

# *force matters*



**NEVER  
NEEDED  
SO MUCH**

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# We've never needed you so much



By Meriel Fishwick  
FORCE Chief Executive

With the majority of our services now available face to face as well as via video and phone calls, and the coronavirus vaccination programme underway, we are looking forward with hope and optimism. Since the start of the pandemic in March 2020 our skilled and adaptable support services team have delivered more than 10,000 support sessions.

I wonder how many people reading this newsletter can remember cancer services in Exeter before FORCE Cancer Charity was established in 1987. Clearly treatment options were quite different, but there was very little clinical research and any additional support for patients and their families was confined to end of life. As we grapple with the fallout of the pandemic it's important to understand all that has been achieved over the last three decades thanks to FORCE and its supporters. It was funding world class research in Exeter that put FORCE on the map and the purchase of state of the art equipment has helped keep cancer treatment up to date. Latterly we have become best known for providing a comprehensive range of practical and emotional support for people and their families. So much is at stake if we cannot raise the funds we need to secure our future and deliver our services.

### Now is the time to get behind the local charities that bring so much to our communities.

FORCE in its current guise is pretty unrecognisable from its origins, but the culture and the ethos of the organisation are unchanged. There is a sense of commitment and shared pride, generated by our staff, volunteers and supporters, ensuring FORCE is here for those who need us. We have continually adapted to the changing needs of cancer patients and their families - hence the FORCE we see today is progressive and agile but still focused on individualising support for patients and their families.

In terms of our financial position, we currently have our nostrils above water - but no more than that. Huge thanks must go to our supporters, fundraising and shop teams, who have worked tirelessly to achieve truly amazing things and found new ways to bring in vital funds.

The pandemic has created previously unimaginable change. The overnight shift to using digital platforms has catapulted us forward by as much as 5 - 10 years. A good deal of what we've learned from this new way of working is positive and will create improved access and a preferred way of communicating for some of our beneficiaries. We have, however, had many moving conversations over the last 12 months with people who have been



**Force Matters** is the newsletter of FORCE Cancer Charity. Thanks to everyone who has contributed to this issue. While every effort is made to ensure accuracy at the time of going to print, please accept our sincere apologies for any errors or omissions.

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**Fundraising:**  
☎ 01392 402875 @ forcefr@forcecancercharity.co.uk

**FORCE Charity Shop**  
73 Fore Street, Heavitree, Exeter EX1 2RN ☎ 01392 271652  
**Open: 10:30am - 4:00pm Monday to Saturday**

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If you no longer wish to receive our FORCE Matters magazine you can let us know at any time by calling us on **01392 402875** or emailing [supporter.relations@forcecancercharity.co.uk](mailto:supporter.relations@forcecancercharity.co.uk). If you would prefer to receive the magazine via email we would be happy to amend your preferences. Supporters of FORCE are incredibly important to us. Further details of how we comply with General Data Protection Regulations can be found on our website: [www.forcecancercharity.co.uk/privacy](http://www.forcecancercharity.co.uk/privacy)



so grateful to be able to get safe, face to face support when things have been unbearably difficult for them.

Saving lives in cancer medicine is understandably associated with clinical treatments, but the importance of good mental health is sharply in focus everywhere you look and this is where FORCE is at its best.

We have loved hearing the stories of Zoom exercise groups and other group support. It has been moving to see the comradery created in these testing times. I am going to finish by reflecting on the last 12 months and asking you to do whatever you can to help us - **we've never needed you so much.** ●

We have helped people <b>manage</b> their <b>fear, anxiety</b> and <b>uncertainty</b> alongside our own	We have <b>been there for people</b> through some frightening and lifechanging times	We have <b>kept our doors open</b> when others have closed
We have learnt the words <b>COVID, coronavirus, furlough, Zoom</b> and have overused a few others!	We have <b>massaged</b> people - sometimes the only treatment left for them	We have <b>welcomed back some volunteers</b> to FORCE, the shop and the Oncology Centre (only to stand them down again in January)
We shout the words ' <b>can you hear me</b> ' to colleagues now living in our computer screens	We have <b>kept people active</b> and silver surfers have become silver joggers - via Zoom	We have made space available to <b>breast prosthesis clinics</b> and doctors needing desk space
We no longer hug people but <b>wave madly</b> at our screens instead	We have <b>delivered headgear</b> to support people with hair loss	We have <b>supported each other</b> , and you have <b>supported us</b> - thank you!
We have learnt that, for many, COVID is their <b>first concern</b> with cancer second	We have <b>listened to</b> the hopes and fears of <b>children</b> and helped them smile	We are <b>very proud</b> to be FORCE Cancer Charity

# we are open

and can see you safely - Monday-Friday 09:30-16:30

**For cancer support and information plus advice on claiming benefits**

☎ 01392 406151

**Oncology physiotherapist** ☎ 01392 403094

✉ support@forcecancercharity.co.uk

**For psychological and emotional support**

☎ 01392 406168 / 406169

✉ help@forcecancercharity.co.uk



# ONE YEAR ON...

Welcome again to FORCE MATTERS!

**R**electing on the past year, where FORCE came from, where we are now, how much FORCE has adapted to change and need, what it has meant to so many, individually and collectively, there's so much I want to say... but above all, what is most important is to pay tribute to you all, who have supported FORCE with your loyalty, inspiration, giving of yourselves, time, ingenuity, skills, effort, "held" each other with understanding and compassion, smiles, encouragement, even when weary and tearful – often behind the scenes – and enabling FORCE to continue its work, through these difficult, unimaginable, unpredictable times – so many extraordinary, unsung heroes amongst you.

Meriel has expressed all of this so eloquently and comprehensively – as always, moving, inspirational, a touch of humour, highlighting that very personal touch which makes FORCE and all those who make up the FORCE family so very special and unique. She has also touched upon FORCE's financial position and again, thank you for your committed, continued efforts to keep those much needed funds coming in, without which we could not do what we do.

I always find inspiration and hope in personal stories... and there are many... of individuals, families, patients, carers, healthcare professionals, who have come through FORCE's virtual or real doors,

found a welcome, time to be... to be quiet, to cry, to share words and feelings when there are no words, a listening ear, an understanding heart, a (virtual) hug, enabling each to find inner resources through one-to-one or group sharing and a way to look up, then move forward when the time is right.

There are some points which bear repeating: throughout this testing year, we have kept our doors open when others have closed, been available when needed for those who need us... listened, helped, encouraged, supported each other through fear and uncertainty to hope, provided practical help, realigned the way we work to provide services to meet those needs. None of this would have been possible, together, in a spirit of mutual comradeship, without you, our loyal supporters, our teams – operational, psycho-oncology support, administration, the FORCE shop, volunteers, fundraisers, trustees and committee members - all of whom have kept and continue to keep FORCE doing what we do best.

So, thank you again. I am proud, humbled and privileged to be part of the FORCE family.

Anne  
**Dr Anne Hong**  
 Chairman, Trustees of FORCE ●



# We walk alongside people in many more ways

Our remarkable team of Oncology Support Specialists reflect on the experience of the past year and how new ways of delivering support can help shape our services to benefit even more people affected by cancer in future.

## Emma Ellis, Lead Oncology Support Specialist

I feel privileged to be working with such an amazing team through these extraordinary times. We all pulled together and flipped a predominantly face-to-face service to telephone and video overnight. Global adaptations dictated that FORCE alter its services accordingly. It has been a fine balance between maintaining safety for our most vulnerable clients, while continuing to offer optimal and timely support. Just as we settled into a new working pattern, Government guidelines would change, causing us to modify how we worked.

We have learnt so much and now look forward to incorporating what we have learnt as we move out of this latest lockdown and shape our services moving forward. We now value modern technology and this will enhance how we support people in the future, alongside meeting people at the Centre and at our outreach locations. Face to face, telephone and video support blend nicely together and we envision this strengthening the support we offer, particularly for those who are too unwell to travel, live further away or cannot face the dreaded car park. Personally, I have valued the opportunity

to offer ‘walk and talk’ sessions when the situation has felt appropriate.

## Gerry Gillespie

It took a huge adjustment to not be able to see people face to face and be present with them in the room. In the beginning I found it really difficult but then I started to notice that as I listened more intensely, I could pick up nuances and expressions which somehow added another depth to the relationship and with that came another layer of empathy and understanding. Modern technology has given us more ways of reaching people. Now, when someone lives a long way away and doesn't feel up to travelling, we can reach them and walk alongside them in a way that we wouldn't have been able to before.

### Psychological and emotional support

☎ 01392 406168

@help@forcecancercharity.co.uk

## Tania Davidson

I was sceptical of phone and online counselling before COVID but having had to rely on these I was surprised how effective they can be. What I can take from this experience is the value and uniqueness of face

to face human connection and how nothing can replace this.

## Roseanna Southall

This has been a time of connection, building secure, and trusting relationships without our normal resources to draw upon and I think in a time of such great change – where all of us are adapting to new and different lives - some things stay just the same. Human interconnectedness is one of the few things that remains as perpetually important, beautiful, and significant as it was the day we entered this strange year.

