

force matters



Welcome to
Cancer Services @
Ottery St Mary

Supported by
@FORCE
Cancer Charity

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Getting it right!



By Meriel Fishwick
FORCE Chief Executive

Getting our support right for people affected by cancer is at the heart of planning the future direction of FORCE and its services. As we start work on our next strategic plan, the needs of our beneficiaries are being reassessed and how and where we offer support must continue to be adaptable and responsive. Nothing has highlighted this more than our experience over the last three years or so.

We know that a healthy support system includes appropriate psychological services but there is so much more provided by FORCE to complement this.

From the start of our support services in the late 1990s, complementary therapies have been offered by FORCE alongside medical treatments. For thousands of people, these therapies have provided a valuable aid to relaxation and helped promote physical and emotional wellbeing. The benefits to cancer patients and their partners/carers are just as important today, as this testimonial proves:

"Just wanted to say thank you to you all for making our visit to your Centre so welcoming and supportive when we visited yesterday. My husband's massage has been so beneficial for him and having the opportunity to share an issue with your nurse has helped immensely. The whole atmosphere of the Centre is like walking into a haven of tranquillity and care - thank you to you all."

You will also read more about the role of our Information Team, in supporting our clients. Their work is invaluable, but not always visible.

When you're at your lowest ebb there's somebody at the end of the phone and you don't have to wait days – much appreciated.

The variety of support available through FORCE is not a luxury, it's a necessity. Everyone walking through the door or picking up the phone brings their own story and individual needs. Equally there are now more ways to access our services both online and through our outreach services in Ottery St Mary. FORCE already understands the value of going out to meet people in their communities and this has been reaffirmed by some recent, post-pandemic experiences. We're so pleased to be restarting these projects thanks to the support of the Community Lottery Fund. It is hoped by the end of 2023 we will have returned to Okehampton and found a suitable outreach venue in Mid Devon.

We are delighted to welcome two new Trustees to the Board, Rosie Mew and Glynis Atherton. You will see from their backgrounds and experience that they are a great addition to the governance of FORCE and we're looking forward to working with them.

What matters to you – our supporters, service users, indeed all our stakeholders – matters to FORCE. There will be several ways you can contribute to our future plans once the process has been agreed. We very much hope you will want to share your thoughts and help ensure the right support continues to be available, in the right place at the right time. ●

“Staying the course, cultivating partnerships, adapting and working together to meet needs wherever and whenever possible in a changing landscape ...”

Thanks to all of you

The past year has seen FORCE implementing our post-COVID recovery plan, focusing on rebuilding our teams, re-establishing and delivering vital services for our beneficiaries, reinvigorating our relationships with supporters and partners and careful, sound, financial management.

Fundamental to maintaining a strong infrastructure to ensure a sustainable future for FORCE services has been the commitment, resilience and sheer determination of all who work or volunteer for FORCE (be it in the Centre, shop, communities, hospitals), the stability, experience and skills of our Trustees working behind the scenes, steering us through testing times, plus the incredible loyalty and support from you all in the communities we serve. We are moving in the right direction – thanks to you all!

2023-24 will be a year of consolidation and gradual growth as new team members (staff and volunteers) settle in, bringing fresh skills, enthusiasm and perspectives. The service focus will be on re-establishing FORCE@ services in communities (Okehampton, Mid Devon and Ottery St Mary) and developing the Role Specific Volunteer (RSV) programme to enhance the quality and sustainability of the support we offer at personal and group level, providing tools for each to manage their own lives following a cancer diagnosis. Nor should the needs and essential support we give to nurses, doctors and

other professionals caring for cancer patients, be overlooked. Their work is increasingly demanding emotionally, physically, mentally and clinically due to the legacy of the pandemic.

Sharing resources, skills and knowledge with other organisations – local and national – is one of our core values, all the more crucial as we adapt to new ways of working, seeking to maximise service provision and minimise duplication.

Improving our communications is also key - raising awareness of our range of services, the roles of our information and support services teams, enrolling FORCE community champions as ambassadors, keeping our supporters and donors informed and involved, highlighting what their support/donations have meant to FORCE and our beneficiaries, encouraging them to come and hear first-hand how they (can) help us.

Finally, YOUR VOICE MATTERS, so please continue to share your experiences of FORCE to help us improve and serve to the best of our ability, to meet your needs in the way you need us, whenever and wherever you are.

Dr Anne Hong
Chairman, Trustees of FORCE ●



Stitching away stress

"MY NAME IS SHARRON. I was diagnosed with breast cancer aged 65, in April 2021, and had surgery, chemotherapy and radiotherapy. After the treatment, I developed some problems with my shoulder, so my Breast Care Nurse referred me to see a specialist oncology physiotherapist at FORCE. She was extremely helpful and was able to refer me on to the hospital for further physio. This was just the start of the fantastic support I received at FORCE, for which I am very thankful.

A few months later, I was kindly offered some counselling sessions, in which I took the opportunity to discuss how I felt about my cancer and the impact it had on my life. I got on so well with my counsellor, she was great to talk with. Some of the important things we discussed included creativity. As a retired art teacher, I was aware of the potential health benefits of creative activities. However, knowing one thing and putting it into practice while going through extensive cancer treatment wasn't quite working for me. The suggestion of embroidery, as a creative and gentle activity, proved very therapeutic. I felt able to take some needle and threads on to the ward while having my chemotherapy and while waiting for my second surgery, in May 2022. It helped take my mind off the treatment and feel quietly relaxed. And it is something I continue to enjoy.

I'd like to give thanks to the friendly volunteers, who welcomed me and my partner with tea and biscuits each time we came to visit FORCE. The embroidery with the text BOOST especially remembers them as they gave me a boost when I was feeling a bit worried." ●





What a privilege

That's what I feel most after being in the role of Support Services Manager for six months. I feel so grateful to be in this role and to be working as one of the team here at FORCE.

I came into this role after working as one of the Oncology Support Specialists since 2018. I knew from counselling clients just how important the FORCE service was. I remember coming into the service myself and feeling wowed by the welcome. Like many of you, I felt the warmth and care when I came into the building and benefited from a fine cuppa from one of our volunteers!

The pandemic left its mark and one of my priorities has been to support the teams to fill the service and staffing gaps that we know have been there. The pandemic also changed everyone's ideas about what services could be delivered and how. There is now a much stronger awareness of the need to be able to meet people where and how they wish to be met. While the number of face-to-face appointments has risen more recently and demand for online services has fallen back, we do need to be able to offer a mix of services with a mix of technologies and in a

variety of locations.

Meriel writes in her introduction (Page 2) about the variety of the support we offer and about how we offer appropriate psychological services but also much more. As I look ahead, I see the need to raise awareness of the full range of what we offer and, once again, to support the team to go where they are needed. It's wonderful that people in East Devon can now access counselling and complementary therapies at Ottery St Mary. West and Mid Devon are next on the list!

I will be looking at how we communicate to patients and their families and how we work with staff at the Trust to get the message out. All of our services teams are focusing on building relationships with the teams at the Royal Devon University Hospital Trust, spending more time supporting the clinical teams with emotional support and reflection sessions and offering complementary therapies to patients and staff on the wards themselves.

As you will read in this magazine, we have ideas, too, about how to enhance our service. We will be looking at offering support days to people living with non-curative cancer. We

will be trialling a new Pilates class online. We want to expand our Relaxation and Anxiety Management and Moving Forward after Treatment programmes and have them take place in community settings. There's also a lot of work to be done in upgrading our processes and systems to be able to offer as many appointments as possible to those who need them. We want to make the most of the talents and experience of our volunteers and make sure they have the support that they need to thrive here.

So there is plenty to focus on! I feel very lucky to be working as part of a team who are committed to the people who need and use our services. They have had to ride the waves of many changes over the last few years, and there will of course be more waves to come. What sustains us? Plenty of coffee; ridiculous amounts of cake; and lots of laughter, as well as moments that touch and move all of us. My waistline might object, but I am looking forward to the next six months.

Alex Moseley
FORCE Support Services Manager ●

“This place saved me”

Lynn Begam clearly recalls the first time she set foot inside the FORCE Support and Information Centre.

The usually bubbly 55-year-old mum from Exeter had been diagnosed with triple negative breast cancer – a less common, more aggressive form of the disease.

The news no-one ever wants to hear came in July 2022 and she began chemotherapy on August 1.

“I used to see the Centre when I drove past. I didn’t want to come at first but my husband persuaded me.

“I remember the first time I walked in here with him and asked if I could see a nurse.

“I’d had my first dose of chemo and I wanted to talk to someone because my head was sore.

“I met Jayne (Fahy, FORCE Information Nurse). She took me into the library and I broke my heart to her. I was worried about losing my hair, worried about my granddaughter seeing me without hair. Jayne was amazing. She really helped me.

“I came in the following week to tell her that my granddaughter had seen me and she was fine.

“This place saved me - simple as that!”

Money can be a huge worry for people dealing with a cancer diagnosis and Lynn has accessed the benefits service based at FORCE.

“What could be worse than dealing with all those financial worries on top of the cancer,” she said. “This place, with all the services under one roof, is amazing.”

Lynn has also had counselling, been to a Look Good Feel Better session and enjoyed complementary therapies.

“Kayleigh (FORCE Complementary Therapies Coordinator Kayleigh Brown) is such an amazing young lady. So, so kind and caring. I think she’s wonderful and this place is lucky to have her. You go in to have your massage and she listens,” said Lynn.

“Kayleigh’s passionate about caring and she hits the spot physically and emotionally,” said Geraldine Channing, Lynn’s best friend of nearly 30 years.

She has also been able to access support at FORCE and explains: “I’ve watched my best friend going through this – cancer has impacted me too. I’m made to feel just as welcome.

“People have to know that coming through that door is a big thing but not to be scared. There’s always someone on the other side who will welcome you. There’s no need be afraid. No-one judges you.”

“There’s a beautiful garden, soft soothing music. It’s like a retreat. It gives you a sense of calm, you’re made to feel welcome and that’s such an important part of it. FORCE has such a lot to offer, not just for the person with cancer.”

Lynn, who can’t wait to get back to her job as a housekeeper at the Exeter Court Hotel, tries to visit our Centre whenever she has a hospital appointment.

“FORCE has helped me so much and I will carry on coming. I love it here. I get so much out of it - I feel safe and relaxed.

“I don’t know how I would have coped without this place. I would shout it from the rooftops if I could.” ●

Geraldine Channing and Lynn Begam



FORCE'S commitment to getting our support services back into more Devon communities is gathering pace.

Growing to meet a need

Our charity has played an important role in establishing a cancer hub at Ottery St Mary Hospital. As well as supporting the nurses delivering chemotherapy there, a vital service pump primed by funding from FORCE, we are now able to offer a growing range of options for patients and their families.

