

NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2026



**FROM
THIS...**

**...TO
THIS**

30 YEARS OF DOVE COTTAGE

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



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30 YEARS OF CARE: A JOURNEY THROUGH OUR HISTORY

This year marks an incredible milestone as we celebrate **30 years of Dove Cottage Day Hospice**. From humble beginnings, our story has been shaped by unwavering dedication, phenomenal generosity and a community-centred approach to providing care and support to local families living with life-limiting conditions.

Following a vision from our founder **Chris Gatfield**, a mammoth 18 months of preparation and building works began to develop a derelict farm building which had been generously donated to our cause, along with an initial £10,000.



Dove Cottage Day Hospice first opened its doors to support local families on **5th December 1996**.

Opening for just **two days each week** and welcoming **eight patients each day**, the hospice was small in scale but had a powerful vision: to offer dignity, comfort, and support to those who need it most.

News of the hospice spread fast, and soon the demand for care and



support exceeded our capabilities which led to the purchase of the **first disabled-access vehicle** in **1998**, enabling us to reach more of those who needed our care. Increased demand for our services also meant that we needed a bigger building.



In **2000**, a community-led campaign by the Melton Times funded our **first building extension**, enabling us to increase our capacity – offering a larger lounge area, more toilets and a bigger kitchen.

Continued increased demand meant

that by **2005**, a **second extension** was required, and offered improved accessibility with **automatic doors** and space for larger electric wheelchairs. The reception area was developed to





2009

too, opening **4 days per week** and welcoming up to **14 patients each day**.

Fast-forward to **2020** and the **Covid-19 pandemic**. Government regulations meant that we were forced to close our doors to in-person care, however thanks to the dedication of our staff and volunteers we continued

incorporate more office space and a 'sun-room' was built to make the most of the beautiful views across the vale.

In addition to our growing building, we also expanded our service offering and in **2006**, introduced **complementary therapy treatments** which enhanced the existing holistic and spiritual support on offer.

2009 saw the opening of our **tearoom** and **first charity shop**. Renovated from another redundant farm building, the shop still remains today at its picturesque canal-side setting not far from the hospice in Sathern.

Further shops were opened in neighbouring villages of **Bottesford** and **Cotgrave** in **2011**, with a premises in **Melton Mowbray** following in **2015** and our newest shop in **Asfordby** in **2019**.

In **2013**, we celebrated the completion of our **final major extension**. This brought a beautiful **octagonal garden room**, dedicated **therapy suites**, and enhanced **accessible bathroom facilities**. The increased space that this extension provided meant that we could increase our capacity

to offer virtual and telephone support to those that requested it. Our **online dementia-support group** was launched to ensure that we could continue to offer a friendly-ear to local carers at such a worrying time.

Thanks to various government funding schemes, we were able to re-open our doors in **June 2021**, but in a reduced capacity and adhering to the 'social-distancing' regulations that were still in force across the country.

In **2022** our online dementia support group was replaced by our **dementia home-visiting service** which is still going strong today offering vital respite for carers in our community.

2013



In **March 2023** Chris Gatfield retired from her role as CEO after 27 years and handed the reins over to **Dan Smeeton**. At the same time, the trustees of Dove Cottage finalised an agreement to merge with local hospice **LOROS**. This new structure meant that Dove could retain its

own identity and charity status, still generating its own income, but with the added protection of being part of a larger group and



HOSPICE

benefitting from shared resources, expertise and maintenance contracts etc.

2024 saw a huge regeneration project of our **hospice garden** to make it more accessible, introducing a circular path and sensory walk to encourage patients to make the most of the beautiful rural setting.

In **2025** we converted one of our existing therapy rooms into a professional hairdressing salon, increasing our holistic offering further. We also introduced a dedicated **counselling service** and more recently welcomed the addition of various **support groups** focussing on carers and bereaved family members. Our **Men's Shed** group launched in **June 2026** offering a men-only environment to encourage discussions surrounding male mental health.

So here we are now in 2026. Our journey is one of remarkable progress, from caring for just a handful of patients to supporting

2024



2024

up to 100 families each week alongside an army of 120 volunteers—we have become a vital part of the community. Our current service offering looks somewhat different to when we first opened our doors three decades ago (check out our

brand new website to see an overview of our current offering)

but the core values remain the same. We continue to provide care and support to those that need it most.

Thank you to everyone - **staff, volunteers and supporters** - who have been part of our story. Together, we look forward to continuing this legacy of care for many years to come.



REWARDING RURAL ROOTS



We were very proud to be nominated for an award from the RCC in June this year.