## Stella King

I was so grateful to be able to continue to connect with my clients and can recall how phone calls and Zoom video sessions, alike, were met with such gratitude. Zoom sessions have also enabled us to reach a wider client group, such as those who are less able to travel and this is something we will continue to offer. I have missed, however, the nuances and warmth of face to face work; some things are inevitably lost in translation with remote working, so I really look forward to seeing more of our clients back at the FORCE Centre.





**Sally Hoult**

I have found working from home during this last year a really positive experience. I was surprised at what a rich medium the telephone and online communication can be. I noticed for some clients a sense of feeling more relaxed being at home. Some said they would have felt too anxious to come to a centre. And for me a feeling of being “at home” with them.

The main benefit of working from home has undoubtedly been the ability to access more people, irrespective of mobility issues, and those who live more remotely, also flexibility with appointments. The chief downside is missing the human interaction both of staff and clients, and all the other cues, vocal, visual, behavioural of being with someone face to face. Not to mention the perils of the cats wandering on to screen in the middle of a session!

**Emma Barker**

COVID magnified what was already a difficult situation for people. People have accessed support with limited social support and the loneliness of cancer treatment. To be alongside someone during such a difficult time of their life, made more stressful and anxiety provoking by a pandemic, is truly a

privilege. COVID has given us the chance to change and expand the way we can offer to see people, to gain our confidence in working in ways we may not have tried otherwise, to be able to reach more people with our support and do the job which is so close to our hearts.

**Paul Grace**

During lockdown, young people and teens liked – at least at first – being able to use a video link to talk, rather than being brought to the Centre by a parent. This may be a feature that continues, as teens seem to feel that talking by video-link can be done more on their own terms. It can also mean less time out of their day. Younger children can sustain only about 20 minutes on video-link; I would often encourage them to have paper, pencils and crayons to draw and colour when we talked, so they could show me their concerns. It worked best if they had already met me in the Centre; it is difficult for a child to meet someone for the first time on video-link. On a personal level, working from home, I developed negotiation skills with neighbours, who were keen to get work done on their homes during lockdown so I would be dashing outside and asking for delays in scaffolding going up and down, mechanical diggers coming out etc. ●

**BENEFITS OF DEEP BREATHING**

ALLEVIATES HEADACHES AND CALMS ANXIETY AND MENTAL STRESS



BALANCES THE ULTRADIAN RHYTHM (AS ONE NOSTRIL IS RESPONSIBLE FOR WAKE CYCLES AND SLEEP CYCLES)

THE HOLDING OF THE BREATH BETWEEN INHALES AND EXHALES HELPS REGULATE AND DIRECT THE FLOW OF BREATH IN THE BODY



INCREASING THE INTAKE OF OXYGEN HELPS TO NOURISH THE BODY AND BRAIN

CALMS THE MIND AND NERVOUS SYSTEM, TRIGGERING RELAXATION



HELPS TO BALANCE THE LEFT AND RIGHT HEMISPHERES OF THE BRAIN (LINEAR THINKING WITH CREATIVE THINKING)

**We are now able to offer more face-to-face contact for people who need our support**

Please get in touch and let us talk you through the ways we can help. We're here to offer you a warm welcome so for psychological and emotional support, contact us today. Call: 01392 406168 Email: help@forcecancercharity.co.uk

**TOWARDS A BETTER NIGHT'S SLEEP**

The body recuperates when we are asleep but sleep can often be affected by the impact of a cancer diagnosis and treatment.

**MAKE SLEEP A PRIORITY**



**MORNING ROUTINE**

A better night's sleep can begin with a morning routine. For example, have caffeinated drinks until midday, allowing the body to fully process the caffeine in our system.

**20 MINUTES OF NATURAL LIGHT**

Each morning aim to get at least 20 minutes in natural light by either going for a walk or sitting comfortably outside. This positively affects the circadian rhythms that help regulate the body's natural sleep/wake cycle.



**TURN OFF**

Turn off blue screens at least one hour before bedtime. This includes phones, laptops and some smart TVs. The light they emit can suppress melatonin, which may adversely affect our circadian rhythms.



**SET A BEDTIME**

It can help to set a bedtime, so that we know the time that it would help to turn off blue screens, finding something settling to do in the hour before bed, for example reading, listening to an audio-book, a podcast or the radio.

**WARM SHOWER**

A hot/warm shower can also be helpful an hour before bedtime.



**BREATHING**

If we're not sleepy when we do turn in, a simple breathing exercise can relax the mind and body. For example, breathing out for a count of six, breathing in for a count of four and repeating this, gently and easily extending the out breath, can have an easing effect on our heart rate.

**FIND A COMFORTABLE PLACE**

If after 15 minutes we find we are not sleepy, it can help to get up, sit in a warm, comfortable chair and read or listen to soothing music, rather than staying in bed and becoming unsettled. The same applies for waking up during the night. If you're wide awake and a simple breathing exercise doesn't help, getting up, going into a different room and staying warm and comfortable, can be more conducive to becoming sleepy again than lying in bed.



**5 THINGS YOU ARE GRATEFUL FOR**

Simple gratitude practice can aid sleep. Think of five things you are grateful for, maybe even write them down. This can divert us from our pre-occupations towards aspects of life we are thankful for and can even allow for degrees of contentment.



CALL FORCE ON 01392 406151 IF YOU NEED OUR SUPPORT







# STILL HERE TO CONNECT AND SUPPORT

Annie Kerr, Lead Support and Information Nurse at FORCE

As I write this piece it is a year to the day that our first lockdown began. Since then, the Information Services team has been here to connect and support people throughout, whether at the time of a new diagnosis, through treatment or when treatment has ended. We know that for those in treatment there has been much less face to face contact with hospital follow-ups and visits to the GP.

Alongside this, our benefits advisor has continued to support people who may have lost their jobs or have been furloughed as well as having to cope with the challenges of a cancer diagnosis.

**To have paused these vital services through the pandemic would have failed the people who are at the heart of FORCE.**

We were very aware that lockdowns brought isolation and loneliness to many in treatment, who were unable to use their normal resources for support. On one afternoon in the Centre, an elderly gentleman ‘dropped in.’ He had been told of his diagnosis over the phone but had not understood the treatment plan or how serious the cancer was. Sadly, he had no close relatives and he cared for most of his elderly neighbours. Among the hospital information he had been sent in the post was a leaflet for FORCE support. He took the bus from Axminster that day and was pleased to be able to talk through the hospital letters and information he had received with us.

We also know that for some people, the diagnosis and treatment of cancer will be managed in a new way and the need to shield from others will have brought different challenges.

Shielding has also provided some solace. The comfort of home and not having to face the outside world has provided some relief. Within one of the recent groups at FORCE we were surprised that some enjoyed the lockdown. A woman described how the devastation of losing her hair with chemotherapy was eased by the excuse of shielding to hide away. Working from home for those in treatment was also welcome - ‘from having to face work colleagues who would not know what to say about my cancer.’

We now hope for brighter times when the expectation is that we are coming out of the pandemic. Three members of the Info services team have been helping with the mass vaccination programme and have been spreading the word about FORCE at the same time!

Understandably people are now experiencing anxiety about coming out of shielding. For some it has been a long time to return to some ‘normality’ and a difficult and isolating experience. We appreciate that there may be a lot of worry about how to keep safe. If visiting FORCE feels like a daunting experience, please feel free to contact the Info services team for reassurance about the safety of your visit. FORCE has been well supported by the expertise of the infection control teams at the RD&E and we can firmly say we are safe to see you... and we look forward to seeing you soon! ●

**Support, information and benefits advice**

☎ 01392 406151 @support@forcecancercharity.co.uk

**ONE OF THE ROLES for the Information Team is to support the Moving Forward Programme. The programme supports people at the end of treatment and helps them find a new normality in life. In previous years, FORCE was able to welcome groups of up to 10 people to explore the impact of a cancer diagnosis. We have had to be creative with the pandemic, but where there's a will there's a way!**

Information Nurse Jayne Fahy reflects on changes to the way the group was recently delivered:

“A Moving Forward group was planned for January and we were looking forward to meeting up in the Centre. However, lockdown put paid to this, so we offered sessions on Zoom. Most people agreed to give it a try. They were open to this way of meeting, although we are all really looking forward to meeting in person in the near future when restrictions lift.

What has become evident is the huge impact of COVID-19 on a cancer diagnosis and subsequent treatments. It was heart-warming to see how the group offered support to each other despite the restrictions of being on video. While we wouldn't have chosen to work via Zoom, we have learnt that for some people who find accessing the hospital difficult, this might well be something we offer in future in addition to face to face groups.”



# Art group a lockdown success

**F**ORCE has run an expressive art group since we opened the Centre in 2004. Sometimes I would pop in to see their work and say hello. There was always a lovely, calm atmosphere as heads were down concentrating, with some chat as well. I also helped collect feedback and there were so many positive comments, so I knew how it benefitted clients. I've always enjoyed anything creative. So, when we were thinking about which services might be transferrable during the pandemic, I was really keen to get the art group up and running on Zoom.