With our East Devon service well set, there are now plans to return to Okehampton and find a suitable location for an outreach centre in Mid Devon. FORCE's mission to get back out into the community after the restrictions forced on us by COVID has been boosted by a grant from The National Lottery Community Fund. Lottery money is helping us rebuild our programme of more local face-to-face services. Ottery St Mary serves as a



Chloe Tribble, Alyson Smith, Linda Wylde, Marion Craddock, Deborah Chapman, Kayleigh Brown, Lisa Jackson

great blueprint for the future redevelopment of our FORCE@ vision to reach more people closer to where they live.

The Rowan Unit at Ottery St Mary Hospital became a cancer hub in December 2020. It's bustling with patients coming and going for chemotherapy treatment and appointments with oncology staff.

FORCE is there alongside the medical teams to offer counselling, physio and exercise clinics, complementary therapies and group support.

The clinical areas and support spaces sit comfortably alongside each other to create a welcoming environment. There's a light and airy reception area where patients and families chat as they wait for their appointments.

Across the corridor is a large room for chemotherapy while more private spaces work well for consultants, nurses and members of the enhanced supportive care team and for our services.

FORCE volunteers provide refreshments for staff and visitors – tea, coffee, biscuits, squash and even soup. Huge thanks to Duncan Sheridan-Shaw from Tesco in Honiton for providing supplies.

At the time of writing, our volunteers were still wearing masks – a constant reminder that COVID remains a threat to the people we support. But there's no hiding the smiling eyes of welcome for each and every visitor.

It has been fantastic to see the service at Ottery grow and the feedback from everyone involved highlights just how important it is. ●

An ideal environment

Tina Grose, RDUHT Lead Cancer Nurse: The success of this initiative has not only provided significant benefits for our patients and loved ones but has hidden benefits for our staff. The facility allows for staff to have time with patients away from the busy acute site (with all the interruptions). The team have reported significant benefits to their health and wellbeing and look forward to spending time at Ottery. The success has been overwhelming, far exceeded the vision Kate (Consultant Medical Oncologist Kate Scatchard) and I had when we visited the empty shell. Thank you for the Trust and FORCE believing in this tremendous service.



Ian Fraser, Oncology Consultant: Oncology in Ottery is better for our patients, providing a calmer environment, easier parking and spacious rooms for consultations with patients and their families. IT systems work well so it is just like doing a clinic from anywhere, enabling us to offer care closer to home.

Volunteer Marion Craddock: We've seen the service grow in East Devon. I started volunteering for FORCE in Honiton in 2018 and it's very rewarding to be able to help our community. It's so relaxed here, lots of lovely conversations and lots of laughter. They've adopted us and it's so lovely. The nurses make us feel like part of the team.

Chloe Tribble, Chemotherapy Sister: I can't think of anything negative about being here. We have more time with the patients and they love it because it's less busy than Cherrybrook. They are guaranteed their drugs will be here without having to wait. Parking is a major selling point and the FORCE volunteers being here is a bonus. In summer it's nice to be able to open the doors on to the garden and make it feel even less clinical. Staff like coming out – it's more chilled for us. We see 12-24 patients a day, four days a week – Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. It's a less clinical environment and it's nurse-led. The patients are less stressed and so are we. Patients are going through a stressful enough time but by coming here for their treatment they can get back to their normal lives much more quickly, without the nightmare of Exeter traffic! Patients even come from Torbay and Newton Abbot because it's easier and quicker. I can't fault it.



Sally Tapp, Immunotherapy Specialist Nurse and FORCE Trustee: Being able to provide a designated facility away from the RD&E environment has been invaluable for oncology patients. They have felt safe and reassured by the facilities at Ottery and have found attending appointments and treatments a pleasant experience.

Thank you, Thelma

It is always humbling to hear what a difference the support from FORCE can make to cancer patients and their families – never more so than when we talked to Thelma Ridgley.

Thelma showed incredible courage to visit our outreach centre at Ottery St Mary on a sunny but crisp Friday morning in late February.



Thelma with husband Dave and daughter Lindsey

She was determined to share her story.

FORCE supported Thelma and her family after she was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in December 2021. She received counselling, complementary therapies and help with wigs and scarves at our Centre in Exeter and in Ottery.

Dr. Niranjali Vijeratnam, the consultant who leads the Enhanced Supportive Care team delivering early palliative care to oncology patients undergoing treatment, also provided immeasurable help.

When we met, Thelma was generous in her praise for how both services had made a positive difference to her during the most challenging of times.

“FORCE has been amazing. I love coming to Ottery. I love the drive here and it gets me out. It’s not clinical and there’s always a nice, warm welcome. I love the ambiance of the place,” she said.

In November last year, Thelma received the devastating news that there was no further treatment available. She and husband Dave, who has also had counselling from FORCE, renewed their wedding vows at the beginning of February and generously asked for donations to our charity rather than gifts.

Although our chat and a further counselling session were clearly tiring for Thelma, she didn’t want to leave Ottery without letting us take some pictures. She looked fantastic and as she smiled for the camera, she reminded us: “We are just blessed to have these services because it’s helped me with my journey.”

Thelma died later that same day.

We are in awe of the grace, dignity and bravery she showed and, with the permission of her family, we pay tribute to her by publishing these words and pictures.

Thank you Thelma. ●

Volunteer Deborah Chapman: Patients love coming here because it’s calm and relaxing and the free parking is a bonus. People have more time here. It’s a good thing that this hospital is being used in this way. It’s a reality check for us. It puts life into perspective. You remember how unimportant you are. The patients are the important ones.

Volunteer Alyson Smith: People see this as an oasis where they can be themselves, they don’t have to pretend that everything is fine if they don’t want to. I find it very humbling. You can talk as much or as little as you want about your cancer or anything else. Everyone is so pleased that they can come to Ottery.



Volunteer Linda Wyldes: Cherrybrook is a much bigger place with a very different environment. Patients talk among themselves and feel they can talk to us about anything. It’s a really nice team, a lovely atmosphere. One lady says she always leaves here with a smile on her face.

Lisa Jackson, Community Outpatient Service Manager: Royal Devon University Hospital were delighted to locate part of the Chemo Outreach Service from our Wonford Site to Ottery St Mary Hospital in December 2020. This enabled patients to travel to a local community hospital site for their oncology treatment. Since this time, our multi-disciplinary team approach, together with our positive collaborative working with FORCE has expanded and provided significant benefits for our Eastern locality patients. The dedicated staff and volunteers who

deliver this vital and compassionate service in our local community hospital setting, ensure that our patients receive a professional and compassionate service. This provides our patients with a local community site to travel to, without having to travel in to Exeter. Services such as this support the utilisation of our community hospital clinical space – housed alongside our Community and Outpatient Services. We look forward to working alongside FORCE for many years to come.

Ali Ashby, FORCE Oncology Support Specialist: I have really valued being part of the team re-establishing our support services at Ottery. Having joined FORCE since the pandemic, I hadn’t been part of our outreach team before and was excited to start offering counselling at Ottery in January. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, with service users feeling warmly welcomed by our fantastic team of volunteers and helped to feel as at home here as they do at the Centre in Exeter. There has been widespread appreciation for being able to access support on the doorstep rather than having the added stress of travelling to Exeter. This has helped to make the experience as supportive as possible for service users. ●



Getting active with FORCE

There are countless success stories from the Get Active with FORCE programme. Specialist physiotherapists Louise Ballagher and Becky Bailey are always looking for new ways to support patients.

A year ago they introduced a Breast Recovery Programme with sessions at our Exeter Support Centre. The course has proved so popular that sessions have been running continuously ever since with demand still so high that it could expand to a second weekly group.

There are six to eight people in a group, the

course runs for four weeks and each session lasts 90 minutes. It is designed to improve upper body flexibility. Education is also an important factor with different components each week..

The best time to get involved is just before or just after radiotherapy but each patient is given the opportunity to join when it suits them.

“It’s lovely to see patients arrive early and chat together, set up WhatsApp groups and share their experiences,” said Louise.

“Anything with a group involvement has proved particularly popular post COVID,” said Becky.

GROUP MEMBERS GIVE US THEIR FEEDBACK:

Amelia Cutts: *I really enjoyed the group. It was nice to meet others in the same situation, get advice from them and Louise. It made me feel positive and feel good about getting back into exercising again.*

Group Member: I couldn’t have got through it without the support from FORCE. Everyone was so kind and welcoming. It’s a safe heaven full of lovely angels. Thank you so much. Louise was supportive, kind, informative and very knowledgeable - a brilliant teacher, full of enthusiasm and encouragement.

Michelle Upsher: *When I was still very unsure about what exercise was good for me or whether I was unintentionally damaging myself, I found Lou’s Breast Recovery Programme incredibly helpful and empowering. Knowing that Lou was qualified, experienced and had probably seen far worse than me was very reassuring. I found the small group sessions manageable when I was feeling very emotional and insecure about myself. Meeting the other ladies showed me the diversity of treatments and outcomes under the umbrella of a breast cancer diagnosis. These were the first people I met who totally understood what I had been through. Very positive sessions helping us to learn to improve our own situations. It was also good to laugh again. Thanks for the sessions, Lou, they really helped me.*

Liz Baker: I found the course incredibly beneficial in a number of ways. The gentle, guided exercise was perfect to aid upper body mobility, in fact I didn’t even know I needed this! Louise led the session with the right amount of support, understanding and fun. It was great to be in a small group of women going through the same thing, we could empathise and share in a safe space. I also learned how to care for myself moving forward. It was lovely to actually do something positive with my body instead of what has felt like an endless stream of invasive treatments and it has certainly inspired me to continue with more positive steps to support my recovery both physically and mentally. I would definitely recommend this course and thank you to FORCE for providing such amazing support. ●

THE COURSE FEATURES:

- **A warm-up with stretches** aimed at full shoulder movement and soft tissue flexibility, strengthening work and a warm-down that features Tripudio flow – Tai Chi like movements that stimulate the lymphatic system.
- **Education on topics** like why it is so important to regain full flexibility after breast cancer treatment, ways to reduce the risk of lymphoedema, empowering patients to return to normal activities and sport.
- **Skin care.**
- **Moving on** with recovering full activity.



Louise Ballagher with a Breast Recovery Programme group

How our Get Active with FORCE programme works

- **Patients receive a free, one-to-one assessment** from specialist oncology physiotherapists Louise Ballagher or Becky Bailey.
- **You don't need a referral – just get in touch** with FORCE on 01392 403094 or email physio@forcecancercharity.co.uk
- **Our physios create a personalised activity programme** and you may be referred to an exercise group or subsidised gym programme, run by fitness professionals.
- **These community coaches all have a Level 4 qualification** in Cancer Rehabilitation, the standard required to work with patients.
- **They meet regularly throughout the year** when Louise and Becky share the latest in rehab techniques and industry updates.

