



SPRING NEWSLETTER 2024



SPRING ...IS IN THE AIR

at Youth Cancer Trust as we look forward to our guests arriving for holidays over the Easter period.

Our February holiday guests were rosy cheeked and enjoyed hearty breakfasts during a fun - filled but slightly drizzly holiday at Manor Farm Barn. The weather didn't stop them making the most of all that was on offer.

Our online programme has been busy as we continue our monthly themes centred around the 5 steps to wellbeing. We've also embraced the theme of love and friendship with our Valentine's Pizza Night and our very own Youth Cancer Trust post box.

[Read on to find out more.](#)



CHARITY NEWS

In 2023 we made the difficult decision to transition from Tracy Ann House in Bournemouth, our base for over 25 years, to a new site at Manor Farm Barn in Dewlish. Hosting 3 trial weeks during the year, staff worked closely with our Youth Ambassadors and invited guests, to settle into our new premises, ensure our guests' needs are catered for, and to prepare an exciting range of activities.

In 2024 we are pleased to officially open our doors and welcome guests to enjoy therapeutic wellbeing holidays, running throughout the year, during the Dorset school holidays.

We have been welcomed by the local community and have been building new partnerships, whilst maintaining links with our Bournemouth supporters. We are very grateful to everyone that has been part of our journey so far.



Under starters orders!

WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO

Gatsby Ball

On 9th December Youth Cancer Trust and Jack Kings Beach Residence hosted a Gatsby Ball at the Royal Bath Hotel, Bournemouth.

The event was a roaring success, with decadent decorations thanks to volunteer Elisa Savioli, a delicious three course Christmas meal and superb dance performances from Marek Lynch and Georgia Damalidou and our Gatsby dance group led by Yana Mira.

Guests arrived in all their finery and enjoyed a 20's themed photo session by JB Luxe Images. [View here.](#)

Everyone then danced away to the lively beats of Swing Unlimited Big Band. [Check them out here.](#)

We'd like to say a really big thank you to everyone that worked hard to create such a wonderful evening. In particular Jack who has hosted many events and socials for us over the years, raising money and awareness for our cause.



Reindeer Race

At the start of the festive season, the Youth Cancer Trust team were joined by family members and holiday guests to take part in a festive fundraiser for the charity. Filmed at our new holiday site of Manor Farm Barn, our YCT reindeer polished their antlers, and led by Rudolph's shining nose, they raced down the field, towards the finish line.

We asked our supporters to make a small donation to guess the winner and be entered into our prize draw. Congratulations to our lucky winner Dan Nokes.

You can watch the race and find out who was the fastest reindeer [here.](#)

We raised £761. Thanks to everyone that took part.

Values Meeting

In November we hosted a Values Meeting, for staff, Youth Ambassadors and Trustees to discuss the charity's core values.

Inclusion, friendship and belonging were key words that many of our young people spoke about when asked to share their thoughts about Youth Cancer Trust Holidays.

They also spoke about being accepted, feeling safe and being around people that understand, without having to explain anything. The Trust will continue to work closely with our guests to ensure we are meeting their needs and expectations by providing a high quality service.



OUR FIRST HOLIDAY OF 2024

By Laura, our Holidays Programme Co-ordinator.

The team were incredibly excited about opening the doors of Manor Farm Barn to our first guests of 2024. After long journeys from Aberdeen, Leeds, London and the Midlands, the group soon settled into making the most of all the house has to offer, including getting on the karaoke straight after dinner!

A few of the group had already met via their hospital. Some had even met on Tik Tok and thought they would never meet in real life, so it was wonderful to be able to create the opportunity for them to be together in person.

Despite the seasonal weather, we donned our wellies and raincoats and enjoyed getting muddy on an Illumination walk around Blue Pool, a tour of the Booth's dairy farm and petting horses at the Clarkes farm.

But wellies were not needed for a relaxation pamper session with Denise, followed by a Valentine's lunch at Dragonfly restaurant in Dorchester. There was even time to squeeze in some retail therapy.

These guests had experienced the extra challenges of having a diagnosis and treatment through Covid times and they all said how much this break was needed. The space to talk about their experiences, providing support to each other physically and emotionally was evident, along with the constant laughter, silliness and singing that this group had in bucket loads.

There are so many people to thank, but we must say a big thank you to the team at Pixie (Dorset Wellbeing) who gave us an incredible day of crafting at their hub using the laser cutter and giving our guests experiences they just wouldn't have normally.

" You've really gave me and I'm sure everyone else the break and laughter we have been really needing"

Paige 21 Leeds



" Stays like this are what makes having cancer a little better (if that's possible!)"