Working with our lovely resident artists, Lucy Rockcliffe, Jess Carvill and James Hedge, we devised sessions of an hour or so long which would run over six weeks. We supplied a short video or written piece and sent out art supplies to cover each project. Some projects also involved sourcing objects around the house or outdoors. Autumn leaves made some great collage work.

Each week the artists set a different project and, if they wished, everyone shared photos of their own efforts the following week. At the start of each session we all had a chance to share how the week had been for us

We've run groups almost back to back and it's been well received. The closed

format worked well as we saw attendees get to know each other and feel comfortable over the course. We also invited all the groups for a one-off session at Christmas and 12 clients attended, all of us silently working in real time concentration to produce a decoration!

We know that engaging in creative activities can aid relaxation but sometimes the motivation is hard to come by. Lots of the participants enjoyed the inspiration, encouragement and motivation that the group gave. Also important was having something to look forward to and the contact with others.

We have shared some of the work on our Facebook page and I'm hoping we can do some sort of exhibition once the Centre is fully open. For now, we will continue on Zoom to spread some therapeutic creativity. This participant summed it up when asked what the best bit was:

*"Having time at the start to catch up and say what kind of a week you have had, knowing that the other members understand and can empathise. Then moving on to the actual art project and having fun discussing the process and outcomes."*

**Nicky Peterson, FORCE Support and Information Nurse** ●



## A HUMBLING PRIVILEGE

**AT THE BEGINNING** of this pandemic I never imagined my job could be done from home. Replacing face to face contact with our clients and the restrictions on the services we usually offer has been heart-breaking. Usually when one of the nurse/information team meets with someone new we have a wide range of support options to draw from. Some to relieve physical symptoms others more emotional and the combined team has, as a resource, a large experience base that we have gained during our careers that has led us to where we are - an excellent team to support anyone affected by a cancer diagnosis.

Working from home in our rapidly changing service provision has given me a new insight into our clients and how they have adapted to work with us. While I may only be ringing to book a benefit or counselling appointment, the privilege of calling people in their homes while they are shielding or protecting others has been humbling. We have had time to talk and often I have been thanked for spending some time doing just that.

### 'It is lovely just to talk to someone'

It is important to talk to ease loneliness and easier sometimes to do this with a stranger. When the business part of the call has ended, we have often ended up laughing, discussing topics from the importance of cream puffs for elevenses to the joys of kayaking our beautiful coastline. This ends the call on a cheerier note.

Our benefits service has also adapted to phone consultations - after Mike (Watson) and I have compared the morning temperatures between his shed and my loft! Mike has continued to support FORCE clients with benefit applications and advice, walking them through this stressful process.

**Jayne Lynds**  
FORCE Support and Information Advisor ●





# Introducing Judy

I started working for FORCE in October 2020. I am originally from Cheshire where I spent a very happy childhood with my three older brothers. When I left school, I worked as a dental nurse at Manchester Dental Hospital, which I thoroughly enjoyed but always had aspirations to be a nurse. I decided it would be fun to see another part of the country, so moved to Winchester to commence my nurse training.

Once qualified, I worked on a general medical ward in Basingstoke. While there we admitted a patient with a cancer. I spent a lot of time with her, talking to her about her diagnosis, finding her journey interesting and just wanting to support her. I knew from this experience that I wanted to work in cancer services. I spent the next two years undertaking my oncology and haematology diploma while working on the medical ward. The need to care for cancer patients in our area increased. An incredible amount of money was raised by a local family in memory of their daughter and a 10 bedded cancer unit was built! I was fortunate to be appointed the sister of this unit and had an amazing team working

alongside me to develop a great service for local cancer patients. After several years I took up a haematology specialist nurse post and enjoyed the autonomy that the job provided. Supporting patients from diagnosis to the end of their treatment was especially rewarding.

During this time, I met and married Peter, spending our honeymoon touring New Zealand in a camper van following the England cricket team - brilliant! We have two girls, Isobel (14) and Emma (8). About three years ago we decided on an adventure, so we moved 120 miles to Devon and have never looked back! We felt settled almost immediately in this beautiful county. Everyone was so welcoming. My friend says you need to live in Devon for at least 25 years before you can call yourself a Devonian - so I've only got 22 years to go! I had some time out when we first moved, getting the family settled and sorting out our house. I briefly worked at Exmouth Community Hospital as an Onward Care Nurse, coordinating the safe discharge of patients back into their homes. It was an interesting role and gave me the opportunity to discover Devon. However, I missed working in cancer services.



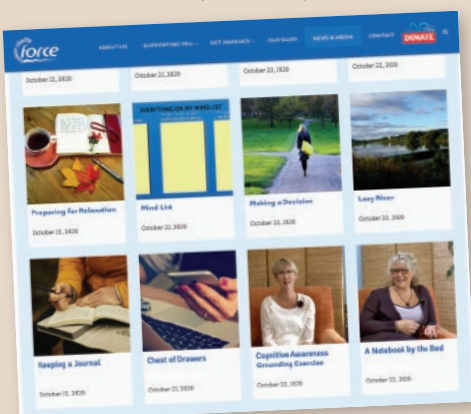
I feel extremely fortunate to work at FORCE as part of such an amazing team providing services that make a difference to the local community. Part of my job involves supporting patients and their families on Yeo ward - I attend the board round every Wednesday. I thoroughly enjoy this and find it very rewarding. The staff have been very receptive to us being there, which has been appreciated. Recently, I have started taking part in the medical student programme, which aims to teach them the impact that cancer can have on our patients and how we support them here at FORCE.

**Judy Gent**  
FORCE Support and Information Nurse ●

## SELF-HELP FILMS AND PODCASTS

As the COVID-19 pandemic exerted its relentless grip on all our lives, staff at FORCE quickly identified opportunities to offer new kinds of support. As well as phone and video calling, the team recognised the value of providing online resources so that people affected by cancer could access help when they needed it.

Our oncology support specialists and information nurses recorded videos containing all sorts of useful tips, techniques and advice.



There's guidance on a variety of topics including relaxation, anxiety management, coping with bereavement, yoga and self-care.

The films are freely available on the FORCE website - [forcecancercharity.co.uk/news/#self-help](https://forcecancercharity.co.uk/news/#self-help) – and although they are not a substitute for the one-to-one and group support our charity offers, they are an invaluable supplement to our services.

FORCE will also be launching its own podcast to share news, information and insights in much more depth. Podcasts – audio recordings – are a way to connect online in a personal, simple and effective way. They have been growing in popularity, particularly in the last two years. It's estimated that 7.1 million people in the UK listen to podcasts each week.

Our podcasts will cover a range of topics in a form that's easily accessible, fitting into your life in a way that other media can't. Just plug in and listen while you're doing something else like cooking, driving, walking or working out.

We'll let you know when we're ready to start broadcasting. ●





## WIGS, SCARVES AND MAKE-UP SESSIONS CONTINUE

Coping with hair loss and helping with some of the physical side-effects of cancer treatment are among the services we managed to adapt and maintain during the past 12 months.

Our Patient Support Admin Assistant Shelley Boulton has provided advice on scarves and overseen face to face and virtual wig fitting appointments and Look Good Feel Better sessions.

**Wig fitting** quickly jumped to a virtual option during the first lockdown with expert staff from specialists Browns taking care of Exeter patients. These virtual appointments even took place on Yarty ward at the RD&E over the summer.

We briefly brought back face to face sessions in November and managed to hold four clinics before we had to stop again in January, but virtual appointments continued throughout.

We have reinstated face to face appointments, one clinic every four weeks, but virtual appointments are available at any time.

Since the first lockdown we have helped 35 patients with wigs and scarves.

We started virtual **scarf advice** sessions in June and despite Shelley's apprehension, the feedback has been extremely positive.

Here's what one lady had to say:

*Hi Shelley,*

*Thank you so very much for your time and effort – you made everything seem so much easier than I anticipated. I was just saying to my husband that if these are as easy and snazzy as you made them look then I don't think I shall bother at all with a wig. In fact, I may well keep my hair short when it grows back so I can continue to wear the scarves – I love hats and scarves but find my ponytail sometimes gets in the way but I've never been brave enough to have a really short style as it takes so long to grow back. You have imbued me with new confidence. Sincere thanks.*

**Look Good Feel Better** quickly adapted the way they hold sessions and moved their worldwide operation, including the UK, online.

We held a closed virtual session just before Christmas with another scheduled for April. These lovely gatherings are by appointment only via Zoom. A member of staff from FORCE is involved and LGFB have also agreed that after each session, patients who attend can collect a goodie bag of skincare products from us at the Centre. ●

## Collaboration to benefit patients

During the pandemic FORCE has done what it can to support staff at the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital and their patients. Sara Green, Breast Clinical Nurse Specialist at the RD&E, describes just one example.