OUR FITNESS PARTNERS ARE:

Rachael Dunn: CREDITON
 Chris Manley: TIVERTON
 Ali Webber: CULLOMPTON
 Rob Amor and Graham Small: RIVERSIDE AND ISCA, EXETER
 Vanessa Loder: SEATON
 Jude Schmidt: HONITON
 Tracey Paddon: OTTERY ST MARY
 Cheryl Furler: EXMOUTH
 Karen Edworthy: OKEHAMPTON
 Anita Griggs: BARNSTAPLE



Another big hit with patients is the **FORCE EXERCISE CLASS FOR STRENGTH AND BALANCE**, held on Tuesday mornings from 10.30-11.30 at the ISCA Indoor Bowls Centre in Summer Lane, Exeter. It is led by fitness instructor Rob Amor and FORCE physio Louise Ballagher.

Denise Sparkes found it particularly helpful.

“FORCE offers a lot of support and this class is a brilliant example of how cancer patients come together to improve their physical well-being and also have an opportunity to interact with other people with cancer.

Denise Sparkes



“Overall, there's a group of around 20 and the class is usually attended by 13 people weekly. There is no obligation to attend each week and the class is made up of different people each time. We range in age and where we are in our journey with cancer. The exercises are adapted for different levels of fitness and wellness and it's great that there is always an easier option for a tired day and a harder option when we're ready for a challenge! The class is composed of two parts. Rob leads the strengthening and balance exercises, which are done slowly, but you definitely feel the benefit. Then Louise leads the Tripudio Flow, which is great for our lymphatic system. Afterwards you can stay on for a drink and chat in the cafe.

“Louise keeps us updated on FORCE support and refers us individually to other services. These include the gym sessions at ISCA for cancer patients, Look Good Feel Better and Living with Non-Curable Cancer among others.

“This class was recommended as part of my initial treatment plan. I started in August 2022 and at that time couldn't get out of a chair or car without help. In six months I have regained my balance and core strength, which allowed me to start walking regularly. I was referred on to the gym at ISCA and have just got back on my bicycle! It has helped me regain some of my physical strength, been great for my mental health and socialising with people who understand what it's like to live with the day-to-day symptoms of cancer and side effects of treatment.

“I'd recommend the class on so many levels.” ●

FORCE PHYSIOS BECKY AND LOUISE visit Ottery St Mary once a month to hold face-to-face clinics on a Monday as part of the FORCE hub at the Keegan Close hospital site.

Louise said: “It's really lovely to be a part of the team there. We have had a great response from patients when they are offered an appointment at Ottery. It's a lovely location and there's never a problem with parking, which is always a bonus.



A PARTNERSHIP BUILT ON TRUST

One of the most successful partnerships between FORCE and the Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust is the link between our physiotherapy team and review radiographer Alex Board.

Her job is to support patients going through radiotherapy and help them manage side effects like skin reaction, pain or bowel and bladder problems.

She and FORCE physios Louise Ballagher and Becky Bailey work closely together.

“It works well. We pick people up at different stages of their treatment. Things can be overwhelming for patients and we judge the right time to refer them and know that Lou and Becky will look after them and their issues with mobility and pain,” said Alex.

Lou and Becky see patients during and after treatment and explain what they should be expecting at certain points and what exercise they can do within safe limits.

They also offer advice before their radiotherapy treatment begins.

“Sometimes at the scan stage, we find there would be no way for patients to maintain a certain position for treatment for perhaps 20 sessions,” explained Alex.

“Lou and Becky can get them to a point where there is no delay to their treatment and get them physically ready for their radiotherapy.

“They will help manage pre-existing conditions that might impact their treatment, which isn’t always the case with some services.

“The wider team here is very much aware of how useful it is not to delay treatment. We are conscious of the value of the service FORCE provides.

“There is a good pathway between us and FORCE. Sometimes Lou sees a patient that could do with my support and I do the same for people who may be having trouble with something like arm movement.

“Mobility can also worsen during treatment and Lou can help at that stage too. She and Becky are there at any time for the benefit of patients and not just to deal with the effects of surgery.

“Access to the FORCE physio service is much quicker. Where there’s a will there’s a way with Lou and Becky. I know if I reach out, they will help.

“It’s amazing to see patients again after they’ve seen Lou and Becky. Their care is so individual for each patient whether its exercises, stretches, resistance work or Tripudio. People love it.”

Alex qualified in 2013 and spent a couple of years working in Exeter before moving to Bristol, returning in 2017 and helped set up the newly created review service.

She and Louise have worked more and more closely over the years as their roles have developed, Becky boosting the service when she joined the FORCE team in 2018.

“Becky and I so value the way that we can contact Alex or the radiotherapy department easily when we have any concerns about a patient’s skin or other side effects from radiotherapy and they



Alex Board

know all about our services, particularly physio and the one-to-one consultations we offer as well as groups like breast recovery and exercise,” said Louise.

Alex is enhancing the package she offers by setting up a late effects service to deal with ongoing effects of radiotherapy, which can occur years later.

“Lou and Becky are a link to support them too. Whenever they can help, they will,” she said.

“Their criteria are not quite as strict as some others impose, which gives patients a lasting lifeline in knowing that they don’t have to put up with symptoms.”

Alex is a great advocate for FORCE and loves visiting our Centre.

“When you walk through the door, something happens. It’s relaxed, comfortable, a totally different, non-clinical environment and that’s very important for patients.

“It’s not like you’re sitting in a row of wipeable chairs, watching the clock tick by and waiting for your appointment.

“When you walk through the door at FORCE you are a person, not just a cancer patient – it’s very different to coming here.

“I have confidence that when I refer someone to FORCE, they will be cared for and I know they will be made aware of all the other services available to them for free.

“We realised how important FORCE was when we didn’t have FORCE. The pandemic forced an overnight shutdown of face-to-face services but FORCE responded so quickly that it wasn’t long before hybrid support was available to patients and those close to them.

“The answer to so many questions that patients have can be answered by FORCE.” ●

A warm welcome to Glynis Atherton and Rosie Mew, the latest members of our Board of Trustees.

A double boost for our board

GLYNIS ATHERTON

It is both a privilege and a responsibility to join the team that steers the charity to do its best to care for people living with cancer.

My career has been almost exclusively in the voluntary sector, with Victim Support, the Motor Neurone Disease Association and as CEO of Hospiscare, the local charity that provides specialist palliative care in Exeter, Mid and East Devon. At Hospiscare we had a strong partnership with FORCE and greatly valued the support it offered individuals and families that we were both working with.

My experience at Hospiscare means that I appreciate both the physical and emotional toll that a cancer diagnosis takes on individuals and those close to them. And, sadly, like most people I have experienced the impact of cancer on family and friends.

I retired as CEO of Hospiscare in 2018 and spent the next three years as a Non-Executive Director of NHS Devon, as a member of the Board and Chair of the Quality Committee. This coincided with the pandemic, which irrevocably changed the way healthcare is delivered and the way people work.

I look forward to working with my fellow trustees, the staff and volunteers at FORCE to meet the challenges created and exacerbated by the pandemic such as developing services to meet escalating demand whilst ensuring our sustainability into the future.



DR ROSIE MEW

As an oncology doctor working in Exeter, I see first-hand the incredible support this charity gives to people across the region in a multitude of ways. The passion and commitment by so many people is infectious and makes such a difference to those facing a difficult time in their lives.

I grew up locally so have admired the work done by FORCE for many years, particularly enjoying the Nello FORCE cycle ride many times! More recently I have had more personal experience of loved ones going through cancer treatment and it has highlighted even further the challenges of these times of uncertainty and the need for a strong local support centre and community to guide people through this.

I hope to bring a fresh perspective to FORCE, advising on medical matters, improving engagement with healthcare professionals and younger people within the local community.

Away from the world of oncology, I am a keen runner and live with my husband and rather cheeky four month old puppy, enjoying the coast and countryside as much as possible. I feel passionately about the power of getting outdoors and exercising, in whatever form that takes, to improve physical and mental wellbeing. ●



NICOLETTE JOINS THE TEAM

She was a Clinical Nurse Specialist in oncology and palliative care from the mid-1990s and in 2007, began to focus on children and young people as a nurse practitioner at the Gold Coast University Hospital, Australia.

She returned to England in 2015 to be nearer family and worked in children's oncology and as a CNS in hospice care in Sussex as well as lecturing in palliative care.

While living in the South East, Nicolette qualified as a counsellor at the University in Brighton and is continuing her studies there towards an MSc in Psychotherapy.

"I wanted to learn to help people in a different way, concentrating on people's psychological wellbeing and their distress through their oncology experience," she said. "Working with children and families in a more supportive role really touched me and I wanted to work with people in a more

psycho therapeutic way."

Nicolette and her husband moved from Sussex to Devon last summer for a fresh start but the desire to work with people affected by cancer was undiminished.

"I didn't know FORCE but the minute Gerry (FORCE Oncology Support Specialist Gerry Gillespie) and I spoke, it felt right immediately. I felt at home, at ease, welcomed at FORCE. It's a lovely team and I felt like I fitted in. It felt a good and right place to work"

"The supportive and multi-dimensional, holistic approach is really lovely. People feel peaceful here, they can relax in an oasis away from the hospital. The non-clinical environment is so important."

"And I feel I am developing here too. Working with clients and staff is enhancing and deepening my experience in psycho-oncology care." ●

NICOLETTE THORNTON is the latest member of our counselling team. She became a FORCE Oncology Support Specialist in September, adding invaluable experience from decades of work in cancer care.

After training as a nurse in the UK and working briefly in intensive care at Derriford Hospital in Plymouth, Nicolette moved to Australia, living and working there for 25 years.



Acupuncture groups prove a hit

Acupuncture is offered free of charge at our Exeter Support Centre on Tuesday mornings by experienced practitioner Cath Stacey.

It's for cancer patients experiencing hot flushes as a result of their treatment and for head and neck patients who may have an unpleasant side effect known as xerostomia, which happens when the salivary glands are damaged by radiotherapy.

Symptoms can include dry mouth, difficulty chewing, swallowing, tasting or speaking, a burning feeling in the throat, cracked, sore lips, a dry, rough tongue.

Cath's sessions are for small groups and last for an hour.

You sit in comfortable chairs while fine needles are inserted into specific points on the outer ear and left in position for up to 30 minutes. Treatment is generally pain-free but you may feel a tingling, dull sensation.

Steve Cousins chose acupuncture to help with the severe effects of his radiotherapy and because he wanted to be part of a group.

Steve's throat has been "destroyed" by his cancer and its treatment and he can longer eat or drink. Immunotherapy is slowing the progress of the disease.

"I needed to be around people having similar treatment, like-minded people who understand where you are.

"I was sceptical about acupuncture but after three or four sessions it started to have a noticeable effect.

"The sessions were excellent. I would recommend them to any head and neck patient. The group setting is ideal as it's specially pitched at people with similar problems.

