

NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2025



DOVE COTTAGE DAY HOSPICE, Canal Lane, Stathern, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, LE14 4EX.

Tel: 01949 860303 Email: admin@dovecottage.org Web: www.dovecottage.org

Registered Charity No. 1057941



REGISTERED WITH
FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR



WELCOME

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF CARE AND COMPASSION

As the leaves turn and the days grow shorter, we at Dove Cottage Day Hospice are reflecting with gratitude on another remarkable year - and looking ahead with excitement to our 30th anniversary in 2026.

For nearly three decades, Dove Cottage has been a place of **comfort, care, and companionship**, offering warmth and support to those who need it most. None of this would have been possible without the incredible generosity of our community, our volunteers, supporters and friends.

As we celebrate this incredible milestone, we're also mindful of the challenges we face. With **ever-rising costs** and **less than 4% of our funding coming from the NHS**, your continued support is



more vital than ever in helping us sustain our free services.

So, 2026 will be a year of vital fundraising, with a huge target to reach and we will need you all to help us yet again, to ensure we are here in another 30 years.

In this edition, you'll find heart-warming stories from within Dove Cottage and community supporters plus updates on our recent events.

Thank you for helping us keep Dove Cottage a place of peace, dignity, and compassion — whatever the season. With heartfelt thanks,

Dan
Dan Smeeton, C.E.O
Dove Cottage Day Hospice

FIRE DAMAGE

Some of you may be aware that on August 6th we sadly experienced a small fire in the hospice which had started whilst the building was empty. This was thankfully an isolated incident and there were no casualties.

After a few days of closure to carry out safety checks and clear debris, we reopened to guests offering a reduced menu choice which our chef Ingrid has been preparing from a temporary kitchen unit on site.

Refurbishment works to get our kitchen back in use are due to be finished by the end of November, in good time to ensure that we will be able to offer our guests their usual traditional Christmas roast dinners!





CARE FOR CARERS

Our Monday sessions are gathering momentum, with several guests and carers being welcomed into the hospice to enjoy activities, refreshments and companionship.

The Monday session is slightly different to our other days at the hospice, with a big focus on carers and their own wellbeing. They offer opportunities for local carers to come together and make connections with others in similar situations, build friendships, enjoy some well-deserved 'me-time', lend a friendly ear and raise any worries or concerns that we might be able to support with.

The sessions are supervised by our usual staff and volunteers, but with the added bonus of Annabelle – our dedicated Carers Champion, who offers specific support and guidance to those who feel they need it.

We have also recently welcomed Zara to the Monday team – our very-own Complementary Therapist! Zara is on hand every week to offer a range

of sessions and treatments to carers to enhance their general wellbeing. The proven benefits of complementary therapy treatments are far-reaching, including promoting relaxation, reducing anxiety, stress & fatigue, improving quality of sleep and in some cases helping with pain management, amongst many others! All treatments are offered to our guests and carers free of charge.

We will be holding an open day in the new year to highlight our Monday offerings to local families and will be inviting any local carers to attend and find out more.

This event will take place on **Monday 12th January** at the hospice. It

will be an informal drop-in session but we will also be running a schedule of informative talks for those that are interested. Pre-booking is essential to assist with our arrangements. Please call the hospice on 01949 860303 for more information or keep an eye on our website and social media in the new year!



FOLLOW US ON OUR WEBSITE WWW.DOVECOTTAGE.ORG

HOSPICE

IT'S OFFICIAL!

For those of you that aren't aware, there has been a big transformation taking place in the hospice garden recently. Construction work began in April 2024 and although this is still an ongoing project, we decided to 'officially' open it at our celebration event in August.

We were joined by representatives from several community groups and grant funders who have been involved in the funding and development of this landscaping project, including the Mayor of Melton who came along to officially mark the opening and 'cut the ribbon'. We are very grateful particularly to Melton Borough Council who have provided the bulk of the funds for this project which has enabled our garden to become much more accessible and attractive to our guests, whilst providing various sensory stopping points to enjoy much-needed moments of tranquility in our beautiful rural setting.