“Despite the COVID-19 restrictions within the hospital, the work to diagnose and treat breast cancer has continued. However, the ability to offer some follow up face-to-face appointments has been impacted. Women undergoing a mastectomy for breast cancer would usually, at around eight weeks following surgery, meet with a breast specialist nurse and the prosthetic fitting service to provide them with a breast prosthesis. Due to COVID-19 restrictions and the effort to keep patients safe, the breast prosthetic fitting service, run by external companies, was not able to deliver these clinics within the hospital. We were struggling to find a suitable space in which to accommodate these clinics. It needed to be a discrete space in which patients could be seen and the storage and access to stock needed to be considered. FORCE was able to come to our assistance and provide us with both the space and staff to be able to manage these clinics, keeping patients safe. This service is invaluable to our breast cancer patients. There is only so much we can carry out to support breast cancer patients over the telephone and

being able to provide the face to face service to fit an appropriate prosthesis has made a huge difference to our patient care. We know that patients are grateful to have this service resumed. On behalf of our patients and the Breast Care Nursing team, a huge thank you to FORCE for your ongoing support to breast cancer patients.”

Twelve clinics ran between September and December as FORCE and specialist suppliers Amoena teamed up to support the RD&E breast care team and a total of 67 patients.

FORCE provided a safe place and Amoena provided the fittings with full safety measures in place.

Yvonne Lewis, Territory Manager for Amoena in South Wales and the South West said:

“Wearing the right breast form helps restore not just a woman's shape but also her confidence, which is why it's a vital part of the recovery process. Amoena was delighted to adapt to the new procedures so that fittings could still go ahead, and all the women who attended told us how grateful they were that the service was able to continue.” ●



Yvonne Lewis, Amoena

# NEW VOLUNTEER ROLES AVAILABLE

New opportunities will be opening up at FORCE over the coming months as we look to enhance the support services already on offer.

We plan to do it by expanding our team of volunteers to help us deliver new programmes that will benefit many more people needing our care. We will be recruiting individuals with specific qualifications and backgrounds who will be specially trained to lead support groups.

We aim to pilot this new initiative by enlisting people to run bereavement courses in various places around Devon. They will deliver six sessions on dealing with a loss due to cancer and help people move on to other support networks.

FORCE bereavement specialist Gerry Gillespie (pictured) will oversee the training.

“One of the silver linings of the pandemic has been to look at different ways of working, including volunteers joining us to add their skills and broaden the support we offer to those who are struggling,” he said.

There has been a rising demand for bereavement support. People can feel desperately alone when their loved one dies and the intensity of medical support stops.



“We are finding that people are more isolated now with COVID restrictions in place and usual coping strategies are denied to them because of the lockdown,” said Gerry.

“Any opportunity for bringing people together can only be a positive in our fragmented world at the moment.

“The idea is that the more people we have helping to facilitate people coming together in groups, the more people we can reach out to.

“Bereavement is one of the hardest things in life we have to cope with. Bringing bereaved people together can help to soften the isolation they may feel and give them the opportunity to know that they are not alone.”

FORCE already has specialist volunteers in our complementary therapies team and in the shape of experienced physiotherapist Anne Hansell, who has offered invaluable support to our Keeping Active programme.

All new volunteers go through a full induction programme with training to build on their qualifications and experience to match the various roles available.

Anyone interested in becoming a FORCE volunteer should contact Heather Taylor on 01392 406154 or email [heather.taylor@forcecancercharity.co.uk](mailto:heather.taylor@forcecancercharity.co.uk)





# It's a two-way street

## Heather Taylor, FORCE Volunteer Co-ordinator

We are fortunate to have such an amazing team of volunteers. They have waited so patiently since last March to be able to return to their various volunteering roles, working alongside the staff here at FORCE.

We appreciate all that our volunteers do to help FORCE run in the best way possible for our patients and visitors.

We all know that volunteering is a two-way arrangement. The volunteers take many positives from their experience of giving their valuable time to FORCE, so it's an honour to be able to share some experiences, in their own words with you here.

If you would like to find out more about the roles we have to offer and how you could become a volunteer for FORCE, check out the volunteering information on our website - [www.forcecancercharity.co.uk/volunteer/](http://www.forcecancercharity.co.uk/volunteer/) - where you'll also find testimonials from some of our volunteers. Here are a few extracts:

## Anna Ingram - Oncology Department Snack Bar

With so many people having to make daily trips, often for a number of weeks, you can see what a difference it makes to have us there, familiar faces with a warm welcome and a cuppa in a 'proper mug' without it costing them the earth. It is really rewarding to know you have helped someone, if only a little, especially knowing first-hand what a challenging time it can be.

## Geoff Roberts - FORCE Support Centre and RD&E

I attend the preparatory sessions for men awaiting prostate cancer surgery. Having had that procedure myself, I sidle up to the ones on their own who may find it more difficult to ask questions in the open session, always with a cuppa and a biscuit in my hand. As a retired GP I can use some of my hard-earned skills in talking to patients without any of the tough parts of the job that I did for nearly 40 years. It may sound like a busman's holiday, but for me it's an opportunity to continue making a contribution to our wonderful NHS.

## Ali Deighton-Gibson - FORCE@Tiverton

Having lived in Tiverton for 40 years I knew a lot of the visitors and was able to relate to them and their families in many ways. I always looked forward to Thursdays and we would meet early to prepare the rooms for the day ahead, greet the nurses and patients and do our best to make people feel at ease and smooth the way for the professionals to do their bit. The whole experience was symbiotic for me. I was able to help others in what appeared a small way but in return I had a sense of worth and derived enormous pleasure in continuing to interact with people in a very positive way.

## Ruth Bagwell - FORCE Walk Talk Group

I have volunteered at the Centre, Oncology Snack Bar, the FORCE Shop and spent a couple of years with a pre-op prostate cancer patient group. I now volunteer with a weekly FORCE Walk Talk Group based at Exeter Quay. It genuinely has a family feeling as we walk (or sometimes run) together, chatting about anything and everything. To be out in nature is a wonderful way of nurturing and supporting the body and mind. Everyone's experience is valued and we always enjoy finishing with a coffee (and cake) at Lutzy's. The pandemic stopped us physically meeting but we continued to chat as a group over WhatsApp.

## Sara Warren - FORCE Support Centre

If I were ever to find myself on the other side of the coin, I would want to know that there is someone who will be with me, to laugh and cry with me, who will treat me as "Me" – the person I was pre diagnosis not just the person who now has cancer. Being a volunteer is a two-way process and I hope that I can give to others as much as they give to me, including my fellow volunteers. This is what being a volunteer with FORCE is about. Meeting people, listening to and talking with people, having a laugh with someone if the moment is right. But really just being there – and that is what FORCE is – it is THERE. ●



# Exercise programme an on

The FORCE physiotherapy service has continued non-stop throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our oncology physio Louise Ballagher rapidly adapted her way of practice to provide safe and effective care for people with cancer.

This meant working from home initially and offering phone or video consultations.

“Assessment and the prescription of exercise programmes was something I thought a physiotherapist had to deliver face to face. I was astonished as to what you can gain from a remote assessment with the appropriate questions and description of assessments or exercises verbally to patients,” she said.

FORCE has also invested in a subscription to software that enables personalised home exercise programmes to be printed off, emailed or sent to patients via a free app.

This has been invaluable to Louise during lockdown periods and enabled patients to feel safe with exercises tailored to their specific needs.

Development of Zoom exercise classes began in April 2020 and not only enables safe, interactive exercise but also, importantly, social interaction between patients with similar cancers and side-effects.

There is a chance to chat while exercising, people often sharing experiences they are having with their cancer treatment, but also plenty of laughter and recommendations of



recipes or latest movies to watch!

The group created their own WhatsApp group from the beginning of the pandemic, which has given them all another way of supporting each other and keeping in touch.

Class regular Jo Borrie has been incredible in using her time to create and post out two quizzes a week, keeping group's minds active as well as their bodies.

Classes were initially delivered live from Louise's kitchen often, she admits, with technical problems and home schooled children interruptions.

From July 2020 they have been delivered from the FORCE Support Centre.

“I'm still not a Joe Wicks but I do have a head microphone now!” said Louise.

The Zoom exercise classes have been so successful that there was demand for two extra sessions a week. They began at Christmas and are delivered by Nick Paynter, a Level 4 Cancer Rehab instructor for FORCE.

Classes have now gone International.

One patient, who received cancer treatment initially in Exeter, is now attending from Gozo, near Malta, where she now lives.

Anne Hansell, a local, private musculoskeletal physiotherapist who supports the FORCE rehabilitation service, has been donating much of her time voluntarily to help support cancer patients identified by Louise as having needs requiring more specialist advice.

“I can make a referral to Anne and know that she will contact patients within days, giving practical advice and reassurance for back, neck and other joint problems. She has been the icing on the cake for the FORCE physio service. I cannot thank her enough for her support,” said Louise. ●



## Specialist oncology physiotherapy

☎ 01392 403094

@ louise.ballagher@forcecancercharity.co.uk



# on-screen hit



atmosphere with like-minded people. It's helped me physically and mentally. If my partner's away I might not see anyone for days, but I look forward to the group and finding out how everyone's doing. Well done to Louise because she is brilliant at her job."