"The interaction with others is good and I would encourage anyone to give it a try."

Here's what other patients had to say...

Rob: *I was diagnosed with cancer around a year and half ago. I was experiencing dry mouth, a common problem after radiotherapy. Surgery had damaged a nerve that blocks your nose at night, which leaves your mouth open, so this was also a problem. I wasn't keen on a group however that changed after the first session, reason being it's an integral part of the understanding of others and through this window it was an opportunity to look at myself. The treatment was easy and painless. I felt a positive difference in my mouth on the very first treatment. Cath gelled the group together with sympathy and positivity.*

Emma McKay: I enjoyed my acupuncture course with Cath. Although my symptoms haven't yet subsided, I am definitely sleeping better and gained so much from the group in friendship and by meeting other cancer patients going through similar issues. While we had the needles in our ears, Cath would ask us how we were feeling, any improvements etc. We could speak freely and offer advice to each other - sleeping tips, herbal remedies etc - and it became like a mini counselling session. This was the first time I had visited FORCE since my diagnosis in June 2021. It really is a wonderful place,

managed by wonderful staff and volunteers. I turned 50 this year so I asked for a collection bucket for my party and chose FORCE as my birthday fundraiser on Facebook. I think overall it raised around £250.

Mary Gibbs: *I was very sceptical about acupuncture, but I thought I would try FORCE as my mouth was chronically dry after radiotherapy. The lack of saliva in my mouth was so bad at times that speaking was difficult and my diet needed to be very soft with lots of liquid to drink while I was eating. Cath talked about what we should expect from acupuncture and made no false promises. She said some people would get a good result while for others it might make no difference at all, but for most*

people it would give an improvement - not so many drinks, more comfortable eating and a sensation of saliva accumulating in your mouth. This was true for me, although I still have times when my mouth is chronically dry (after exercise, too much talking or anxiety). I now have long periods when I have normal moisture. Being part of a group of people all experiencing the same problem and talking about it cannot be underestimated and my group all agreed that this was very important. Cath was very encouraging and listened patiently to our personal stories. She was sympathetic but not sentimental - the ideal personality.

Paul Easton: I had a four-week acupuncture session with Cath and found the whole experience, as always with FORCE, so encouraging. Cath is a very calming and reassuring person (professional too) and if you believe in acupuncture or are sceptical, just being with her classes and mixing with others who have their own stories and battles is so beneficial for everyone. I strongly believe that the FORCE Centre shows all of us we are not alone and there are special people like Cath (and all the team) out there to offer help in many different ways. I for one feel fortunate to have this care here in Exeter. ●



Complementary therapies

FORCE offers patients up to four free complementary therapies, before, during or up to 12 months after completing treatment for cancer. They can also nominate one other person

Complementary therapies work alongside medical treatments and can be a valuable aid to relaxation, helping promote physical and emotional wellbeing.

Our qualified therapists deliver massage, aromatherapy massage and reflexology in two

dedicated rooms at our Exeter Centre.

As part of our mission to provide support when and where it is needed, we also offer treatments to inpatients on the wards at the RD&E or while they are having chemotherapy.

Complementary Therapies Coordinator Kayleigh Brown is also working hard to re-establish our CT service in the community, paused due to COVID.

From the end of March she has been

providing treatments at Ottery St Mary Hospital every Friday.

“We want to rebuild and grow the service and this is a major step forward,” she said. ●

To find out more about the FORCE complementary therapies and acupuncture service, please call **01392 402086** or email **admin@forcecancercharity.co.uk**

Helen Grimwade is a volunteer massage therapist with the FORCE Complementary Therapies team. We asked her for an insight into a part of our service that is so valued and appreciated by the people we support.

Tell us a bit about yourself.

I'm nearly 30 years married and have two gorgeous, grown up children. Peter and I moved to Devon two weeks before lockdown, having spent almost 25 years in Oxfordshire. It is the best move we made. Everything I have done workwise has been off the back of my training as a nurse and health visitor. I was first introduced to massage and its positive effects when we were taught hand and foot massage as student nurses – this was the mid-80s and ahead of its time, or so it felt. Watching how a patient's blood pressure was reduced with a simple foot massage was amazing and obviously stuck with me.

When and why did you become involved with FORCE?

A few years ago I retrained as a massage therapist and started my own full-time practice in Oxfordshire. When we relocated to East Devon, the idea was to reduce our workload and have more time for volunteering. I heard so many people talking about FORCE and what a great charity it is. When I met Kayleigh's mum, while we were both volunteer stewards at a Covid Vaccine Centre, she told me about FORCE and that they offered complementary therapies. Serendipity! I emailed Kayleigh and here we are over two years later.

What is your experience of being part of the FORCE team?

When I first walked into the Centre it felt like getting a hug from a building. Kayleigh, Jo and the team are just fab. Being a therapist can be quite isolating. We work 1:1 with clients - some like to chat but otherwise it is a quiet therapy room. Walking

into the office is always great. We chat, laugh and support each other. The whole team at FORCE stops to say hello and that makes you feel part of something, which is really wonderful.

What do you get from it?

I love people, be it a listening ear or an opportunity for them to leave the therapy room feeling relaxed. It is a massive privilege to be allowed to enter people's lives at a really tough time for them, to get to know them, albeit for a short time.

What sort of feedback do you get from clients?

I believe they like the sessions. Well, they rebook with me so I can't be that bad!

Why do you think CTs are important for cancer patients and their loved ones?

We offer such wonderful therapies in a lovely space. It's a safe, non-medical touch when many are going through so much treatment. They come in with rounded, stooped shoulders and leave standing straighter with a positive step. For carers, I think it offers them a chance to be recognised for all that they are carrying on this huge journey with their loved ones.

Would you encourage others to get involved?

YES! Being a therapist already means that you are (hopefully) in tune with others around you. Finding a few hours a week can be tricky when you are self-employed but the payback is HUGE. We are so well supported by the CT team and by FORCE that I think it has given me new confidence and widened my professional practice. I just love it. ●





Our information team

THE FORCE INFORMATION TEAM

Judy Gent

Team lead, former ward sister and Clinical Nurse Specialist in haematology

Jayne Fahy

Former Clinical Nurse Specialist in lymphoedema and Hospiscare nurse

Jayne Lynds

Experienced in patient support after 11 years at FORCE

Jo Cock

Experience in nursing as a healthcare assistant and worked in health records at the RD&E

The FORCE Information Team plays a key role in the support our charity offers to people dealing with a cancer diagnosis. They provide the gateway to all of our services, backed by specially trained volunteers Joan Cooper, Claire Ridler, Anne Hong and Bea Knight – all with many years of experience in healthcare.

Together they ensure that anyone who walks through our doors, calls our support line or emails us is offered the best and most appropriate care available from FORCE.

Patients and the people directly affected by their cancer diagnosis are always the priority for our team.

Providing timely care, compassion and expert advice is top of their task list, but it takes an awful lot of work to create the right environment for the information service to run smoothly.

Starting the day

The Centre opens at 9:30am. From 8:30am, work begins on getting everything ready, checking the reception area, conservatory and complementary therapy rooms are ready to receive visitors and all the right equipment is in place.

In the team office, phones and emails are checked - people seek advice, hospital staff request support for patients, appointments are confirmed or cancelled. Tasks are triaged and allocated to the right members of the wider support team.

“There are messages from people asking for

help, wanting to know what’s available and how they can access support. It’s difficult when you pick up a message from a distressed person, someone who’s sad, upset, angry. That happens on a weekly basis.”

That sets the scene for the day and we roll from there.

Patients are the priority

People come to FORCE of their own accord or because their nurse or doctor has told them they might benefit from our support.

We see a variety of people from the minute the Centre opens. Volunteers greet and settle them, make them a cuppa then tell the team there’s a client in reception.

“Sometimes they are confronted with very distressed people – we must find time to support our volunteers too.”

Nurses Judy and Jayne F are first to respond but the whole team takes responsibility for seeing clients.

The library offers a quiet space for an informal chat about the diagnosis that has brought them to us, about FORCE and what’s available. Every member of our team has the skill and experience to judge exactly what each individual needs, to offer honesty, reassurance and guidance.

Patients want to know that what they are feeling is normal after a diagnosis.

“Things can be unpredictable and we deal with whatever’s thrown at us. If the phone rings or someone comes in needing support, they are the priority.”

There have been more phone enquiries since lockdown. We offer a hybrid service to meet everyone's needs. When you pick up the phone to our team, it's the same as coming through the door.

No two days are the same.

Ward visits

On Wednesdays, Judy takes part in board rounds on Yeo Ward at the hospital, joining the multi-disciplinary team of doctors, nurses, physios and occupational therapists that reviews each patient. She visits anyone identified as needing our support, letting them and their families know that FORCE is there for them.

She also visits Cherrybrook to chat with staff, check on patients having chemotherapy and sit with them for a while.

"The response is very good. Staff like that we are working as a team. We've made it a regular thing, which is important. It's nice for me that I'm part of it and to know I am being useful. It's a great example of collaboration between the hospital and us."

We are another layer of support, often with more time to listen.

Judy lets our counsellors know if an inpatient would benefit from speaking to them – they visit the wards on a weekly basis.

We also support nursing staff.

"Recently, three young patients died within three months and that was difficult for staff, so our counsellors spoke to them. We also offer them reflective practice sessions and complementary therapies. We're there for them when they need us."

Benefits advice

Living with cancer can have a significant impact on your finances. FORCE hosts a service provided by Citizens Advice and supported by Macmillan to offer free guidance on claiming benefits.

Mike Watson is the CA benefits advisor based at FORCE. Jayne L manages his diary, gathering information and making appointments. The details she provides make Mike's review of each individual case as efficient as possible to minimise waiting times.

Everyday duties

Enquiries about travel insurance are common and the team can offer invaluable advice. They manage our library, keeping everything up to date.

Jo supports Complementary Therapies Coordinator Kayleigh Brown, managing the team of therapists, helping with diaries,



Medical students visit the Centre

taking CT and acupuncture referrals, bookings and service requests and prioritising the workload.

"We have to be flexible with our day."

Booking counselling sessions is a key part of the job – reviewing availability, matching clients with a counsellor and arranging the first appointment.

Not everyone needs or wants counselling. Years of experience have educated our team in how to determine what people need and steer them towards all sorts of alternative support – grants for travel, utilities, wigs, bras, exercise, even things like a blender if they can't eat normally.

"We are the first professional point of contact with FORCE. We want their experience to be a good one so they come back. You've got to be at your best, fresh and ready each morning because who knows what the day will hold."

In between we make a cup of tea!

"We share what we do as a charity for patients and families. It's always well received – the students appreciate that it's non clinical here and there is a holistic side to cancer care which dovetails with the clinical service. One or two have even become FORCE volunteers."