TIME TO CELEBRATE!

The sun shone, music played and many scones were devoured at our garden party in August celebrating the support and achievements of our wonderful team of volunteers!

It was lovely to see so many enjoying the afternoon in our beautiful hospice garden and also recognising the dedication of those that have reached significant milestones in their volunteering journey with us, with another ten individuals receiving their 5 or 10 year badges.



THE VALUE OF A VOLUNTEER

"VOLUNTEERS DON'T GET PAID; NOT BECAUSE THEY'RE WORTHLESS BUT BECAUSE THEY'RE PRICELESS"

Sherry Anderson

We currently have around 120 active volunteers across the charity who collectively give us almost 20,000 hours of time each year!

We couldn't put a physical value on this because they are worth so much more than their time to us, however if we were to pay all of our volunteers for their time, our annual salary costs would increase by almost £250,000! Thanks to the generosity of our volunteers, it means that we can continue to provide our services without having this staggering additional cost to cover.

We recently asked our volunteers to tell us why they support Dove and here are some of their responses:



"IT'S A HAPPY PLACE TO VOLUNTEER - I LOVE BEING ABLE TO JOIN IN WITH ACTIVITIES AND INTERACTING WITH GUESTS AS PART OF A TEAM"

"IT'S NOT ABOUT WHAT YOU GIVE, IT'S ABOUT WHAT YOU GAIN... FRIENDSHIP, BEING PART OF A TEAM, FUN AND LAUGHTER!"

"I ENJOY MEETING NEW PEOPLE AND FEEL I AM GIVING SOMETHING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY"

"IT'S ONE OF THE FEW OCCASIONS IN LIFE WHERE YOU GET BACK MORE THAN YOU GIVE!"

"IT'S A WAY OF SAYING THANK YOU TO AN AMAZING GROUP OF PEOPLE WHOSE IMPACT ON MY WIFE'S AND MY LIFE IS BEYOND MERE WORDS"



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VOLUNTEERS

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: JOE

One of our regular volunteers, Joe, had a wonderful write up in June with Voluntary Action Leicestershire. It's a lovely read and really highlights just how vital our volunteers are to our services! Here is a very short snippet of the piece, the full article can be found at www.valonline.org.uk.

Having fully retired at 65, Joe sought a meaningful way to spend his time that wouldn't interfere with his other interests. Volunteering at Dove Cottage provided that perfect balance. What he enjoys most is making a positive contribution to a worthwhile, local charity. The daily conversations with guests, staff, and fellow volunteers, coupled with being part of a team, have given him a renewed



sense of being needed in a work-like environment. This role has given him a profound sense of purpose and the opportunity to add value, making his retirement transition smooth and fulfilling.

We asked Joe if he would recommend volunteering to others and he responded:

"Absolutely! There are so many different volunteer roles available, it is possible to find a role that either fits your skill set or gives you the opportunity to learn new skills."

If you are interested in supporting our hospice and can spare a few hours each week, please contact our Volunteer Facilitator Luisa to find out more via admin@dovecottage.org

"THERE ARE SO MANY DIFFERENT VOLUNTEER ROLES AVAILABLE, IT IS POSSIBLE TO FIND A ROLE THAT EITHER FITS YOUR SKILL SET OR GIVES YOU THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN NEW SKILLS."



MEET THE TRUSTEES

At the core of Dove Cottage is a dedicated group of individuals who guide, support, and champion our mission - our trustees. These passionate volunteers bring a wealth of experience from diverse backgrounds but are united by a shared commitment to making a difference in our community.