**Jill Salen**, a professional period costume designer for film, TV and theatre, was diagnosed with breast cancer in December 2019, five months after moving to Devon from Cardiff. She had a telephone assessment with Louise after surgery in April and joined the online exercise group and yoga classes. Jill, who also lectured in costume design at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama and has published books on the subject, described her classes with FORCE as "challenging enough for us to see real improvements and it's fun.

I really look forward to Monday and Thursday as this last year has been a lonely frightening time. It has helped enormously with the amazing recovery I have made so far. Louise (the pair have never met in person) is brilliant.

She chatters all the way through and she's so inclusive. She always asks about our aches and pains and that gives you permission to say something. She has come up with real solutions for me. The benefit of exercise has been wonderful. I think you should continue with the Zoom classes because it makes exercise so accessible for everyone."

After surgery for bowel cancer, **Dorothy Armstrong** from Exeter wasn't exercising – "I am blind and found it difficult." – so her nurse suggested FORCE. She met Louise and among many suggestions was joining the twice-weekly exercise class at Heavitree Hospital. "I attended and have never looked back. Once the pandemic hit, the class was transferred to Zoom and many more people have joined from around the county. The exercises are great and Louise, very professionally, tailors each exercise to suit everyone's individual needs.

Throughout the class we are encouraged and if a session is missed, we certainly feel the difference. But the benefits are not only physical, great as they are. Louise engages us all and we laugh and chat. It is fun! Everyone is incredibly supportive of one another through the ups and downs of treatments. I cannot praise Louise too highly. She has been a tremendous help to us, always ready to chat to us privately, listen, advise, and make medical referrals where helpful. She is an absolutely wonderful support. And I can't thank FORCE enough for providing this opportunity for people who can be at a low ebb after a cancer diagnosis to take positive action towards better health. Thank you FORCE and Louise."

**Sue Pyle** has received one-to-one support on Zoom from Louise throughout the pandemic and describes her as a lovely warm person who builds your confidence like a caring friend. "She gave a human touch after what had felt like a 'process' and at times a very lonely journey. Clinicians often gave conflicting advice or were not confident in the advice surrounding the appropriate nature of exercise.

Everyone, without exception, in FORCE has been so helpful and friendly going above and beyond just a job. Lou was knowledgeable in her field and anything she couldn't advise on she referred to another member of the team who could. Advice given by FORCE staff gives the impression of being individual and tailored and not rushed. My biggest regret is that I didn't seek help from FORCE sooner. COVID put such a strain on services that I felt that others might need help more than me and delayed making contact. I believe others felt this way too but were much relieved once they did. It would have been much better to have had support from FORCE prior to treatment, and in particular physio advice, before I suffered from contracture relating to radiotherapy.

I'm sure much of the restriction could have been avoided had I been stretching through the treatment rather than after. I'm so grateful to the staff at FORCE who have been so kind and efficient in making an empathetic and empowering difference to what is a difficult journey. I would also encourage others with cancer not to suffer alone but to embrace the support offered sooner rather than later." ●

**A**rea farm manager **Emma Newbold** from Tiverton had her cancer diagnosis in April, surgery on both breasts and under her arms in June and radiotherapy in September.

"I wanted to get fit again and as soon as I was able, I had a one-to-one with Louise via Zoom – we've never actually met in person – and she invited me to join the exercise group. It's great, really good fun, particularly through lockdown when most of us have been shielding."

Her dog, Eric, and two cats occasionally make an appearance in the Monday and Thursday sessions.

"I've got full movement back which is great but it's also about the camaraderie of the group. They're all so lovely. We talk about recipes, the weather, what's been going on and there's a WhatsApp group. If you're having a bad day, you can stick something on there, you don't have to explain, everybody understands. It's just a really friendly

# A YEAR IN

FORCE has consistently provided support for the people who need us most to ensure we were there for cancer patients and their loved ones throughout the year. Here are some of the services FORCE provided for a one-year period from 23rd March 2020 to 23rd March 2021.

10,678

The number times  
FORCE has provided  
support



800

800 new people  
registered for  
support



507

Complementary therapy  
and yoga sessions

518  
BENEFIT  
sessions



523

Bereavement  
support  
sessions

438

Individual specialist  
oncology physiotherapy  
assessments



25

Average number of people  
now attending an exercise  
class each week



25

Online meetings of the  
art group

35

Women helped with  
wig-fitting or advice  
on scarves



Record number  
have appeared  
at exercise

6,193  
Telephone  
support calls  
58%

2,563  
Sessions  
conducted on  
Zoom  
24%

1,922  
Face to face  
support sessions  
18%

3,349

Miles run in aid of  
FORCE

49

Facebook  
birthdays



# NUMBERS

most, even during the most difficult of times. Our teams quickly adapted throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. We have taken a snapshot of the March 2020 when we went into lockdown for the first time.



# Skincare during your cancer treatment and beyond

Kayleigh Brown, FORCE Complementary Therapies Co-ordinator

I want to share some ideas on how you can look after your skin during cancer treatment and beyond. Cancer treatments can cause so many unwanted side effects including hair loss, dry skin, rashes and itching. There are several ways to self-care at home to help take back a small amount of control by using some of these top tips.



## Hydrate yourself

We have all heard it many times before but it's true! Drink plenty of water, especially if you are receiving chemotherapy. Your body will thank you for it and so will your skin.

## Be kind to your skin

Gently does it when in contact with water. Try to pat your skin after bathing, showering or even washing your hands. Try to wear soft, comforting materials as this will reduce the friction on your delicate skin and prevent it drying up and any causing further damage.

## Time for you

Keep your skin moisturised. Dryness, itchiness and rashes are best kept at bay when your skin is moisturised every day. Dedicate a few moments of your day to gently smooth body cream into your delicate skin after a bath or shower. If you're feeling tired or struggling to do this, ask a family member to help you. If you can only manage to apply a lip balm, you have done something for you, so well done.



## Protection

Your skin is super sensitive to the sun during some cancer treatments. Hats, long sleeves and sunscreen is highly recommended. Double check with your doctor whether you should use this daily.

Our complementary therapy rooms have had a makeover. Huge thanks to Mitie, Original Style and Rubber Duck Plumbing for making the transformation possible.



## Nails

Problems with nails can often occur during treatment and continue long after it has ended. The area around your nails can become dry, brittle and even cracked. What can you do to help? Wear gloves when needed, don't be tempted to bite your nails, avoid fake nails (acrylic or gels will dehydrate them even more) and don't forget your feet. Avoid tightly fitted shoes. A hand and nail cream or nail oil will help prevent your nails from drying out. You can do this many times a day, especially after washing your hands or using alcohol gels.



## Talk to someone

Skin changes are very common through cancer treatment and you are not alone. If you do start to notice skin changes which concern you, contact your doctor or cancer nurse specialist, who will advise you on the best thing to do.

Please note that this is general information. Your consultant and nursing team should be your main contact for management of your side effects.

## TREATS THAT KEPT ME GOING

Cancer patient JC shares the benefits of complementary therapies from FORCE

"I CANNOT BEGIN to express how grateful I am for the treatments I've had, and how much they have helped me. I had three operations for breast cancer, chemo and radiotherapy. During the treatment I had four therapy sessions which were some of the treats that kept me going; they encouraged me during a dark time, and I felt better for them. Since the treatment finished, I've been living with fatigue and have found it really hard to adjust my expectations as there are so many things I used to be able to do, that I still cannot.

The massage/reflexology sessions I've had during this time have been simply amazing. They have both helped me more than I can possibly express; my body feels more fluid and eased; and it's

helped me emotionally in ways I can't understand - I simply know the changes. Session 5 was probably the most important; it was a big part of the turning point for me, when I felt that I really wanted to be well again, instead of battling through. FORCE is a wonderful place to go to. It's safe because it's where it's normal to be a cancer patient, and where I meet with understanding that my body doesn't work as it once did.

I don't need to explain the trauma of the journey because everyone there knows it. I can't express my gratitude enough, for the FORCE Centre, all the lovely volunteers I've met the lovely people who ran the make-up session and especially and very warmly, for the therapists." ●



# EXCITING NEW PARTNERSHIPS TO AID YOUR WELLBEING

**F**ORCE is always looking for new ways to support cancer patients.

During the pandemic we were all encouraged to embrace self-care in many different ways, from online exercise classes to healthy eating apps.

Our complementary therapies co-ordinator Kayleigh Brown was always available to offer useful advice when we couldn't provide hands-on treatment.

She has also been researching products that are suitable for the people we support.

We are excited to announce partnerships with two well-respected companies in skincare for wellbeing.

Products from Jennifer Young and MooGoo will be available to purchase at our Support and Information Centre and online.

Kayleigh explained: "Our vision is to offer patients wellbeing products that will support them through their cancer diagnosis and beyond.

"An opportunity has arisen for us to work with these two brands which offer our patients and their loved ones the opportunity to buy research-backed products that have been designed and formulated specifically for cancer patients."

Chemotherapy, radiotherapy and other cancer treatments can have many side effects on the body.