These awards are an opportunity to celebrate and reward outstanding people, projects, and groups that uplift our rural communities. Much like a rural BAFTA this was an evening celebrating inspirational people and groups delivering projects and services that are making a difference to our rural communities.

We are thrilled to announce that we were awarded 'Runner Up' for the 'Community Wellbeing' category.

HOSPICE HERO SALLY HANGS UP HER UNIFORM

Earlier this year we said a fond farewell to our wonderful nurse Sally as she retired after more than 20 years at Dove Cottage.

Sally was a core member of our team, performing a range of duties including clinical care, advanced care planning, bereavement services and holistic support. Over the years she has helped hundreds of families to navigate their life-limiting diagnoses together. In recognition of her outstanding contribution to nursing during her career, Sally was also honoured with the prestigious Cavell Star Award.

When asked about what she loved about working at Dove, Sally said that the calm, unhurried environment allowed staff to truly listen and connect with guests, making a meaningful difference to their wellbeing. "It is amazing and inspiring work," she said. "Sometimes it is the smallest things, a kind word, a hug, or simply sitting together with a cup of tea, that matter most."

You can see a full interview with Sally talking about her time at Dove on our YouTube channel:

www.youtube.com/@DoveCottageHospice/videos

Thank you Sally for your amazing time at Dove - you will always be a star to us!





CONNECTED. SUPPORTED. EMPOWERED.

It has been proven that peer support groups play a vital role in helping individuals feel understood, connected, and less alone during difficult times. By bringing together people who share similar experiences or challenges, they create a safe space for open communication, emotional support, and practical advice.

'Talking therapies' such as these groups can reduce feelings of isolation, boost confidence, and encourage personal growth, making it easier for people to cope and move forward in a positive way.

At Dove Cottage we now offer a range of groups that are open to anyone living locally who feels that they may benefit.

Carer Support Group – Mondays 1.30pm – 3pm

Bereavement Support Group (timings TBC)

Men's Shed – Thursdays 10am – 12pm

For more information visit our website and search for '**support groups**'.

SUPPORT FOR EVERYONE, AT EVERY STAGE OF YOUR JOURNEY

Did you know that we offer a counselling service? Whether you are facing a life-limiting condition yourself, caring for someone close to you, or a family member who simply needs space to breathe; our fully trained counsellors are here for you.

Sometimes the most important thing is simply being heard. We offer a quiet, confidential space to talk about whatever is on your mind be it your condition, your relationships, your fears, or just the ordinary things that have

become harder. You don't need to have a specific problem, and there's no right or wrong way to use the time.

Alongside emotional support, we can help point you towards other support that you may feel is right for you, including other counselling provision, spiritual care, community support, or other organisations that can help with specific needs.

To find out more visit our brand new website www.dovecottage.org and search for

'counselling'.





HIRE OUR HOSPICE!

Did you know that we are now offering our hospice spaces for private hire?

Our building offers calm and accessible spaces available for hire by external organisations and individuals. Located within the beautiful rural Vale of Belvoir, our rooms are ideal for meetings, training sessions, wellbeing activities, creative groups, special appointments or even family celebrations.

We have several rooms available for private hire for individuals, groups and businesses on weekday evenings and all day on a Friday, Saturday or Sunday.

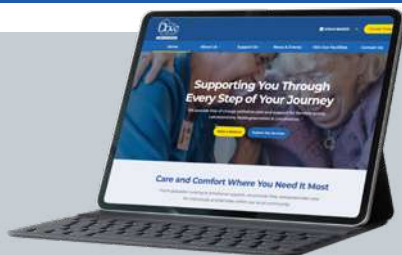
Rooms include:

- Hairdressing salon
- Complementary therapy/Beauty treatment room
- Meeting space
- Large outside garden

With extensive free parking on site, drinks station, mini fridge and free Wifi access, our hospice building offers the perfect alternative to traditional corporate rooms for hire.

By choosing to hire our facilities, you are also supporting the vital work of our hospice, with all income reinvested into patient care and family support.

More information and photographs can be found on our website www.dovecottage.org/hire-our-facilities for additional details, costs and availability please email dan@dovecottage.org



NEW-LOOK WEBSITE

We are delighted to announce the launch of our brand-new website, designed to provide a fresh, accessible and informative online experience for patients, families and the wider community.

Developed by digital specialists **Dotwall**, the new site combines modern design with user-friendly functionality. It also features a stunning collection of new imagery captured by **Chris Bunce Photography**, offering a warm and authentic insight into our hospice environment.

The website gives a comprehensive overview of service offerings at the hospice, helping visitors better understand the support on offer. With an easy to navigate 'explore our services' and search facility, visitors to the site can quickly and simply find information and contact details regarding every element of our hospice, including how to support our work or make a donation.