Each of our trustees play a vital role in shaping our strategy, protecting our finances, ensuring good governance, and helping us stay true to the values that Dove Cottage was founded on almost 30 years ago. Whether they're lending their expertise in finance, marketing, health & social care or business management, their leadership is vital to help us deliver our mission and support more of our local community.

We have had lots of new faces join our board of trustees over the past few months so thought it was a good time to introduce some of them to you! We asked each of them some quickfire questions – you can see the answers from two here and we'll meet more of our wonderful trustees in our next newsletter!

PAUL MARCUS

Where do you live? Great Glen, Leicestershire

What skills and experience are you hoping to bring to help Dove Cottage fulfil its vision? I believe I am a "people person" and our vision of providing compassionate and dignified care really resonates with me. From a practical perspective I worked my entire career in the property industry and gained broad management experience being a company director. I also have spent many years volunteering and fundraising for charities.

What do you love about being part of Dove Cottage? Dove Cottage cares! That is why I love being part of it. I am proud to be a small part of our journey, trying to enable our vision to maximise the quality of life for all of our guests.

If you could choose one of our hospice services to champion, what would it be and why? I would champion "Support" and Talking Therapies for our guests and carers. This is at the heart of what we do and hopefully really makes a difference.



DAVID FORD

Where do you live? Greetham, Rutland

What skills and experience are you hoping to bring to help Dove Cottage fulfil its vision? I am an experienced charity trustee with specialist financial and commercial knowledge. (ie fundraising, marketing and income generation) I hope to be able to help Dove Cottage sustain

itself in the months and years ahead

What do you love about being part of Dove Cottage? I love how the charity is able to help and support people who are having a really tough time.

If you could choose one of our hospice services to champion, what would it be and why? Bereavement Counselling because as person who was widowed at a fairly young age, I would have really appreciated someone independent to talk to and get advice from.



RETAIL

STATHERN



ASFORDBY



COTGRAVE



BOTTESFORD



SUPPORT OUR SHOPS!

Did you know that profits generated from sales of items in our charity shops go towards the continuing provision of services at our day hospice? Without support from the community, our shops wouldn't be able to survive and that would in-turn have a sad knock-on effect on our hospice services.

All of our four shops sell a great range of pre-loved items including clothing, shoes, bric-a-brac, jigsaws, books, toys and

games. With stock being updated daily, there is always something new to see and a bargain to be bagged!

Please consider us for all your festive shopping needs too - we have a fantastic range of brand-new festive greetings cards, gift wrap, 2026 diaries & calendars, alongside a plethora of Christmas jumpers, decorations and knick-knacks which make great 'Secret-Santa' gifts or stocking fillers!

What better way to spread joy this season by shopping preloved at Dove, with the knowledge that your money is continuing to support local families living with life-limiting conditions.

SHOP OPENING HOURS

All of our shops are open Monday-Saturday but opening times vary for each individual shop (see below).

STATHERN: Mon-Sat 10:30 – 4:30

BOTTESFORD: Mon-Sat 9:00 – 4:00

COTGRAVE: Mon-Sat 9:00 – 4:00

ASFORDBY: Mon-Fri 9:30 – 4:30, Sat 10:00 – 4:00

Please note that the last day of trading before Christmas for all of our shops will be Tuesday 23rd December, re-opening on Monday 5th January 2026.



RETAIL



of the downstairs area to create a spacious yet cosy area, with more items to browse. In addition to the vintage rail of clothing and accessories, a new 'book-corner' has been created with multiple shelves stacked with a huge range

of authors for every age and interest.

Customers to the shop can also enjoy our beautiful garden area and cosy up with a blanket in the outside shelter, dogs are welcome too!

STATHERN EXPANDS RANGE

Despite the sad closure of our tearoom last year, our Stathern Shop continues to thrive in its beautiful rural canal-side location.

The dedicated staff and volunteers have been busy beavering away to rearrange the stock, displays and layout



JUMBLE SALE

Thank you to everyone who supported our recent jumble sale at the hospice. Around 200 people popped by for a browse and the opportunity to bag a bargain, with the event raising over £1,300 for the hospice.