Many of the products have been designed to help specific side effects of treatment like itchy skin, dry skin, brittle nails or sensitive skin.

"We believe that by offering skincare for your wellbeing we are creating a new way to encourage our patients to look after themselves at home," said Kayleigh.

"We believe this is integral to a patient-led journey in which we are able to offer multiple support services, not only for the psychological and emotional wellbeing, but also for the physical and practical needs of our clients."

Jennifer Young said: "It's an incredible joy to be working with the team at FORCE. They are so passionate about what they do and are powerful champions for people with cancer within their community. In the work we do training therapists in oncology massage at the Jennifer Young Training School, as well as providing specialist skincare products for those living with and beyond cancer, we are acutely aware of the importance of local charities in advocating



for individuals and ensuring they receive the care they need and deserve - FORCE is a guiding light in Exeter and surrounding areas."

Laura Ball from MooGoo said: "MooGoo is an Australian range of natural, gentle and effective products, made with healthy ingredients, designed for people with sensitive, easily irritated skin. Skin Milk Udder Cream was the first product to gain popularity for its skin repair properties. As a result, many medical professionals picked up on its effectiveness and today it is recommended by a number of oncologists and nurses worldwide. We know how challenging it is for cancer patients to find skincare that is safe and effective for them to use whilst going through treatment, which is why we are so delighted to be working with FORCE, together helping people find the best possible products to care for and protect their skin." ●



# We cannot thank you enough



By Sarah Daniels,  
FORCE Head of Income Generation

There have been highs and there have been lows since we last went to print. COVID has changed the world and there is not a single person who has not been affected. A majority of those needing our support have now spent a year being 'labelled' clinically extremely vulnerable. The toll of changes to treatment plans and the anxiety around coming to hospital for treatments remains high. The impact this has had on both physical and mental wellbeing cannot be underestimated and we must continue to support emotionally and physically where we can. To do that, **FORCE has never needed you so much.**

**We cannot thank you enough...**

- for all the **fundraising** you have managed through 2020 and into 2021 so far
- for all the **donations** you have generously given
- for continuing to support our **shop**
- for the **awards from grant makers**, who have acknowledged the importance of FORCE in our community
- for the **kindness** of families, who have remembered us at **funerals**

- for the **legacies** that enable us to shape our future
- for the **fun and laughter** we have still enjoyed - albeit on the phone, on social media, on Zoom!

But we need to ask you for more – more donations, more fundraising, more phone calls (we really do miss you!), more shopping – and to put FORCE at the forefront of your mind when thinking of the longer term future for those affected by cancer.

Please support FORCE today, tomorrow, this year, next and please consider helping to ensure we are here for the next generation of cancer patients and their families. ●



**Useful Contacts:**

Telephone: Fundraising 01392 402875  
 Email: [forcefr@forcecancercharity.co.uk](mailto:forcefr@forcecancercharity.co.uk)  
[shop@forcecancercharity.co.uk](mailto:shop@forcecancercharity.co.uk)  
 Web: [www.forcecancercharity.co.uk](http://www.forcecancercharity.co.uk)

- [forcecancercharity](#)  
[charityshopnumber1](#)
- [Forcecancercharity](#)
- [@forcecancer](#)



## Finance in a time of COVID



By Julia Pitts,  
FORCE Chief Finance Officer

It is hard to believe that we have spent a full financial year managing the whirlwind of change that the COVID pandemic has thrown at us. Thankfully, recent investment in our IT infrastructure and robust systems enabled a rapid adaptation to home working and, most importantly, a relatively seamless provision of remote services. The Finance Team has worked alongside our Fundraising colleagues to mitigate the loss of traditional income streams by switching our focus to submitting grant applications and

expanding on-line/virtual fundraising. Together with some exceptional donations, income has held up remarkably well in the circumstances and we can't thank all who have supported FORCE enough. However, we are very aware that over half of the income that we have received for 2020/21 is not from sustainable sources.

It has been a huge challenge to manage our finances in such uncertain times and we have striven to make savings wherever possible while continuing to provide services which have never been needed so much. We are

hopeful that the new financial year will see the shoots of recovery start to emerge, but there remains huge uncertainty around the longer term impact of the pandemic and how this will affect income streams in the months and even years ahead as our supporters face their own financial challenges. We will need to continue to adapt our services to this new environment to ensure that we remain sustainable and can continue to provide the much-needed support for local people affected by cancer. Thank you so much for helping us to weather the whirlwind! ●



# Bravo boys! Marathon effort from Arthur and Rupert

Well done to the Bostock brothers from Exeter – Arthur (7) and Rupert (5) ran a marathon in March to raise money for FORCE.

The boys completed 26.2 miles within the month and smashed their fundraising target of £250. Their total stands at nearly £1,000 with Gift Aid.

Arthur and Rupert were looking for a challenge after enjoying running so much as their daily exercise during lockdown. They committed to running a daily mile, with some rest days in between, often getting up at 6:30am to complete the distance.

Proud dad Fergus, who ran with them, said: "I was surprised how motivated they managed to stay. They quite often encouraged me! They really enjoyed it. They're so grateful for all the sponsorship and surprised at how much they managed to raise."

The dynamic duo completed their challenge in their local park on the day they were allowed to meet friends, who cheered them to the finish and helped them celebrate with some well-earned doughnuts!

"They've fired up their friends and they're already talking about recruiting them for another challenge next year," said Fergus.

The family chose to support FORCE because of the "amazing job" our charity did looking after their mum Sophie's late grandparents, Charlotte and Steve Preston. They were staunch supporters of FORCE – Steve rode the Nello a number of times – before needing our services when they were diagnosed with cancer.

Fergus, a GP at Rolle Medical Partnership in Exmouth, said: "FORCE is a great help to so many of our patients. As a practice, we always signpost people to your services and the feedback about what you are able to

provide is always positive. It's a cause we are all really pleased to support."

A big thank you to everyone who has taken on a challenge for FORCE in the last year. Your contributions have been vital in maintaining our services at such a challenging time.

If you're inspired to run, but can't manage a marathon - how about taking on the Virtual FORCE Half? Whether you're new to running, a seasoned competitor or someone looking to walk the half marathon distance of 13.1 miles, May 2021 is a cracking time to take on the challenge. Pick a route, decide whether you're going to do it over one day or several - the choice is yours. Find out more on our website - <https://rb.gy/ksjplr>





# Gratitude is heart shaped



Six-year-old Liberty Guppy from Dawlish wanted to do something for charity as part of her Rainbows Girlguiding Helper badge.

Her dad has been undergoing cancer treatment for the last 18 months and the family has had great support from FORCE, so they wanted to raise funds for us.

Ahead of Valentine's Day, Liberty and mum Jane created around 80 living willow love hearts. They made them available for donations on the honesty table outside the gates of Easterhill Nursery, their garden centre in Starcross where they grow the willow.

"We were closed due to lockdown but locals and passers-by could safely visit our honesty table," explained Jane. "We put them out all week on the run up to Valentine's Day and we were selling out faster than we could fill up! We had so much support."

The willow hearts proved so popular that they raised £351 for FORCE. "We want to thank you for all the amazing support you give to families like ours," said Jane. ●



Blundell's School  
Rainbow Run



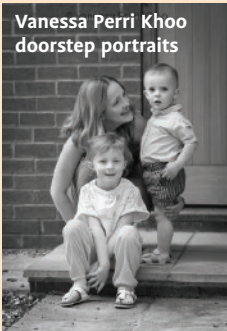
Emma Davies -  
birthday



John Williams -  
headshave



Team Oncology Laps of Honour



Vanessa Perri Khoo  
doorstep portraits



Helen Hulme,  
Wear Your  
PJ's Day



Kate Clayton -  
Sober September



Katie Harries  
Book Sale



Philippa Fraser -  
Wear Your PJ's Day



2.6 Challenge:  
Above: Sophy Creed  
Below: Ian MacCord -  
80's style!



Tarran girls -  
2p challenge



Jenny Forrest and Martin Wray-Cook -  
RD&E teams Everest Challenge



Foran Family - Santa Cycle



Dukes Sidmouth - 20p  
on cake sales in October





# Mary makes the best of challenging times

Mary Tomes has been a resourceful and valued fundraiser for FORCE during a difficult year.

"I have always enjoyed fundraising for charities and since my retirement it has become my main hobby. I started fundraising for FORCE just over a year ago. Luckily neither I nor my family have ever needed to use their services, although I know many who have. I think the work that they do is incredible, plus it offers people that service much closer to their homes. It's also a local charity. Sadly, last year was not a good year to start, but I was determined to keep going.