Mollie (19) Hull



Holiday spaces are still available for 2024. Please complete our enquiry form [here](#)



ONLINE PROGRAMME

Move More

In our online programme we pick a different theme each month to focus our content around. Over the last few months we've been looking at the 5 Steps to wellbeing to support mental health. Like many, we are starting the year with a goal to be more active.



Staff and guests have been discussing their tips and ideas, offering support and encouragement to each other.

We've also been doing some work with Helen Murray from Move Against Cancer charity. In a recorded discussion, we asked her some of the key questions that our guests have been asking about how to exercise safely, stay motivated and make it enjoyable.

The video is available for our guests to watch in their own time, but we also hosted a zoom session in which we watched and discussed it together.

Valentine's Pizza Night

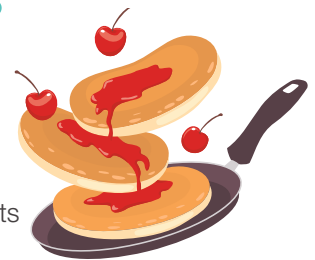


Our popular pizza night was back for Valentine's weekend. Guests receive their pizza kit by post, then we met via Zoom to cook and eat them together.

This year the pizza kits were created by Peppina Sicilian Bakery in Poundbury. Peppina is located in the same building as our new office base and is perfectly located for our staff team to call in for a coffee.

Pancakes

Online guests joined together via Zoom for our pancake night social. We also managed to link up with our holiday guests at Manor Farm Barn.



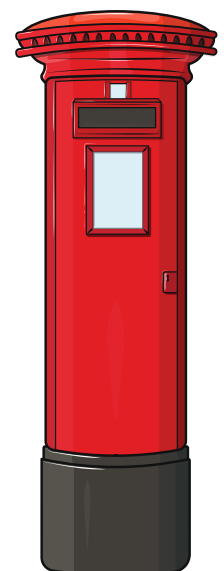
The pancake flipping competition was on, as staff and guests joined in for the annual challenge. This year, we managed to avoid any ending up on the floor- or the ceiling!

Post Box

To keep in with our February theme of 'connect', we created our own YCT Post box throughout the month for guests to share friendship cards and letters with each other.

Guests sent their messages into the team who gathered them up and sent them out randomly to everyone that had signed up to receive one.

Everyone enjoyed receiving a special message through the post and the chance to make a new connection.





▶ OUT AND ABOUT

Christmas Craft Fayres

We would like to thank Castle View Care Home in Poundbury for inviting us to join in their Christmas Fayre where we were able to sell our crafts made by guests and staff. This was followed by having a spot at the Poundbury Christmas Market. This was most definitely the coldest day of 2023 but we were grateful to have the opportunity to join our local community raising awareness of what we do.

5K Your Way

On 27th January staff and supporters joined the 5K Your Way run in Poundbury, continuing our Move More theme for the month.



5K Your Way is an initiative by MOVE Against Cancer. They link up with Park Runs across the world [here](#).

It's organised by people who have been affected by cancer, including health professionals, friends and families as well as patients themselves.

YCT's Laura is an Ambassador for the event, inviting people to join in and give it a go. As well as providing support and encouragement for those that do. She herself joined to be around other people for motivation, community and support.

You can walk and chat, run, or just turn up for a cup of tea and to meet others in a supportive environment.

Park runs always have volunteer tail walkers so you will never be last, there is always someone there to support you through it and you can go at your own pace.

▶ UPCOMING EVENTS

Dance Beats Cancer



Our sell out Dance Beats Cancer show is back for its 6th year. This year we welcome a new host, popular local DJ, Radio/TV host and entertainer, Allan Turner Ward.

The annual show invites first time performers to share the stage with seasoned pros in a warm and friendly family event, deeply rooted in community and bringing people together.

The Dance Beats Cancer community has been building since 2017 when the team released an award-winning piece of dance for film. The project was a collaboration between Youth Cancer Trust and Fraser Freeze with Ego Media, MBN Arts, Ashley Knight and hundreds of local and professional performers

The annual show attracts a large following of supporters and dance lovers all welcomed to be part of our DBC community.

Tickets: £6 adults, £3 U12 available on the door and Eventbrite [here](#).
Enquiries: wendy@yct.org.uk

If you are able to volunteer or donate a raffle prize please contact Wendy.



STAFF

INTRODUCING ...JOSH BOOTH



Josh and his family own the beautiful farmhouse we rent out for Youth Cancer Trust holidays and Josh was keen to get more involved with the charity outside of his work on the dairy farm.

Thrown in at the deep end, Josh joined the team last May and helped Laura and Jo host the three trial weeks in 2023.

His debut holiday season saw him dressed up in a crocodile suit and capsize a raft (or was that Laura and Jo?). He also dressed up as a Reindeer for a fundraiser!

Since then, he has been an integral part of the team, getting to know all the guests on arrival, taking them on tours to see the calves and milking parlour, as well as rolling up his sleeves to do the washing up!