Emotional toll

Dealing with distressed patients, facing an outpouring of emotion from people who haven't had the opportunity or wanted to do it at the hospital or with family, is part of the job.

"This is a safe space for them, to be able to express themselves. We give them time. You never know when people are going to offload."

There's support in place to help the team deal with the emotional cost of what they experience daily. Sometimes, just closing the office door and shedding a tear with colleagues is enough to make it possible to carry on.

"We get emotional support from everybody in the team. We all have different things to draw on."

"I wear my heart on my sleeve and I like to talk straight away about what I've experienced. We are a tight team that supports each other. We talk throughout the day."

"It's most important that we all understand our personal and professional boundaries. When we walk out of here, we worry about the same things as everyone else – what's for dinner, have I got a parking ticket. If we couldn't leave it at the door, we wouldn't be able to do the job the next day. You have to be able to protect yourself because patients can be sad and their situations complicated."

The team is driven by shared passion for the charity and the people it supports.

"You know you have made a difference – to know that something you do can be a massive thing but sometimes it gets to you."

There are happy times – patients whose treatment has gone well come back to visit or fundraise for the charity.

"It's nice to see people emerge with positivity and know FORCE has made a difference along the way."

"There are patients who resonate and stay with you for a long time. Sometimes there's nothing you can do but you can give someone time and space and be there to listen. We don't have a crystal ball and we can't change their diagnosis but we can support them along the way."

It's a rollercoaster of emotions that you get pulled on to at 8:30 and get off at 4:30. ●



Jayne Fahy recording a podcast with dietician Rosie Martin

Important extras

Our nurses help with FORCE's acclaimed support and education programme, using their expertise to co-facilitate groups like the Moving Forward course.

Raising awareness of FORCE takes many forms, anything from recording educational podcasts to supervising the first and second year students from the University of Exeter Medical School who visit our Centre twice a month.

The FORCE Moving Forward programme has won significant praise since it was launched in 2018.

Support & education programmes

More than 150 patients have taken the course, available for a year after their treatment ends at a time when it can feel like the safety net of hospital appointments has been taken away.

Up to five groups a year have been running at our Exeter Centre and there are plans to expand where and when courses are available.

This year's schedule includes two Moving Forward programmes in the Centre for the first half of the year with further groups in September and November at the headquarters of Westbank, a community health and wellbeing charity based in Exminster.

Groups are also planned for Ottery St Mary in April and October, Okehampton in September and one other venue, hopefully in Mid Devon, before the end of the year.

In 2024 we plan to hold all our Moving Forward sessions at Westbank, and at three other locations including Ottery St Mary, Okehampton and Mid Devon. One of the course designers is Emma Ellis, Oncology Support Specialist (Support & Education Programmes).

"It feels like the right move to take the groups out of the Centre and make them accessible in more areas of the county. The bonus being the other sites generally have free and easy parking," she said.

"This course encapsulates the common physical and emotional affects we regularly hear patients with a cancer diagnosis experiencing. Each group is unique with a variety of life situations and diagnoses, however, I am always struck by the power of the shared group experience.

"In every group the overriding feeling is that they are not alone in what they are experiencing, thinking and feeling. They share a bond, which is humbling to witness alongside the support they give each other."

"The impact of cancer does not stop after the treatment has finished. The ripple effects continue into life after and the course aims to explore and look at ways of acknowledging and living with these."



STEVE HUXTABLE is 64 and lives near Exeter with his wife, Tina. In July 2021, he was diagnosed with oesophageal cancer following a visit to his GP after he had difficulty swallowing.

Steve went through four rounds of chemotherapy before undergoing surgery to remove most of his oesophagus and nearly half of his stomach, followed by another four rounds of "incredibly tough" chemotherapy, that ended in January of last year.

During his treatment, Steve worked with FORCE to produce a podcast about his cancer journey, to share his experience about the treatment and support he received.

Feeling slightly let down with his aftercare from the NHS, Steve received a range of services from FORCE after completing his chemotherapy, including counselling, massages to help with stress, relaxation classes and the Moving Forward group.

"I thought I was a perfect human being," Steve admits. "I found out from speaking to my wife and daughter that perhaps I wasn't as nice a person as I used to think I was. I was so short-tempered, and I wasn't happy that I wasn't the same person.

"FORCE offers a completely different package of care to the NHS; both were unique but complementary. The NHS covered the physical side with chemotherapy and surgery, whereas FORCE worked on the mental aspect. I describe it as a pair of gloves; gloves are handy but not if you only have one. If you've got a pair of gloves, it gives you a well-rounded service."

Steve takes every day as a bonus: "I'm not the youngest of people and therefore my priorities are different, but they've changed significantly in the past 18 months since the diagnosis. I managed to get through this so far and I'm going to take advantage of it."

"I found the group session uplifting, not just because of the course but to listen and share experiences with others that have been and are going through cancer treatment."

"I knew I was in safe hands when I came to FORCE."

Our pilot Living with Non-Curable Cancer sessions have also been a great success.

They're for patients living well with an incurable primary or secondary diagnosis but their disease is stable, not end of life

Those groups will still be held at the FORCE Centre, where patients can access other services if they need to. There are three groups in the schedule for 2023.

Early feedback from the first groups has highlighted the need for ongoing support after these sessions – a space to meet with other people who can understand how it feels to live with cancer every day.

There are now ambitious plans to hold a pilot programme of up to four retreat days a year to supplement the Living with Non-Curable Cancer timetable.

They are likely to be held away from Exeter and will be open to anyone who might benefit, whether they have taken the course or not, as many times as they feel necessary.

“We are responding to a need that we have recognised in people living with a cancer that's not going away. With the significant developments in treatment there is an ever growing number of people who are living with cancer for many years,” said Emma.

The first retreat day is planned for October 10th – the venue will be confirmed soon.

It will feature a main speaker, sessions for large and small groups with workshops on a variety of subjects.

“We would really love to hear from people who are living with cancer about what they would like from these days. We want to create something with their need at the centre of our planning. We really would value as many people as possible who are living with a non-curative cancer to complete a short questionnaire so that we can plan these days accordingly.

“We plan to include a mixture of topics, dealing with things like how to have difficult conversations with your family, the day to day challenges of living with cancer, shared time with others facing similar issues, managing immediate and future practicalities or how to make a will, plus information stands and perhaps the opportunity to walk and talk,” Emma explained.

“We'll be gathering suggestions as to what patients would find helpful from medical information to more spiritual input.”

If you have any thoughts on what would be valuable on a Living with Non-Curable Cancer day, you can fill in an online form at forms.office.com/e/4wxtQ8SPHN or scan the QR code.

To request an email link to the form or a paper version, get in touch with Emma Ellis on emma.ellis@forcecancercharity.co.uk



“We want to offer an opportunity to talk in a safe, protected environment around people who understand what you are going through; to explore thoughts and feelings with people you don't feel the need to protect, as you might with family and loved ones,” said Emma.

“From our experience of running the support group sessions, the space can also be used to experiment with what you would like to talk about with loved ones.”

The away-days will be run by FORCE Oncology Support Specialists with help from our growing cohort of Role Specific Volunteers. They have been recruited to support our professional teams and often have a therapeutic or medical background. Their experience makes them well suited to help deliver Moving Forward, Living with Non-Curable Cancer and Relaxation and Anxiety Management and Mindfulness courses.

The relaxation groups are held at the FORCE Centre for anyone



MY NAME IS BEA and I have been a nurse and midwife for a long time. I've been involved with FORCE for many years. With both clinical and personal experience, I know how important FORCE is and the support it provides. Initially I helped support service users apply for Macmillan grants, which at times was quite heart-breaking. More recently a position came up within the newly developed FORCE Role Specific Volunteer (RSV) programme.

I was invited to help with the relaxation and anxiety management course. While not a support group as such, it provides a supportive environment for participants to learn and practice simple but powerful techniques for relaxation and anxiety management. I worked alongside Emma Ellis, the course co-ordinator, to learn the ropes and experience first-hand the techniques. Some I was aware of, others were new, but the potential effect of each is immense. Once I had built up a bit of confidence, I felt able to facilitate the course on my own.

From previous experience of running groups (antenatal classes for pregnant mums and dads) I think its important people know what options are available before a need arises. Participants on the course are invited to learn and practice simple techniques that enable them to feel more in control over feelings and anxieties that may initially feel overwhelming.

I have now been involved in several courses, and really enjoy seeing the positive impact learning these simple techniques have on participants' levels of confidence. I would recommend anyone with a clinical background, looking to share their experience of working with people, to contact FORCE and discuss how they could become involved.

affected by cancer and it's hoped to introduce them into outreach locations later this year. Sessions have traditionally been led by our counsellors or information nurses but former midwife Bea Knight has successfully trained to run them as a Role Specific Volunteer.

The latest five-week Mindfulness course began at the end of April.

“The aim of the course is to develop mindful attention to our experience,” said oncology support specialist Paul Grace. “We

develop such attention through a variety of simple mindfulness techniques that we will be building on, through practice, each week.

“Research has shown that by practising mindful attention we have a resource to help us better manage uncertainty, pain and discomfort, all of which are often associated with illness and the stress of illness.”

The course is primarily for patients and, space allowing, can also include a close relative or friend. ●



Giving something back

Becky Handford has joined our team as Voluntary Services Assistant. She's supporting Volunteer Manager Heather Taylor and Oncology Support Specialist Emma Ellis, who is heading up our Support and Education Programme

Her role is to help ensure that our volunteers – regular and role specific - have a rewarding experience and feel well cared for and valued.

Becky's no stranger to FORCE Centre visitors – she spent six and a half years as a Wednesday afternoon volunteer and also helped with breast care and prostate cancer groups at the RD&E.

She first came into contact with FORCE as a patient 10 years ago, taking advantage of support groups, acupuncture and our exercise programme.

"FORCE is special because of the support they offer to everyone, not just patients, and for the variety of services available because they know that people respond to different things. Nothing here is rushed, you are allowed to go at your own pace. This was my space, somewhere I could come for a tea or coffee, and I was always made to feel welcome. You feel that friendly environment as soon as you walk through the door.

"As a result, I decided I wanted to do voluntary work to support others in the way that I had been supported and to give something back for all the help I had received.

"I found volunteering so rewarding. It's one of the best things I've ever done - the feeling of helping other people and how much you are made to feel appreciated.

"One of the things I really enjoyed was helping people dealing with hair loss with head scarves, giving ladies the confidence to face the world when they hadn't got any hair. I also formed really good friendships with my fellow volunteers. It's such a great team here."

When the new role in the volunteer team was created, it was the perfect fit for Becky, who is also continuing her job of 26 years in medical records at the Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.

"I wanted to make other volunteers feel the way I felt and help them feel supported," she said. "Working for FORCE is something I feel really privileged to be doing. It's such a fantastic charity."