Are you registered for Gift Aid?

Gift Aid is a government scheme that lets charities claim tax relief on donations made to them.

Whether you are donating items to our shops or making a monetary donation, please ask if you're eligible for Gift Aid.

It means that we can raise 25% more towards our hospice services.

Thank you!

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FOLLOW US ON OUR WEBSITE WWW.DOVECOTTAGE.ORG

30 YEARS OF CARE

30 AND STILL GOING STRONG

2026 will mark 30 years since our hospice opened its doors to serve the local community.

We may be 30 years on, but our underpinning vision, mission and values remain the same. We still provide care and compassion. We still offer hope. We still support those who need it - not just to individuals, but their families too. Up to 100 each week.

When we opened our doors in 1996, it was as a result of a phenomenal combined effort - not only from the amazing team behind the hospice- but from you, our supporters. You helped us raise the money needed to open our doors for the first time, and you've continued to help us. When we needed to build an extension to meet the increased demand for our services, you were there. And again a few years later when we required a further extension, you stepped up. Even during the Covid pandemic when we sadly had to close our doors for over a year, we continued to be able to support families remotely, because of you.

We truly are a service for the community, supported by the community.

As we head into 2026, whilst we celebrate and reflect on how far we have come, and although our core values remain the same, the landscape in which we exist has changed dramatically. Government funding now covers less than 4% of our



running costs and is set to decline further, which means that in order for us to survive for the next 30 years, we once again need to call on your support.

We are asking for our community to consider arranging fundraising activities, challenges and events on our behalf throughout 2026 to help us reach our fundraising targets.

For details on how to get started please visit www.dovecottage.org/thirtymoreyears

Thank you for helping us to serve our community for the past 30 years. Please help us to make sure we are here for the next 30.

Thank you!

DOUBLE THE DIFFERENCE THIS DECEMBER!

WANT TO MAKE YOUR DONATION GO TWICE AS FAR?

Turn to the back cover for more details of how you can make your donation double in value at **NO EXTRA COST TO YOU!**

COMMUNITY FUNDRAISING



PANTOMIME PROCEEDS

Local theatre group **Kinoulton Players** have generously donated the proceeds from their 2025 pantomime to local charities, with Dove Cottage receiving a fantastic **£1000!** ...“Oh yes they did!”...

OUT AND ABOUT

You may have seen Dove Cottage staff and volunteers out and about at several local events recently, raising awareness of the charity and also vital funds to support the continuation of its hospice services.

Thank you to the organisers of these local events including (to name just a few) Belvoir Flower & Garden Show, Hickling Scarecrow Festival, Hose Antiques Fair, Belton Community Festival and Waltham Charter Fair for their support in helping us to raise awareness locally.

We are always looking for extra volunteers to help us spread the word at events such as these. The more people we have, the further we can spread our message! If you would like to join our team of Events volunteers please drop us a message to fundraising@dovecottage.org



BIRDBATH COMPETITION

Thank you to everyone who entered our 'Design a Birdbath' competition! We received lots of fantastic entries from a range of ages which was lovely to see!

Here is the winning design that has been beautifully brought to life in glass by **Floral Dene Designs**. Congratulations to our winner Cathy and our runner up- Jessica. Our thanks also go to **Brinvale Bird Foods** who not only kindly sponsored the winners prizes but also keep our wildlife friends well fed!



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COMMUNITY SUPPORT



CHARITY FOOTBALL MATCH

Local football club **The MFFC Vixens** arranged their first annual charity football fundraising match in July. Topped up with donations from the Royal Antedeluvian Order of Buffalos, the event raised **£500** which was donated to Dove as a tribute in memory of a good friend of the clubs who was a well-loved volunteer at the hospice.