The new platform also serves as a central portal for referral enquiries, making it simpler for healthcare professionals, patients and families to get in touch and begin the process of accessing care. Alongside this, it hosts a wide range of useful resources and signposting to other providers to support those navigating life-limiting conditions.

Take a look for yourself by visiting www.dovecottage.org



VOLUNTEERS

MEET OUR TRUSTEES

As you will know, Dove Cottage is governed by a board of trustees. These individuals volunteer their time and expertise to shape our strategy, protect our finances, ensure good governance, and help us stay true to the values that Dove Cottage was founded on 30 years ago. Following on from the feature in our winter issue, we'd like to introduce you to our Chair of Trustees.

Name: Jack Adlam

Where do you live?

Shelford, Nottinghamshire

What skills and experience are you hoping to bring to help Dove Cottage fulfil its vision?

I have worked in the NHS for more than 16 years, including in senior leadership roles. Throughout my career, communication, engagement and relationship building have been at the heart of what I do. I hope to combine those skills with my passion for supporting communities, to help Dove Cottage achieve its ambitions and continue its life-changing work for patients, families and carers.

What do you love about being part of Dove Cottage?

Being part of an organisation that makes such a difference to people's lives, in the community where I grew up, is incredibly special.

If you could choose one of our hospice services to champion, what would it be and why?

Men's Shed, because historically, hospices have found it harder to reach men who are living with, caring for someone with, or grieving the loss of a person with a life-limiting illness. Our Men's Shed supports both mental and physical wellbeing and helps tackle isolation, which can have such a profound impact on people's lives.



AWARD-WINNING VOLUNTEER

We nominated one of our longest-standing volunteers (Chris) for an "Order of Mercy Award" earlier this year, in acknowledgment of her continued dedication, commitment and support to our hospice over the past 21 years.

We are delighted to announce that she was selected by the judging panel to receive one of only a handful of awards that are presented nationally each year in recognition of individuals "distinguished voluntary work over many years"

In one of our guests words: "We all love Chris because she is so jolly and happy and likes to have fun. But most of all we love her because she makes a jolly good cup of tea! (very important!)"

Congratulations Chris! Thank you for all the wonderful support you have given Dove over so many years!



CAN YOU GIVE YOUR TIME?

Dove Cottage has been providing compassionate care for hundreds of families since 1996, but we couldn't have got where we are today without the support of our dedicated and loyal volunteers. We currently have over 120 individuals who regularly give their time to share their skills and support in a variety of meaningful ways.

In order to support more families, we are currently looking to recruit additional volunteers to support in the following areas:

Chaplaincy - Offering spiritual care, comfort and a listening ear to patients and their loved ones, regardless of faith or belief.

Hairdressing - Providing a simple but powerful boost to patients' wellbeing through hair care and styling, helping them feel more like themselves.

Whether you can spare a few hours a month or more, we'd love to hear from you! Please contact our Volunteer Facilitator Luisa on **01949 860303** or email admin@dovecottage.org for more information.

HELP OUR SHOPS GET SOCIAL...

Each of our charity shops now has its own Facebook page, making it easier for us to share updates that are relevant to your local community. From new arrivals to special offers and shop news, our pages are the best way to keep in touch with what is happening near you. Scan the QR codes above to follow one shop, or all of them and help us spread the word!



BARGAINS BAGGED!

A huge thank you to everyone who supported our **Spring Jumble Sale**. We had 47 bargain hunters queuing before 9am and welcomed more than 150 visitors in total, raising over **£1500** towards hospice services!

Save the date for our next sale which will be held at a new venue in Melton Mowbray on **31st October 2026**. Keep an eye on our Facebook pages for more details nearer the time!

TIME FOR A CUPPA?

We are delighted to be able to offer refreshments and basic snacks at our Stathern shop thanks to our new coffee machine which was purchased with generous donations raised by local community groups Hosenbury & Harby Harlequins.

Whether you are walking the dog, cycling the canal or simply enjoying a browse in our charity shop, you are very welcome to take a break in our garden and make use of the picnic benches. It is the perfect spot for a well-earned rest whilst supporting a local charity.