Becky was part of the FORCE team that won an Extraordinary People Award for going the extra mile in support of cancer patients at the RD&E in 2018, in recognition of their help at health and wellbeing clinics.



Becky Handford

Family is a really big part of Becky's life - she has three grown up sons and is about to become a nanny for the first time this summer.

She enjoys walking, cycling and afternoon teas – be sure to ask her for recommendations as she's a great source of knowledge from extensive research! ●



VOLUNTEERS ARE AN ESSENTIAL AND VALUED PART OF OUR CHARITY

and their contribution is vital. They help us maintain the amazing services we provide and we couldn't do it without them.

We are always keen to hear from anyone wanting to join our dedicated team. It all starts by contacting our Voluntary Service Coordinator, Heather Taylor on **01392 406154** or email heather.taylor@forcecancercharity.co.uk

Your time is a valuable donation to us. Thank you.

LGFB and

FORCE has strengthened its partnership with Look Good Feel Better so our patients can combat the physical and psychological effects of cancer.

Our relationship with Look Good Feel Better, which runs free workshops on skin care and body confidence at the FORCE Support and Information Centre, is thriving.

We have also reinforced links with the Little Princess Trust. They provide real hair wigs, free of charge, to children and young people under 25 who have lost their own hair through cancer.

Our fortnightly LGFB sessions for women are always popular – beauty industry professionals and volunteers offer advice on make-up, hair and nails and supply goody bags worth more than £200.

People who attend the workshops often feel less isolated as part of a group, resulting in increased confidence and a sense of well-being at what can be a particularly traumatic time.

We have also run men's sessions at FORCE, offering practical, down-to-earth advice on safe shaving, skin and sun care and how to avoid scarring. This year, FORCE is pioneering hybrid sessions for men – patients come to the Centre and the experts deliver their advice via a live video link.

We also host LGFB for teens with specialist advice for young people on managing the way drug and radiotherapy treatments can impact how they look. We were the first venue in the country post COVID to host a teens group.

These have also proved extremely popular and sometimes dovetail with a Little Princess Trust consultant appointment. Since 2006, LPT has provided more than 14,000 wigs to children and young people with hair loss.

FORCE is now recognised as the South West centre for sufferers from cancer and alopecia – LPT works closely with a trusted network of accredited wig fitters to ensure that young people needing their support never have to travel far for their fitting.

Teresa Wood is their local expert. She has more than 33 years of experience in hairdressing and is full-time director stylist at the Chameleons Salon in Plymstock.

Teresa is a board-certified member of the Institute of Trichologists and a specialist in the diagnosis and treatment of hair and scalp problems.

copling with hair loss

tips with two charities helping cancer
 biological side-effects of their treatment.



Teresa Wood

She began volunteering as a wig fitter for the Little Princess Trust in 2021 and for the last 18 months, has been coming to FORCE to support young people coping with hair loss and help with Look Good Feel Better sessions.

It was supposed to be a once-a-month commitment on her day off, but such is Teresa's commitment that she now makes the near 90-mile round trip at least every fortnight.

"I love helping other people feel how we all should feel," she said. "Our hair is our crowning glory and I like them to feel as good if not better than when they had hair, especially teenagers.

"I want their friends to be jealous of their hair. That's why I do what I do."

Teresa works closely with FORCE Support Services Administrator Shelley Boulton to co-ordinate appointments that enable more



young people to access the service without having to travel too far.

"Shelley's sheer determination has made it work. She makes everything happen every time I come. She is so passionate about it."

"I fit wigs for children but what the whole family gets from visiting the FORCE Centre



is so much more. It's not just about the wigs. They can access so much more that's available here.

"It's nice to be able to give these young people time. It's not a conveyor belt. It's about making them feel that they are still the same person inside and it's not all about their treatment and what it's done to them.

"The feedback is amazing. They go out standing so tall, looking and feeling so much better. We can make them look good and feel better." ●

To find out more about the work of Look Good Feel Better or book an appointment, visit lookgoodfeelbetter.co.uk
 More information about the Little Princess Trust is available at littleprincesses.org.uk

MY NAME IS JENNIE MOXOM. I have been in the beauty industry for more than 40 years and I have been volunteering for LGFB for more than 20 years.

It all started when a volunteer walked into my salon, Lefroy Beauty Therapy, and asked us if we would like to get involved. One of my girls and I said yes! We underwent their training and started attending classes. We were first in haematology in the RD&E in a really small room with no windows. FORCE now very kindly accommodate us in their beautiful building.

The ladies take part in a 12-step programme from eye make-up remover, right through a cleansing routine, camouflage, foundation, eyebrows, eye shadow and finally lipstick. All the appropriate products are provided free of charge and are all donated by the cosmetic industry.

I try to make the sessions as relaxed and fun as I can while being sympathetic and supportive. Ladies often come in looking like scared rabbits, so we try to relax them straight away and at the end of two hours they're transformed - they're all smiling, swapping numbers, maybe getting WhatsApp groups together.

What I get out of it is being able to spread a little happiness.



I REALLY ENJOYED

the Look Good Feel Better course. I would definitely recommend it for anyone going through cancer treatment because you get a really good selection of branded make

up worth over £300 but you also get to meet up with others going through the same situation. Everyone is so lovely and I felt really welcomed, even though I didn't know anyone. Before attending I was worried about losing my eyebrows and looking very pale throughout having chemotherapy so I felt the course helped me look past that.

Freya Sampson

Further steps on the road to recovery

As we digest the details of another financial year, it's a good time to reflect on the strides we have taken along the road to recovery post pandemic.

As part of our aim to GO WHERE WE ARE NEEDED, a key focus has been to use our resources even more effectively and to raise funds to re-establish our outreach services.

An uncertain world has thrown further challenges our way, with war in Ukraine and the cost-of-living crisis, but your support has given us the confidence to move forward with recovery plans.

We have started to rebuild our teams to ensure we have the people we need to deliver

services, raise funds and provide essential financial and governance support.

Our traditional income streams are showing shoots of recovery – generous donations from our supporters, a return to face-to-face fundraising, stronger performance from our shop and a welcome increase in legacy notifications during 2022/3.

We have also focused on grants and in August, secured National Lottery funding towards our Role Specific Volunteer programme and for rolling out support in the community – a tremendous boost towards our goal to reach as many people as possible.

This and an improving picture for legacies

should give our income for 2022/23 a healthy lift.

With cost saving, achieved mainly through delayed recruitment and careful management, we are likely to report a surplus this year. However, we know that there will be significant cost increases next year. Some will be funded by the Lottery grant, but the majority are outside our control.

We hope you will continue to support us in any way you can to enable us to provide sustainable services for the future.

Julia Pitts
FORCE Chief
Finance Officer ●



TRUDI YEO has joined the FORCE team as a Finance and Admin Officer. But she's no stranger to our charity.

"I am so happy to be back at FORCE as part of the finance team. I have previously been a volunteer for the charity for several years and helped at various events, so I know the importance of what FORCE has to offer. My absolute favourite part is that it is predominately local support so I can see where all the income that I have the pleasure of processing in my role goes! It is humbling to see all the different reasons why people and businesses support FORCE and makes me feel very proud to be a part of the charity. I'm looking forward to being part of such a dedicated, caring and passionate team."

Leaving a legacy of hope

It's tough to think about what will happen to the people we cherish when we're gone. We can't be there to hold their hand or comfort them through the pain of loss.

But making a will can go some way towards meeting their needs in the future. It's the only guarantee that your money, property, possessions and investments go to the people and causes you care about.

Leaving a gift to FORCE in your will can help create a better future for local people dealing with cancer. It's an important way to ensure that your compassion and kindness lives on, helping us to be here for people who will always need our support.

We work with Tozers Solicitors, who waive their usual fee for preparing a simple will in return for a donation to FORCE.

The suggested donations are **£275** for a single Will and **£350** for a mirrored will. Should you need specialist advice, your solicitor will quote a separate price for any additional work. They will talk you through the complexities and make sure your wishes are met.

This is an all-year-round scheme, open to supporters of FORCE. Please quote FORCE when booking your appointment.

Patients, their spouses and partners will not be asked for a donation if you are leaving a gift to FORCE in your will.

By using this service, we must stress that you should not feel obliged to leave a gift to FORCE. We simply urge you to think about your choices and remember FORCE if you are considering charitable gifts, however big or small.

Whatever the future brings, we want to be here for local people affected by cancer. You can help us provide that lifeline. ●

For more information about Tozers' services, visit www.tozers.co.uk.

TOZERS

[co.uk/personal/probate-wills](http://www.tozers.co.uk/personal/probate-wills) or contact:

Exeter: Grainne Staunton **01392 209596**

Newton Abbott: Rachael Morley **01626 207042**

Teignmouth: Sue Halfyard **01626 771227**

Signature

Could you be a Friend of FORCE?

Our Friends of FORCE groups have never been more important in their role as ambassadors for our charity.

They are the face of FORCE in communities around Devon, spreading the word about all the amazing free services we offer to local people affected by cancer.

They are passionate about FORCE and give up their time to make sure the name of FORCE is well known across their communities.

They also play a tremendously important role in raising vital funds – the groups contribute around £50,000 each year between them by organising a whole range of events.

From bingo to breakfasts, table top sales to Christmas fayres, garden parties, concerts, cream teas, supermarket collections and a host of other fundraisers, our FoF groups work tirelessly to support FORCE.

We'd love you to become part of the team. ●

WE ARE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR NEW MEMBERS

to join our Friends of FORCE groups in:

- Exeter
- Kenton
- Exmouth
- Tiverton
- Crediton
- Okehampton
- Axe Valley
- Honiton

If you're interested in joining one of our existing groups or you would like to consider starting a new group in another area, please contact our fundraising team on 01392 406153 or email forcefr@forcecancercharity.co.uk



Axe Valley Tabletop Sale



Prague or Bust rally (Tiverton FOF)



Newton St Cyres Charity of the Year (Crediton FOF)



Newton Poppleford Community Cafe



Budleigh Cream Tea



Great Western Railway Club (Exmouth FOF)



Lyndsey Trimmer with Hummingbirds at Cadhay Day



Kenton Cream Tea



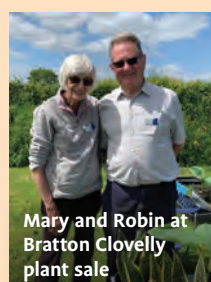
Exeter FOF volunteers at Nello



Honiton Great Devon Breakfast



Bow Young Farmers Charity of the Year (Crediton FOF)



Mary and Robin at Bratton Clovelly plant sale

COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS



Groups aren't everyone's cup of tea but you can still support FORCE by becoming a Community Champion. You can help FORCE in your community and networks in a number of ways such as:



Promoting or supporting fundraising events and activities in your area and asking people to get involved



Dropping off and picking up fundraising collection cans or resources for supporters, like posters, banners or T-shirts



Attending cheque presentations and saying thank you to donors



Giving a talk or presentation (after full training) at events or groups

Community Champions can choose to do one or more of these activities. We'll give you all the support, training and resources you need.