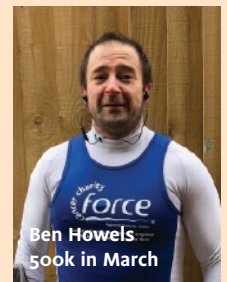
I managed to do a few car boot sales, then nearer to the end of the year some virtual Christmas markets on Facebook. Another good fundraiser is paper quizzes that some local shops are willing to sell for me. I also recycle and sell birthday cards etc. I'm hoping as this year progresses into some normality, I will be able to do coffee mornings, quizzes, craft markets and outdoor events and possibly a plant sale. It's also a great way to meet people and spreading the word about FORCE." ●



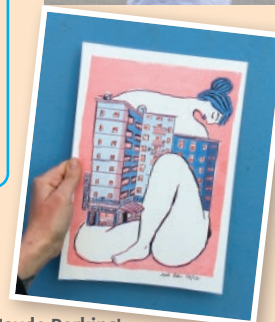
Jane Martin - face masks sold in aid of FORCE



Liz Mary - 310,000 steps in March



Ben Howels 500k in March



Above: Jayde Perkins' Hausfrau print, sold for FORCE



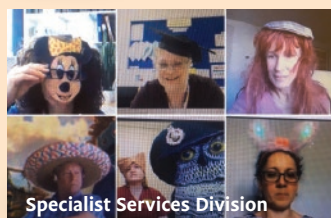
Gerway Close Advent Calendar



Aurelia Matthews - Virtual Nello fundraiser



Lucy Wilson - headshave



Specialist Services Division



Charlie Dawe Sale of Fruit and Veg



Sidmouth Hotels - January Jaunt



Lauren Butt, 100 mile walk



# New arrangement keeps choir on song

A local choir refused to let “a little thing like lockdown” stop their efforts to raise money for FORCE as choir member Mark Davie explains.

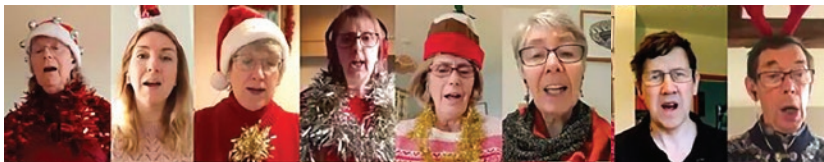
**C**antilena is a community choir based in Broadclyst with about 30 members. In normal times we practise every Thursday evening and perform three or four concerts a year. Each year we nominate a charity to support at our concerts.

In 2020 none of that was possible. It was also the year when we sadly lost Chris, a stalwart of our bass section. Chris was supported by FORCE during the long months of his illness, so we naturally wanted to support FORCE in any way we could.

When we had to suspend rehearsals in the summer, we decided not to ask our members for their usual subscriptions but invited them to make a donation to FORCE instead. As a result, FORCE received over £1,000 from Cantilena members. When the autumn came and we still weren't able to meet, our Musical Director Hannah Stephenson persuaded us that with rehearsals on Zoom we could make videos of three of our favourite songs and post them with a link to a Virgin Money Giving page.

Thanks to Hannah's inspirational leadership and her husband Dean's technical skills, we surprised ourselves by what we achieved. Donations from viewers came to more than £500, which was generously matched by Barclays Bank, enabling us to raise a further £1,166 for FORCE. So, 2020, which has been such a tough year for us all, ended up being one of our best years ever for fundraising. On the down side, it was a shame that we couldn't sing together or socialise but, on the plus, there were no teas to serve and no cakes to bake!

You can view our virtual singing videos on our Facebook page @CantilenaDevon and on Hannah's YouTube channel, hanmv84.



## POST SCRIPT

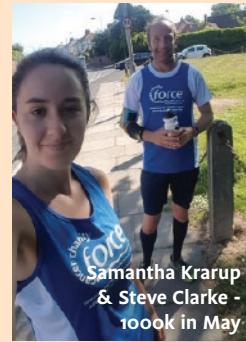
Chris's partner Sally has shared a few words about how FORCE's help supported them. **CHRIS'S APPRECIATION OF FORCE**

*When Chris was initially diagnosed with stage 4 cancer it was such a shock. So, to find out about FORCE was a real blessing. Very early on in his treatment we were introduced to FORCE volunteers. Having the support of the volunteers bringing Chris coffee and sandwiches while he was having weekly chemotherapy on the ward was a great encouragement. They were always available for a friendly chat, if that was what he wanted. FORCE volunteers also provide a much needed support to relatives, carers and friends.*

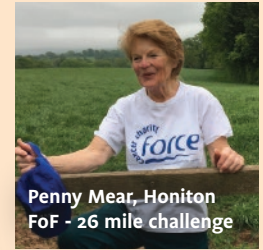
*The FORCE Support and Information Centre is also a wonderful resource in many ways. In between Chris's Consultant appointments and treatment there was frequently an hour or so. The Centre allowed us time to relax together in a very welcoming environment. Again, here the volunteers look after patients and relatives with great care and compassion.*

*The FORCE Centre provides many other free therapies available to both patients and relatives: complementary therapies, relaxation classes, massage, counselling and specialist financial advice for benefits if needed.*

*FORCE is a local charity for local people and Chris and I gained so much support and compassion from them and this support made what was a very painful, difficult journey a little better. ●*



Samantha Krarup & Steve Clarke - 1000k in May



Penny Mear, Honiton FoF - 26 mile challenge



Katy Ware Walking London challenge



Gill Hall - Virtual Great West Run



Exeter FoF Walk for Gwen



Kerry Roffey and Kim Kelly headshave



Lis Hipkins Sock Monkey



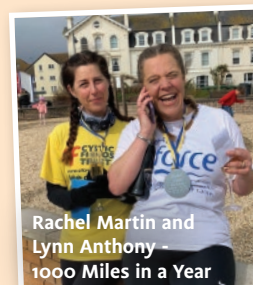
Martyn Kelland Skydive yaive.buzz www.skydivebuzz



Lindsey Deacon - birthday



Emma Davies - "Take My Hair but not my Humour"



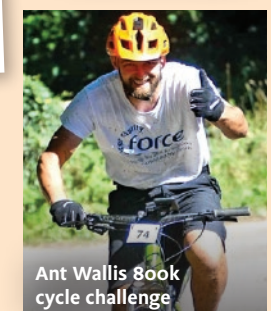
Rachel Martin and Lynn Anthony - 1000 Miles in a Year



Kevin White - 4 Marathons in June



Margaret Phillips Easter Chicks



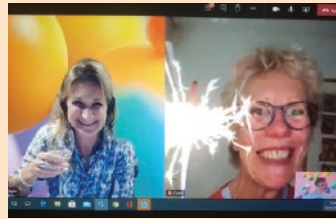
Ant Wallis Book cycle challenge



# Eat up to help out



Mary Dargue facemasks



Karen Taylor - birthday



Bailey Partnership Christmas Jumper Day



Ned Giongo - Virtual London Marathon 2020



Virtual Dog Show: Daisy - Floppiest Ears...



...and Charlie - Golden Oldie



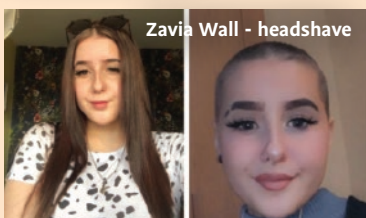
Nexus Open Systems - Wear Your PJs Day



Beth Taylor Wear Pink Breast Cancer Awareness at Taekwondo clubs



Kigbeare Studios pop up shop



Zavia Wall - headshave



Ray Mallett, Exeter FoF - Rowing challenge

**C**ream Teas for Cancer is back for this summer and we're hoping to make it bigger and better than ever. What better way to celebrate the easing of lockdown than getting together with friends, family or colleagues to enjoy a classic Devon treat.

On Thursday July 8 the team at FORCE and our **Cream Teas for Cancer** partners from Beaverbrooks the jewellers in Exeter will be delivering delicious delights for you to devour.

Each cream tea is carefully packed and costs just £5. For that you'll receive two scrummy scones from Halletts Bakery, Westcountry clotted cream from Rodda's Creamery, lip smackingly good jam from Waterhouse Fayre and a fine brew from Miles Tea and Coffee Merchants.

"**Cream Teas for Cancer** is set for its biggest year yet in 2021," said FORCE Fundraising Development Officer Olly Watts. "We anticipate a great response as the country emerges from lockdown. With your help, we hope to raise £6,000 and believe we can do it. Every year this event plays a huge part in our community, bringing local businesses, friends and family together to enjoy a great Devon tradition whilst doing their bit to support a local charity. We are hugely grateful and delighted with the news that Beaverbrooks will be supporting this event once again."

Now in its fourth year, **Cream Teas for Cancer** has raised more than £14,000, which has enabled FORCE to continue supporting patients and their loved ones as they come to terms with a cancer diagnosis.



This year we will be delivering throughout the day on July 8 in the Exeter, Honiton, Tiverton and Okehampton areas.

Ordering your cream tea couldn't be simpler. Just head to FORCE Cancer Charity's website - [www.forcecancercharity.co.uk/fundraising/cream-teas-for-cancer/](http://www.forcecancercharity.co.uk/fundraising/cream-teas-for-cancer/) - and order online for your special delivery on Thursday July 8.

Help us make it a great British summer by supporting your local cancer charity. Order your cream tea today!

How do you have yours? ●





# TIINA'S LEGACY OFFERS HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

“Tiina was always smiling, always positive and never once asked ‘Why me?’”