RETAIL

UNRAVEL YOUR CREATIVITY

We're creating something special in our **Bottesford, Asfordby and Cotgrave shops**, now stocked to the brim with a yarn-tastic range of wool from Cygnet Yarns at prices that won't *unravel* your budget. Whether you're *casting* on a brand-new project, *purling* together your stash, or simply looking to *spin up* some inspiration, you're sure to find the perfect *thread* to get those creative needles clicking. And to help you *knit it all together*, you can also explore a pattern-lover's paradise at Cygnet Yarns' website with plenty of free knitting and crochet designs to keep your ideas looping along! www.cygnetyarns.com/patterns

FANTASTIC FEEDBACK

We recently asked our charity shop customers what they love most about shopping with us, and your answers simply made us proud! The top words you



used were: **FRIENDLY, GREAT, GOOD, COMMUNITY** and **LOVELY**. The feedback means so much to our shop teams and volunteers who work so hard to create a welcoming place for you to browse, donate, shop sustainably and support local hospice care. If you have a favourite Dove shop story, bargain find or kind word for our teams, we would love to hear it! Email tim@dovecottage.org

OPEN ALL HOURS

You can now support **Dove Cottage 24/7** through our online stores. We carefully handpick and curate donated items for Vinted and eBay, with more than 500 vintage, new and high-quality pieces regularly available. It is a great way to shop sustainably, find something special and support free hospice care for local families even when our shop doors are closed.

You can find our online shops by searching on our website.

HOME-GROWN GOODNESS AT STATHERN

There is plenty happening behind the scenes at our **Stathern shop**. Andrew, one of our newest volunteers, has been working his green-fingered magic in the polytunnel, and we are hoping for a bumper harvest later in the year. When our fresh vegetables are ready to buy, we will let you know through our Facebook pages — so keep an eye out for updates and seasonal produce grown with care.

The first haul were these lovely lettuces that were immediately purchased by a group of customers who took them home, washed and bagged them to distribute to less-mobile residents in an over-55s living complex!



COMMUNITY SUPPORT



HELP SUSTAIN OUR HOSPICE FOR THE NEXT 30 YEARS



Every day, Dove Cottage Day Hospice provides compassionate care and support to local families when they need it most. Yet, like many hospices across the UK, we are facing growing financial pressures with NHS funding covering less than 4% of the true cost of delivering our services.

That means that we rely on the generosity of our community to raise the remaining 96% of our costs...or in other words...the care we provide depends on local people

standing with us and helping to secure our future.

By making a regular monthly donation, you can provide the sustainable funding that allows us to plan ahead, support more families, and ensure that hospice

care remains available for everyone who needs it, now and in the years to come.

A small gift each month can make a lasting difference. Please become a regular supporter today and help us continue delivering local, compassionate hospice care in our community.



To sign up for a regular monthly donation visit our website
www.dovecottage.org/donate



FOLLOW US ON OUR WEBSITE WWW.DOVECOTTAGE.ORG

COMMUNITY SUPPORT



GOLF CLUB DRIVE SUPPORT FOR DOVE

Members of the local golf club at **Stanton On The Wolds** have been *swinging* into action for local hospice care after the captains of the club chose us as their Charity of the Year for 2025/26.

A variety of fundraising activities have been organised throughout the year, including coffee mornings, shopping events, charity golf days and various recycling schemes which have raised an amazing total of **£13,609!**

The funds raised will help us to *drive* compassionate care *straight down the fairway* to our guests and carers. From the *first tee* to the *final putt*, we are so grateful to you all for a magnificent *winning round!*



YOUNG ARTISTS

Pupils at **Bottesford C of E Primary School** have been getting creative in the name of charity this term. The pupils in Ash class were each tasked with painting a portrait of themselves as a king or queen, which were then exhibited in an 'art gallery' afternoon in



the school hall. Parents were invited to view the gallery and 'bid' on their child's artwork. All monies raised from the gallery and the cake sale (which also took place on the day) were donated to Dove and totalled a fantastic **£313.96!**



CRAFTY CREATION

The wonderful **Crafty Ladies** have put their creative skills into action for us again and designed an amazing wall hanging to brighten up our hospice walls. The 3D

sensory scene has been created using a variety of techniques including crochet, embroidery, applique and beading, and depicts a colourful array of wildlife including an intricate red kite delicately crafted from micro-beads! The piece really adds colour to the hospice and brings a smile to everyone who sees it! Thank you!

CORPORATE SUPPORT



WE'RE OVER THE (BLUE) MOON!

A key event in our 30th year so far has been our Blue Moon Ball. Held on the weekend of the Blue Moon in May, we welcomed supporters from within our community to recognise and celebrate the journey that Dove has been on over the past three decades.

In addition to celebrating with our existing network, the event was an opportunity to engage with a wider network of corporate contacts and proved to be a fantastic evening.

Guests enjoyed delicious food, live music and fundraising fun including an '80s/90s' music game, mystery envelopes and a thrilling in-person auction. The event was a huge success and we are delighted

to announce that it raised an incredible **£10,600** towards hospice services.