INTERESTED OR WANT MORE INFORMATION?

Get in touch with Chloe Richardson on 01392 402875 or email Chloe.Richardson@forcecancercharity.co.uk

The support that local businesses offer FORCE is exceptional and we are so grateful that the corporate world recognises the value of what we do for people in the communities they also serve. Sometimes their backing comes as a result of the help FORCE has given a colleague. For others it's a simple desire to partner a respected local charity that mirrors their brand values. Whatever the reason, we say a massive thank you to all the companies supporting FORCE. These are just some of them.

Business class!



VAN GUARD ACCESSORIES have chosen FORCE as charity of the year for 2022 into 2023. Van Guard have been manufacturing aftermarket van accessories and security products on the same site at Exeter Airport for more than 47 years, so we felt it was right that we chose to support a local charity that helps the community we work and live in.

We've set a target of raising at least £2,000 through fundraising events, and we've already seen bake sales, sweepstakes, raffles, and cycle rides raise more than £800. Hosting the fundraising events at Van Guard boosts staff morale by giving the employees something to look forward to and provides the opportunity for the teams to come together and socialise across departments, whilst raising money for a great cause.

We are **TAYLOR WOODROW**, previously known as South West Highways, a civil engineering company based just a few miles from FORCE's Support Centre in Exeter. Each year we choose a local charity to support and we like to involve our employees in making this decision. This year our team voted for FORCE, with many of our employees having experienced the difficulties of living with cancer, be that with a loved one or friend, or going through the battle themselves.

Speaking with one of our colleagues about FORCE, she said: "I had breast cancer in January 2021. After my operation and treatment, the breast care nurses spoke to me about FORCE and the support they offer. I was lucky enough to speak to a FORCE support worker at the beginning of June. I really appreciated the understanding and positivity they showed me. Unfortunately, due to COVID, I was unable to attend the Centre, but knowing there was someone on the end of the telephone was so helpful."

Our fundraising events so far have included a post-Christmas charity weight loss challenge at head office, with six members of staff collectively losing a whopping 92.5lbs in just eight weeks and raising £124!



We celebrated pancake day at our office (with a fruit option for our dieters!) with all proceeds going to FORCE.

Throughout 2023 we have many other events planned, including a Senior Manager car wash, employees taking part in the Power Run at Powderham Castle and Elysium Healthcare Great West Run, a skydive, plus many more ideas in the pipeline. We also have volunteers interested to help at events and the FORCE shop in Exeter.

We are proud to be supporting such an incredible charity and look forward to working more with FORCE throughout the year to raise as much as we can.

THE FAMILY LAW COMPANY is a proud, long-term supporter of FORCE and the service it provides to the communities of Exeter and beyond. Cancer touches so many lives including our own colleagues, families and friends. When cancer strikes so close to home, we take courage in knowing that FORCE is there to help them face the future with the help, advice and care they need. FORCE's contribution to those who turn to them at such a challenging time cannot be underestimated.

Director Jane Chanot from The Family Law Company said: "FORCE is a charity that is close to our hearts and one which has been so important to many of us on

Classics Galore!

a personal level. In turn, we choose to support the charity for the long-term, from sponsoring FORCE-run events like the Santa Cycle to putting on our own fundraisers including skittles evenings and an annual memorial walk at Killerton.

“Our colleagues and contacts always support these events, this year’s walk alone raised nearly £300 in donations.

“We hope that our involvement goes some way towards raising awareness of FORCE and the service it provides in Exeter and at local community hospitals, as well as providing those vital funds that help the charity to continue its amazing work.”

In 2022, our colleagues at **THE EXETER** selected FORCE Cancer Charity as our corporate charity partner, making them the central focus of our fundraising initiatives for the next three years.

With someone diagnosed with cancer every two minutes in the UK, the support provided to patients by organisations such as FORCE is both invaluable and hugely important. We were pleased to have recently made our first corporate donation, which will help their Information Services Team provide patients and their families with support and information following a cancer diagnosis.

In addition, we will also continue to encourage colleagues to further support FORCE throughout 2023, through a range of fundraising events, Payroll giving and volunteering opportunities, including Cream Teas for Cancer.

As a Devon-based life and health insurance provider, we are incredibly proud of our roots and the work our colleagues do within their local communities. Partnering with FORCE allows us to help them with their fantastic work supporting local cancer patients during difficult times and we are looking forward to seeing what we can achieve together! ●



GOOD NEWS: Classics Galore! 2022 was a joyous celebration of great music.

BETTER NEWS: The concert raised £19,500 for FORCE, taking the overall total from eight fantastic events since 2007 to more than £130,000.

BEST NEWS: Classics Galore! will be back so save the date – November 9 2024.

The latest concert was originally scheduled for autumn 2021 but the pandemic forced a postponement. There was uncertainty that it would be successful with so many potential difficulties like the cost of living crisis.

“We needn’t have worried,” said organising committee chairman Peter Payne. “It was a wonderful evening and it made a staggering amount of money for FORCE.”

Musical Director Malcolm Matthews worked his usual magic in putting together the Classics Galore! orchestra and choosing a programme that drew the best from them, members of Ottery St Mary Choral Society and St David’s Players, the SW Comms Band and stunning soloist soprano Cheryl Enever while Justin Leigh did a great job on

his first appearance as compere.

The backstage crew, FORCE staff and volunteers and the team at Event Exeter and the University of Exeter all combined to make the evening run smoothly.

“We are extremely grateful to every single person involved, to all those who donated draw prizes and to the sponsors and a huge thank you to the audience, without whom there wouldn’t be a show,” said Peter.

Classics Galore! is a lasting tribute to concert founders Posy Passmore and her late husband, Dick. ●

If you’d like to get involved in sponsoring the event in 2024, contact Olly Watts on 01392 406150 or email olly.watts@forcecancercharity.co.uk



HOW YOUR BUSINESS CAN SUPPORT FORCE

- ✔ Choose FORCE as your **Charity of The Year**
- ✔ **Gifts in kind**
- ✔ **Volunteering**
- ✔ **Sponsorship**
- ✔ Organise fundraising **events**
- ✔ **Match funding**
- ✔ **Monthly donation** e.g. from the sale of goods or services
- ✔ One-off or regular **donations**
- ✔ **Payroll giving**
- ✔ Donate items to our **shop** in Heavitree

Please get in touch if you would like to consider choosing FORCE and find out what opportunities are available to you and your business. Contact Olly Watts on 01392 406150 olly.watts@forcecancercharity.co.uk. For the most up-to-date news please follow us on [LinkedIn](#).

Craig travels 6,000 miles to ride The Nello



The 24th annual Nello cycle ride takes place on Sunday June 25. It's still FORCE's biggest single fundraising event of the year and we're looking forward to another amazing day with the unique atmosphere that only The Nello can generate.

People travel from far and wide to take part but few will journey further than Craig Muldoon. He's making a trip of more than 6,000 miles from his home in Thailand to be on the start line at Topsham Rugby Club.

Craig's first experience of the ride was 20 years ago, encouraged by a friend Pete Cain, one of the original crew who took part in the very first Nello in 2000.

"I ended up riding the 100 mile challenge with a hernia in my right groin, which the doctor had told me it would not be an issue as he was riding the event too



Craig with his daughter, Connie

and would help if he saw me lying by the side of the road. Not too sure how serious or humorous that comment was, but I did it," said Craig.

"When I lived in Exeter, I ran a business in Crediton and we regularly held coffee mornings to help raise funds for FORCE, even though at that stage no-one connected to me had suffered from cancer.

"It was in 2016 that my daughter, Connie, was diagnosed with thyroid cancer. Shortly after that, my father was diagnosed. I returned to the UK from my home in Thailand, taking care of my father and giving support to my daughter.

"Since the passing of my father, I have lost a number of people close to me and with the recovery that my daughter made, for which we are truly blessed, I decided about 18 months ago that I would come back to Devon and ride the Nello again, raising vital funds for such a worthy cause.

"I feel extremely fortunate to be able to live my day-to-day life the way I do, without ailments or disabilities, so why not use that ability to help others and raise for good causes.

"Like many others that will join me on the day, we have our own personal reasons, but together we help the many and that is what counts. Thailand seems so far away sometimes but that 12-hour flight home will fly by, pardon the pun, with the excitement of that 100-mile challenge. "God bless you all for what you do for others."

Craig, who runs a financial services company in Thailand, initially set himself a fundraising target of £500. "We were getting close to the target with more than three months to go, so I am reaching out to all my friends, colleagues, clients and associates and try to raise £1,000 for this great charity," he said. ●

You can sponsor Craig at forcecancercharity.enthouse.com/pf/craig-muldoon

You can also sponsor anyone and everyone taking part via our Nello fundraising page www.justgiving.com/fundraising/nello2023

And if Craig's story has inspired you to take part, there's still time. Enter today at forcecancercharity.co.uk/nello/

Thank you to...



BG&E Cadence Cafe at FORCE



Santa Cycle



Keith Waters:
London Marathon



Montane 3 Hadrian's Wall Trek



Owen Davies and
Tahnee Heath
Endurance Life
half marathon



Izzy Weis
and Anna
Hutchinson:
Tough Mudder



One Voice
Green Circle Walk

It's the best book room in a charity shop in Exeter!

The book room is like a library or high street book shop

It's the place to come for a bargain



Otto



Hannah



Dave

That's the verdict of the customers who love to peruse our paperbacks or hunt for a hardcover and the volunteers who make the FORCE shop's book department a unique experience. We have three volunteers dedicated to sorting and displaying all the generous daily donations from our supporters. Hannah Gange, Otto Sinclair and Dave Robinson combine their passion for books with a commitment to serving their community.

Dave has been with FORCE for five years and has a very personal reason for volunteering his time. "My best friend and my sister both died of cancer in the same year. FORCE was very good to my friend."

When he first retired as a lecturer in literature, philosophy and art, Dave worked for a book charity in their warehouse but found it a better fit at FORCE

"Books are my thing," he said. "When I came here the atmosphere was great – everyone is very friendly, good natured, always joking, they are really nice, the staff and volunteers. We sort books into different categories, everything from romance to steam engines. It's the place to come for a bargain – most paperbacks are only 80p.

"My speciality is appraising valuable books. They get put to one side and I price them accordingly. We put anything of significant value on eBay so that we can share it beyond Exeter."

Eagle-eyed Dave recently identified the value of a book of plans for art deco style seaside bungalows from the 1930s, of interest to architects, colleges and historians. It fetched £100 online. There are 200-300 new titles on display every couple of weeks and book sales total around £500 a week.

"It's always exciting when a whole new load of books come in. There's always something different or odd. And we never turn down books, we always want more," said Dave, who likes to offer help and advice to customers.