VALE VOICES

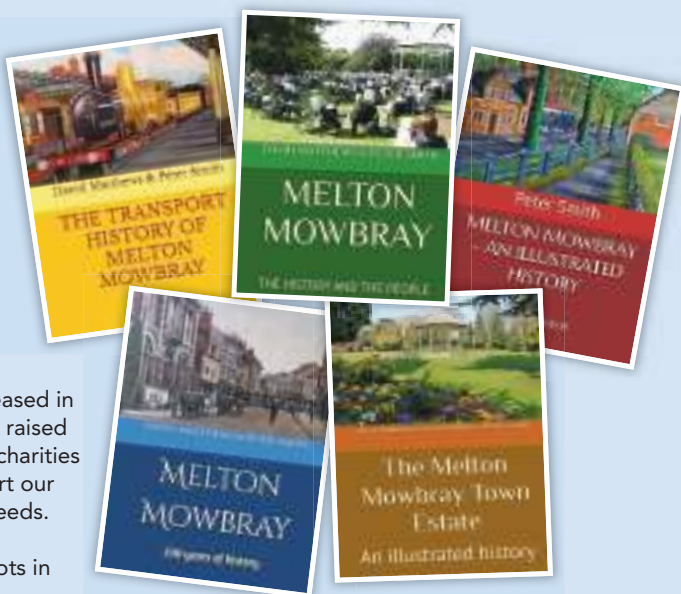
We were thrilled to be chosen by Bingham-based community choir **Vale Voices** as the beneficiary for their charity concert in the summer. The choir performed a variety of modern and classic songs to a packed audience and raised over **£400** towards hospice services.



HISTORY WITH A HEART

Local authors **David Matthews** and **Peter Smith** have kindly chosen to donate all proceeds from the future sales of their history books to Dove Cottage. The authors have published a series of five books on the history of Melton Mowbray, with a new addition due to be released in 2026. The pair have already raised over **£1,500** for other local charities and have decided to support our hospice with all future proceeds.

The books are currently available for sale via Foxy Lots in Melton.



FUNDING & CORPORATE SUPPORT



COMFY CREATIONS

The wonderful **Melton Crafty Ladies** have been very busy lately creating some amazing cushions to add a soft touch and pop of colour to our garden furniture. The cushions have all been hand-made with love by the talented group, who have also been selling some of their other creative masterpieces at local events and have donated £130 to Dove.

AUTUMN TREATS

We have been very grateful to receive some wonderful donations from local harvest festival collections this year.

Scaford Primary School have been a regular supporter of the hospice at this time of year, and their generous donation for 2025 was even more welcome than usual as it helped to re-stock most of our kitchen supplies that we sadly lost in the recent fire.

We also received a huge haul of apples, pears and other fresh produce from **RABI** which have been transformed by our chef into delicious crumbles and desserts for our guests.



Best of Belvoir SUMMER PRIZE DRAW

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO SUPPORTED OUR DRAW
THIS SUMMER – YOU'VE HELPED US RAISE A FANTASTIC

£1500 TOWARDS HOSPICE CARE

THIS WINTER WE'RE TRYING SOMETHING NEW – OUR BIG
GIVE CAMPAIGN – WHERE YOUR DONATION WILL BE
DOUBLED, AT NO EXTRA COST TO YOU!

(TURN TO THE BACK COVER FOR MORE DETAILS)



FOLLOW US ON OUR WEBSITE WWW.DOVECOTTAGE.ORG

COMMUNITY SUPPORT



SUMMER FUNDRAISING WEEKEND

Thank you to everyone who supported our fundraising weekend in July and even braved the rain during The Wind in the Willows! Whether you were attending or helping on the day we are truly thankful!

Together you have helped to raise over **£2500** which will go towards the delivery of our vital hospice services.

None of this could have happened without support on the day and for this we are eternally grateful to all of the volunteers from the Vale of Belvoir Lions for running the BBQ, and the Vale of Belvoir Rotary and Melton Belvoir Rotary for supporting with the car parking. Plus our team of staff & volunteers who donated so much of their time over the weekend to help.