Alex Penman remembers his late wife with great pride and affection. The couple were together for 17 years, marrying six months after they first met in London.

They bought and managed a hotel on Mull and ran restaurants in Edinburgh and the Borders before deciding to get “a proper job” moving to Devon to take up positions as chef and house manager at Ugbrooke House near Chudleigh.

They had been there for two years when Tiina was diagnosed with breast cancer in March 2018. The cancer was aggressive and Tiina, originally from Finland, needed a mastectomy, her ovaries removed and lymph node clearance. She underwent 15 weeks of chemotherapy and five weeks of radiotherapy, losing her hair during treatment.

Alex, a softly spoken Scot, recalls: “She never took a day off during treatment. She was such a strong woman with a fighting mentality. Six months later we thought she had it beaten – there was no trace of cancer in her system. We knew there was a chance the cancer could come back, possibly somewhere else in her body. We had a wee celebration and everything was grand. We had a good summer and took a trip to Rome.”

Six months later, Tiina contacted her oncologist, Dr David Hwang, when she developed a sore back. The cancer had returned. It spread from her liver to her head, spine and bones despite further rounds of chemo and radiotherapy.

Tiina died on December 23, her 44th birthday, with Alex and her sister by her side. “It was one of the hardest things I’ve had to deal with in my life,” said Alex.

He was unable to share his grief in person with the rest of Tiina’s family. Due to COVID restrictions, they were unable to travel from Finland to be at her funeral.

All through her treatment the couple used FORCE – we were able to offer counselling, massages and help with wigs and scarves.

“FORCE has given us so much support. We found it so refreshing to have a small charity that could do so much for us,” said Alex, who is still accessing help to deal with bereavement.

There is never any expectation that anyone



who benefits from the services FORCE can offer should support the charity in return. But the Penmans wanted to show their gratitude by fundraising for us.

Tiina took part in the Great West Run as part of Team FORCE and Ugbrooke House and estate made us beneficiaries of charitable activities with guests who had come to know and love Tiina and her fabulous cooking particularly generous with donations.

There are FORCE collection boxes at Ugbrooke when it opens to the public in the summer and estate owner Alexander Clifford extended his incredible kindness to FORCE by hosting our annual volunteer thank you party.

This year, Alex has also donated some of Tiina’s clothes to the FORCE Shop – her sister sorted through them as he found it too difficult emotionally.

“I can’t repay what FORCE has done for us,” said Alex “but we can raise as much money as possible.” ●

## Make a Will Fortnight returns in September

**FORCE and leading local solicitors Tozers are teaming up again for Make a Will Fortnight this autumn.**

For two weeks, from September 6-20, Tozers in Exeter, Newton Abbot and Teignmouth will waive their simple will-making fee in return for a donation to FORCE Cancer Charity. The suggested donations are £150 for a single will and £200 for a mirrored will. The donation to FORCE will be made at the solicitor’s office at the time of the appointment and will go directly to the charity.

You can make an appointment from August 23 onwards and during your meeting you can discuss with the solicitor what you would like in your will. Should you need specialist advice, your solicitor will quote a separate price for any additional work.

By using this service, we must stress that there is no expectation that you will leave a gift in your will to FORCE.

All support for FORCE is precious and represents a gift of hope for the future.

There’s more information on getting your affairs in order, how to make a will and Make a Will Fortnight on our website -

[www.forcecancercharity.co.uk/leaving-force-a-gift-in-your-will/](http://www.forcecancercharity.co.uk/leaving-force-a-gift-in-your-will/)

ensure your family's future is secure

**Make a Will Fortnight**

6-20 September 2021  
book from 23 August 2021



# Value of support from the business community

Corporate partnerships are massively important to FORCE. Not only do they equate to around £50,000 of income for our charity each year but they also help us spread the message within the business community about how important FORCE is to local people affected by cancer.

As we start to see a route out of lockdown, we are delighted to be able to offer a wide variety of opportunities for companies to support us.

Over the coming months there are lots of fundraising activities that are both safe and follow latest Government guidelines.

From cycling and virtual events, walks and runs to getting in a spin with Football Zorbing – our sporting challenges have never looked stronger.

Once again FORCE will be providing Cream Teas for Cancer in July (see page 23) – perfect for getting the whole team involved.

And with our charity shop in Heavitree now open, we're always incredibly thankful for donations including clothes, shoes, children's toys and household items that we can arrange to pick up from workplaces in the Exeter area.

If volunteering is key to your business, FORCE is able to offer a number of opportunities this year including gardening days at the FORCE Support and Information Centre and helping out at specific events like The Nello cycle ride in June and Cream Teas for Cancer. Roles include registration, serving teas, coffees and snacks, or packing and delivering cream teas.

Olly Watts, Fundraising Development

Officer at FORCE said: "Corporate partnerships will form an essential part of our income generation plans this year and we're delighted to be able to offer a mix of fundraising activity for all the team to get involved in but we're also open to ideas!

"So, whether you would like to organise your own event for FORCE, take one of our collection tins or talk to us about how we can both work together, please get in touch." ●

**Contact details:**

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Fundraising Development Officer

Tel: 01392 406150

Email: [olly.watts@forcecancercharity.co.uk](mailto:olly.watts@forcecancercharity.co.uk)  
[www.forcecancercharity.co.uk/fundraising/corporate-fundraising/](http://www.forcecancercharity.co.uk/fundraising/corporate-fundraising/)



Zorbing



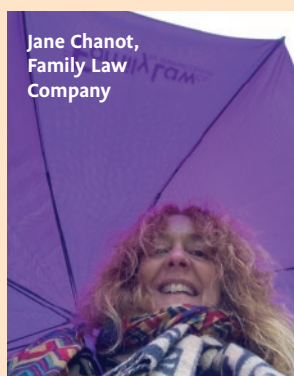
Launch Online Tour de Office



Jane Chanot, Family Law Company



Barratt Homes



Thomson Reuters volunteer day at Centre



# Taking opportunities to broaden our reach

Anna Heard, FORCE Shop Manager

After so many months of enforced closure, we were hugely excited at the prospect of welcoming back our loyal customers and, of course, our volunteers.

There was great support when we were able to re-open after the first lockdown. People understood the need for all the COVID-secure measures we put in place including limited numbers allowed into the shop at any one time and masks for shoppers and staff alike.

A huge thank you to the local community for their continued support and for all the wonderful donations we received while we were closed. It meant we could look forward optimistically with fantastic new-season stock and bargains galore as always.

We made good use of the months when we had to remain closed, creating a new vintage corner and jewellery area which we hope our regulars will love.

During lockdown we did our best to keep generating vital funds for FORCE by selling online. We will continue listing on eBay, Gumtree and Depop and remind people to follow us on these sites to be sure of bagging the newest listings.

The physical shop will continue to follow good hygiene procedures with a maximum number of customers at any one time to allow people to feel confident and enjoy



a pleasurable shopping experience.

If anyone has any spare time on their hands and would consider helping us on tills or on our new queue assistance/enquiry station as customers arrive, we would love to

hear from you.

Volunteer opportunities are also available for people who have experience with Depop listings or potentially just photography of the items for sale online.

Please get in touch on 01392 271652 or email us on [shop@forcecancercharity.co.uk](mailto:shop@forcecancercharity.co.uk)

Come and join our team and do something amazing in your community, just like these ladies.

## Carley Brown

I have been volunteering at the FORCE Shop for the past three years, once a week for 2-3 hours, steaming clothes - definitely low-skilled but important. I am always hugely impressed that, to customers, it all looks so easy and relaxed while behind the scenes, it is highly organised, professional and, in many ways, complicated.

Top quality is essential, whether for clothes, bric-a-brac, kitchen items, stationery, electrical items, jewellery etc. One day I even bought myself some hearing aid

batteries! I also enjoy the coffee breaks, often with cakes, biscuits and fruit contributed by well-wishers. We have many laughs. Staff and volunteer birthdays are always remembered with cards and in normal circumstances, volunteers also enjoy an annual outing. We are never, ever taken for granted!

## Jan Liff

I love being a volunteer on the tills at the FORCE shop. It is much more than just being a cashier. Many of our customers are regular visitors and like to stop for a

little chat about their lives or the world in general, or just to have a bit of a laugh! This was really brought home to me when I went for a walk through Heavitree Park and bumped into (in a socially distanced way!) a regular customer. She told me how much she was missing the shop and we chatted

for a few moments. As we parted, she told me that seeing me had made her feel that she had had her visit to the shop that week and this had really cheered her up. I felt very honoured to be seen as part of the FORCE community in this way. ●





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AND INFORMATION CENTRE

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NEEDED YOU  
SO MUCH**

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**DON'T SEND ME A CARD** **MUSIC** **MAGPIE** **VOLUNTEER** **GIVE AS SPECIAL** **REMEMBER**  
**VINTAGE GIVING COLLECTION BOXES** **GIFT AID** **REGULAR DONATIONS** **YOU** **SOMEONE**  
**LEAVE A GIFT IN YOUR WILL** **AMAZON SMILE** **LIVE SPECIAL OCCASIONS**