"A lot of people are very fond of FORCE and this is a great way to support the charity, get you out of the house and have fun."

There are also shelves dedicated to books in the children's room, the original home for books when Hannah first started volunteering in February 1999.

"I started on the till and then in 2003 the book room called!" she said. "I enjoy sorting and pricing the books, organising and arranging the displays. It's very satisfying replenishing the bookshelves and helping customers find an author or book. I like that my contribution helps the shop make money for patient support and research for FORCE Cancer Charity.

"Customers often comment on how the book room is like a library or high street book shop."

Otto has a similar enthusiasm for the job.

"I like volunteering here for many reasons – it's good to keep the grey matter working and the team are lovely!" he said. ●

volunteering

at the FORCE Cancer Charity Shop

your time is a valuable donation to us

Flexible hours

Working in retail?
Use your till skills
for a great cause

Meet new people
Make new friends
Join a great team

Help your local
cancer charity



FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Visit forcecancercharity.co.uk/volunteer
Email heather.taylor@forcecancercharity.co.uk
Call in to the shop at Fore Street,
Heavitree, Exeter and ask for Anna



“My way of saying thanks”

The Ocean Suite on Exmouth seafront will be rocking on Friday June 2 for a special fundraising night in aid of FORCE and the Fire Fighters Charity. There'll be great food, music from local band Conscious Club and a fantastic draw with around £2,000 worth of prizes.

It's being organised by Graham Rooms, a long-time supporter of FORCE who sought our help when cancer turned his life upside down.

Graham is no stranger to a challenge. He was fearless in the face of danger as a firefighter and in his spare time ran marathons and endurance races. In 2019 he faced the biggest challenge of his life when he was diagnosed with aggressive, high grade prostate cancer, a challenge he still confronts every day.

He was approaching retirement after 30 years in the fire service when he recognised a symptom that made him visit his doctor.

“I noticed a slight decrease in urination pressure, so I went to my GP and had a PSA (prostate-specific antigen) test – a procedure to check your prostate,” explained Graham.

Elevated levels set in train a series of tests that led to that diagnosis just two weeks after his 55th birthday. “That’s when my life changed forever. The diagnosis put dark clouds in place, dark thoughts. So, I contacted FORCE.

“My relationship with the charity began in 2009 when my mother was diagnosed with cancer and despite living over the border in Dorset, there was no question that she would receive support from FORCE. That’s when I first got involved, raising money in various ways including running the London marathon and taking part in the Rock Solid event as part of the FORCE team.”

Graham had counselling with FORCE oncology support specialist Emma Barker.

“She was wonderful. She took away the dark thought. It was brilliant,” he said. Emma shared one particular piece of advice – courtesy of unlikely mental health heroes Pooh and Piglet – that has stuck with him.

“Supposing a tree fell down, Pooh, when we were underneath it?”

“Supposing it didn't,” said Pooh after careful thought.

Piglet was comforted by this.

“It helped me to understand things. I had cancer but it didn't mean the end of the world. It helped me mentally through the diagnosis,” said Graham.

His cancer journey is ongoing. “I've gone from curative treatment to suppressive treatment and lymphoedema is a daily reminder of my cancer. To know that FORCE was there in the background was always reassuring for me and my family. I've had fantastic help and support from the charity and the RD&E specialist nurses and consultants – I couldn't have had better treatment. And I'm blessed to have a wonderful network of family and friends around me.”

Wife Karen and daughter Emma are the solid foundations of that support network and his former colleagues – many living with the knowledge that absorption of toxic material from firefighting can lead to a higher incidence of cancer – have remained constant. They are backing his latest fundraiser in June with Ocean generously allowing use of the venue for free.

“I wanted to do something for FORCE and the colleagues who do so much for me. FORCE supports the local community. This is my way of saying thank you for FORCE and all its unsung heroes. I hope it will be a success and everyone will enjoy themselves,” said Graham. ●



Charity Fundraising Event

Kindly supported by **ocean**

Friday 2nd June 2023
The Ocean Suite, Exmouth
7:00pm to 1:00am

In aid of The Fire Fighters Charity **charity force**

Live music performed by **Conscious Club**

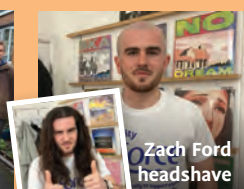
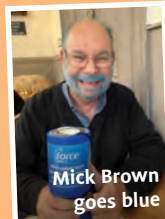
Tickets £30 per person including buffet
 £25 for tickets purchased before the end of March

To order tickets please visit:
<https://charity-fundraising-event.sumupstore.com>
 or contact Graham Rooms on 07946 755810

75% of the event income will be divided equally between the charities.

Event and draw tickets are available via charity-fundraising-event.sumupstore.com or call Graham on 07946 755810

Thank you to...



The FORCE Cancer Charity Great Devon Breakfast

in March was a lip-smacking sensation as cafes, companies and community groups took part in our fantastic foodie fundraiser.

Thank you to everyone who made it a real success.

However you start the day – burritos or bagels, waffles or Weetabix, bacon and eggs, croissants and coffee, porridge or pancakes – make sure you're part of the FORCE Great Devon Breakfast in 2024.

Put it on your menu and let's make it bigger and better next March – get set to tuck in and support local people dealing with a cancer diagnosis.



Details of next year's event will be available soon but if you can't wait that long to tickle your tastebuds in aid of FORCE, why not sign up for our Cream Teas for Cancer event on Thursday July 6. Order yours at forcecancercharity.co.uk/creamteas/



Cafe 53



Burnes Hampton & Littlewood



Cranbrook Running Club



Big Wave Media



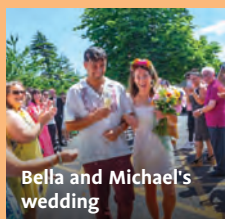
Wilkinson Grant



Millbrook Village



La La Choirs



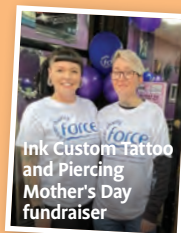
Bella and Michael's wedding



Holzworthy pizza night



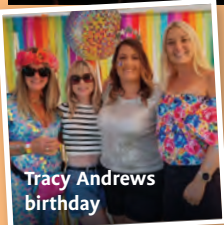
Laura Salt - 35 and Still Alive Party



Ink Custom-Tattoo and Piercing Mother's Day fundraiser



Proud To support



Tracy Andrews birthday



Katy Biggs' London Vitality 10k



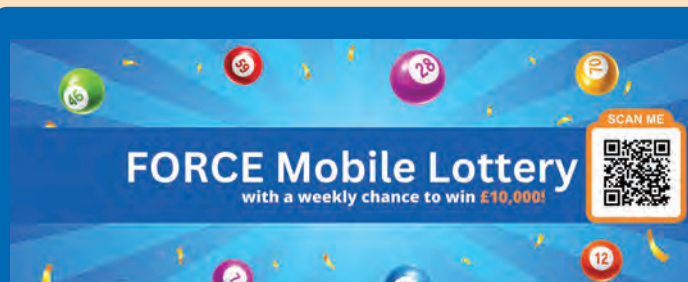
Geoff Gibbins 70th Garden Party



Petroc College bake sale



FORCE Day skydivers



Play the FORCE mobile lottery

THERE'S A GREAT NEW WAY to support FORCE - sign up for the FORCE mobile lottery and spend £2 per week to be in with a chance of winning £10,000. We've teamed up with Donr, a company that works with thousands of national and local UK charities to run successful fundraising campaigns. They take care of all the technical and administrative work.

HOW TO PLAY VIA YOUR MOBILE PHONE:

- **Scan the QR code on the picture or sign up at lottery.donr.com/forcelottery**
The cost of your ticket will be added to your monthly mobile phone bill or deducted from any Pay As You Go credit. Once payment is made through your network provider, FORCE will receive £1.02 from every ticket purchased. The other 98p goes towards covering the costs of running the lottery, including the prize pot, administration costs, processing fees and taxes. You can cancel at any time by texting STOP to 88000 or calling 0333 4444 111. You'll be immediately removed from the lottery and no further payments will be taken.
- **Each ticket is assigned a random six-digit ticket number.**
- **The lottery draw is based on the results of the first six digits of the Germany's Lotto Spiel 77 game, which is drawn every Saturday. The winning number for the FORCE lottery will be the first six digits (in the same order) of that week's draw.**

WHAT PRIZES COULD I WIN?

- Match all 6 numbers - WIN £10,000
- Match any 5 numbers - WIN £1,000
- Match any 4 numbers - WIN £10
- Match any 3 numbers - WIN 5 FREE entries for the next draw

FORCE's Acting Head of Income Generation, Olly Watts, said: "It's great that we are able to offer our supporters the opportunity to take part in our weekly lottery for the chance to win £10,000. The lottery is a brilliant way to support FORCE on a regular basis without breaking the bank. It's easy to set up and you can cancel at any time."

What you can do to help us reach even more people

There are so many ways you can help us raise the money we need to support you, your family, your friends, your colleagues, your community to deal with a cancer diagnosis.



Commit to **regular giving** – it makes a huge difference



Make a **one-off donation**



Leave FORCE a gift in your **Will**



Support or organise an **event**



Donate to or buy from **our shop**



Make us your **Charity of the Year**



Ways to give

- 1. Set up a standing order** online with your bank and let us know. If you prefer, we can send you a paper form to complete.
- 2. Make a one-off donation.** Please refer to the adjacent blue box for FORCE BANK ACCOUNT DETAILS.
- 3. Opt for** a regular or one-off donation through our **website** via JustGiving. Go to **www.forcecancercharity.co.uk** and click DONATE or scan this QR code. Please be aware this is subject to Just Giving processing fees.
- 4. Send** us a cheque – it should be made payable to FORCE Cancer Charity.



FORCE BANK ACCOUNT DETAILS

Account name : FORCE Cancer Charity

Account Number : 60796568

Sort Code : 30-80-37

IMPORTANT

Please email donations@forcecancercharity.co.uk to let us know that you have set up a standing order or have made a one-off donation into our account. We'd love to thank you and confirm whether we can claim Gift Aid on your donation.

For queries or to ask for a paper standing order form, please email donations@forcecancercharity.co.uk or call **01392 406166**.

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If you are sending this form back to us with a one-off donation and would like to Gift Aid it please tick a box.

- I would like to Gift Aid this donation and any donations I make in the future or have made in the last 4 years
- I would like to Gift Aid this donation only

Donor details

Name

Address

Postcode

Please return this form to:
FORCE Cancer Charity, Corner House, Barrack Road, Exeter EX2 5DW

FORCEcancercharity @forcecancer

01392 402875 (Fundraising) / 01392 406151 (Patient Support)

Charity registration no. 1140676 Company registration no. 7529991