The success of this event simply would not have been possible without the generous donations and support of the amazing businesses and individuals that sponsored or made donations on the night, and for that we are truly grateful.

JOIN OUR CLUB!

We're launching an exciting scheme for local businesses to connect with like-minded organisations, raise their profiles and demonstrate their commitment to giving back whilst creating a lasting local impact.

Join Dove Cottage Business Club and become part of a network of local businesses making a real difference in our community.

To find out more about our corporate partnerships visit our website and search for 'corporate'.



FOLLOW US ON OUR WEBSITE WWW.DOVECOTTAGE.ORG

CORPORATE SUPPORT

BIG GIVE = BIGGER RESULT!

Our **Big Give Christmas Challenge** took place before Christmas and thanks to generous contributions from the public and match-funding from the **Reed Foundation** and **Belvoir Farm** we raised a massive **£22,834**, smashing our original target by over 65%!

The Big Give Christmas Challenge is a digital campaign run annually to enable charities like us harness the power of community and match-funding. We've applied to participate in the campaign again this year and are hoping to raise enough money to fund one of our hospice nurses for a year! As it is a digital campaign, donations need to be received online directly onto our campaign page. To receive more details about how you can help support this campaign later in the year, please sign up to our mailing list via our website.



KEEPING OUR WHEELS TURNING

Thank you so much to **Digital Deadline** who have kindly gifted us the branding of our new vehicle! Our accessible transport service is run by a team of dedicated volunteers and gives our patients the opportunity to travel to and from Dove independently of their carers. Give us a toot if you see one of our vehicles out and about!



SIGNAGE

We'd like to give a huge shout out to **AR Signs Ltd** in Cotgrave for supplying us with some fantastic new signage around our hospice.

The signage was funded from the pot of money that Hospice UK awarded



to hospices for capital expenditure, and the team at AR signs kindly produced and installed them at a discounted rate. The team at AR signs also very generously provided all of the printing requirements for our Blue Moon Ball for free, helping us to ensure that more of our proceeds from the event went directly back into hospice care!

SAMWORTHS

We are so honoured to have been generously supported by local company **Samworth Brothers** through various donations and support with our activities over the past few months. They sent volunteers to help with washing-up and gift-wrapping at our christmas parties and have donated some amazing prizes for use at our fundraising events. The team at the **Old Pork Pie Shoppe** created an impressive 4.5kg celebratory pork pie in honour of our 30th Anniversary, which was auctioned at our Blue Moon Ball and to top it all off, **Kettleby Foods** chose us as the beneficiary of an incredible **£2,400** donation! Thank you so much!



FUNDING SUPPORT

GAMES GALORE!

Huge thanks to **Duncan & Topliss Foundation** for their donation towards the provision of a selection of board games and activities to enhance the wellbeing of our patients. We take such pride in providing person-centred holistic palliative care, and this selection of activities was chosen by our current patients to ensure that we continue to meet individual needs.



TRUMPTON APPEAL

We were honoured to be chosen as one of the many local causes that are supported by the funds raised by Trumpton each year. The presentation ceremony in March was an evening full of heartwarming stories and worthy causes and we were delighted to receive a cheque for **£300**. Thank you!



RAGDALE SUPPORTS RELAXATION!

Now in its 18th year we were delighted to be selected as one of the beneficiaries of the **Ragdale Hall & Melton Times Community Chest fund**. We were thrilled to receive a cheque for **£500** which will support our Complementary Therapy Service, enabling our patients and carers to indulge in a range of holistic and wellbeing treatments in our bespoke therapy suites.



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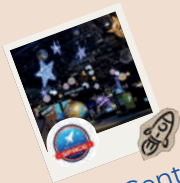
“
MAKING

Memories

”
PRIZE DRAW 2026



Pottery
painting
experience



Space Centre
Tickets



'Best of Belvoir'
hamper



Daltons 125
Pantomime
tickets



Gardening
hamper



Baking
bonanza

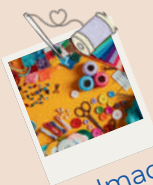
TOP PRIZE:
**£100
CASH!**



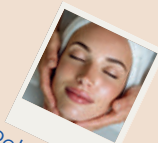
Teddy Bears
Picnic



'Furry friends'
pamper hamper



Handmade
from the Heart



Relaxation
hamper



Bee Happy

TICKETS
**£1
EACH**

(Closing date 21/8/26)



Let Me
Entertain You

All profits support local hospice care

Available to buy from our charity shops, hospice and
online via our website www.dovecottage.org