The refreshments tent had a steady stream of visitors and we are especially grateful to our corporate supporter Belvoir Farm who generously sponsored our drinks over the whole weekend.

The Dog Show was a tremendous success and entirely coordinated by our friend of the hospice - Judith Daws.

Judith has been a long-standing supporter of the hospice in many ways over many years – but she deserves particular recognition for her unwavering dedication and support for her role in our popular dog show that has appeared alongside our summer fete over the past 10 years!

Judith has chosen year-on-year to take on the organisation and coordination of

this dog show (which is by no means a small feat!) and with the support of her loyal team of volunteers, has provided us with a wonderful addition to our events which has well and truly made it's name as a fond event in our fundraising calendar. In total she has helped us raise around **£3000** towards our hospice services!

Sadly, this summer has seen the last of the events led by Judith as she makes the emotional decision to step down from her dog-show role. We are so very grateful to Judith for her amazing support of our hospice in this way and will really miss having her involved in our summer events going forward.



BEST IN SHOW WINNERS FROM 2025.

Unfortunately we don't have a photo of Judith as she always opts to stay out of the limelight, but we couldn't let this issue pass without mentioning how grateful we are to her!

FUNDING & CORPORATE SUPPORT



RAGDALE HALL SPA

STYLISH SUPPORT

We were thrilled to receive **£750** from **Ragdale Hall Spa** which will be put towards the provision of our complementary therapies. The money was awarded as part of the 'Community Chest' campaign; an initiative which is now running in its 17th year supporting local charities, schools and community groups and has donated over **£160,000** to date.



CARE COST CONTRIBUTIONS

We were recently awarded **£2500** to support the costs of our hospice nursing team from **St James's Place Charitable Foundation**. The money was applied for under one of their grant schemes and specifically awarded to support the continued delivery of our Nursing Services.



LOCAL ACCOUNTANT HELPS SPREAD THE WORD

As most of you will know, our newsletter is mailed out twice a year to our supporter network. With postal costs rising each year, we were very grateful to receive contributions towards the cost of this from local company **Foxwise**.

Do you know of another company that could support our postal costs for our future mailings? Various sponsorship packages are available! Please get in touch with us via **fundraising@dovecottage.org** if you think you can help!

MEMORY MEADOW SIGNAGE

A huge thank you goes out to Gavin at **Rusty Metal Signage**, who has designed, produced and donated this beautiful sign for our Memory Meadow. The sign sits perfectly amongst the wonderful hand-made glass tributes to loved ones in our hospice garden. To find out more about this project and how you can dedicate one of our beautiful glass flowers to a loved one, visit **www.dovecottage.org/memory-meadow**



FOLLOW US ON OUR WEBSITE **WWW.DOVECOTTAGE.ORG**



Get ready to have your Christmas donations doubled!

2nd - 9th December 2025

Save the date!

We'd like to say a huge thanks
to Belvoir Farm Drinks and
Reed Foundation for
supporting our campaign!



We're taking part in Big Give's Christmas Challenge, a campaign which enables small charities like us to really boost our fundraising, by giving us the opportunity to get all monies raised **DOUBLED** by match funding.

Every £1 that is raised during this campaign week will be matched by our generous match funders, meaning that every £1 donated will be worth £2 to us!

With your help, we hope to raise £6500 of online donations, which when matched - will mean we will have reached our total of **£13,000!**

Donations need to be made directly to our campaign page between **2nd - 9th December** to count towards our target. Scan the QR code to take you straight there!

If you have any questions about the campaign or would like further info please call Dora or Claire on 01949 860303 or visit our website www.dovecottage.org/biggive



**TO DONATE VIA OUR
CAMPAIGN PAGE GO TO: <https://bit.ly/3WIRvwc>**