On the February holiday we asked the guests to interview him to see how he was finding life in the Youth Cancer Trust family.

How have your first four holidays with Youth Cancer Trust been?

Every group has been different and varied but everyone has been super nice. It's been quite a humbling experience, it's been inspiring hearing everyone's stories.

Why do you want to help people like us?

We are very lucky to have had this farm in our family for many generations and it feels like a very small thing we/I can offer to which may make a small difference to you guys.

Tell us a bit about the farm?

The farm is on 600 acres and we have a herd of over 300 cows we milk twice a day, and around 300 calves and young stock. There are also 2 alpacas, 40 wandering chickens, 2 donkeys and a few sheep.

What are your hobbies outside of farming?

Sport - rugby in particular, but I am broken from it now! I still like playing village Cricket.



GUESTS

To tie in with our theme ‘Move More’ we asked our guests to share their stories and experiences of exercise and movement after treatment.

LEILA'S STORY

THIS IS “

From a young age I enjoyed keeping active whether through sport or normal day to day activities. At school I played a variety of sports like running, basketball, badminton and athletics. I loved exploring the outdoors with my friends running and walking for long hours.



When I was diagnosed with Leukaemia at the age of thirteen everything changed. I could no longer take part in active sport because of fatigue and I had a central line which made playing any contact sport impossible. I was encouraged to follow physiotherapy exercises to strengthen my muscles, but I struggled with this because I was in denial about what was happening to me.

The treatment I received made my muscles weak and tense resulting in the use of a wheelchair. I remember going to physiotherapy as an outpatient. The physiotherapists made sure that every session was fun for me, because they knew I was a teenager being treated for cancer, trying to get through the treatment.

When I finished treatment getting back to normal was important so I started playing sports at school. I soon realised that I wasn't like my normal peers, my muscles were weak and I couldn't keep up with everyone else. I started to feel like I couldn't find an activity that would suit my needs so I started to explore a variety of activities like climbing, badminton and basketball. I realised that I couldn't keep up, even playing in small groups for fun was a lot. At the same time I was being diagnosed with more late effects from my treatment and they were having a massive effect on my body.

I was diagnosed with a lot of conditions. The one that affected my mobility was called Avascular Necrosis. The condition means the blood supply to the bone is cut off leading to bone death.

My hips were mainly affected so I had to have surgery to avoid my hips collapsing. After surgery I had to come to terms with my mobility change, I no longer had the range of motion I had in my left hip and the pain had increased.

I could no longer enjoy the activities that I was trying so hard to keep up with. When something is taken from you without your control you try your best to not give up, even if it isn't the best choice.

I continued to try activities that were not suitable, partly because I had beaten cancer and I wanted to live again, and partly because I didn't want to give up. I was diagnosed with more side effects including more AVN. My hips, knees, tibia, femurs, ankles and shoulders were all affected.





A big thank you!

GUESTS

Leila's Story (cont'd)

For a while I thought I couldn't participate in any form of activity. I tried swimming but due to a weakened immunity I kept picking up infections.

I was in pain all the time and I became more reliant on a wheelchair but didn't want to accept this so I avoided socialising and going out.

My previous experience of using a wheelchair during my cancer treatment also made me more reluctant to use one because I felt like if I gave in I was giving up. I realised that if I used a wheelchair I would more likely go out and spend longer outdoors. Self propelling my wheelchair was improving my cardio fitness as well as increasing my muscle strength.

I was frustrated looking for an activity that I could enjoy but I also missed being part of a community. In 2022, a friend introduced me to wheelchair rugby. At first I wasn't keen because I'd never played rugby and I was scared like my other ventures that I wouldn't manage. Since joining I have completed my first season. There have been many challenges along the way but I have got through them and will continue as much as I can to be part of this wonderful sport.

I'm glad that I took that chance and tried something new and different. I fell in love with wheelchair rugby because I found something that I could enjoy being part of again and best of all be part of a community. It doesn't matter how active you are whether it's a few more steps or standing for longer or doing gentle stretches the important thing is that the activity suits you and it means something to you.



PET CLUB

Smokey and the Bandit

Meet Smokey and Bandit. These cute little gerbils belong to our guest Marreesa. We always love meeting our guest's pets and we were delighted when they joined us on Zoom during an activity recently.



'The darker one is Smokey and the lighter one is Bandit. They are really sweet little guys, always up for treats and fusses, some of the friendliest bubs I've ever had and they love coming up to see people.' Marreesa

FUNDRAISERS / SUPPORTERS

This edition we'd like to say a really big thank you to:

AFCB Cherries Community Fund

For their generous £1000 donation.

You can read the article on AFCB news [here](#).





Belinda's Dance Academy

FUNDRAISERS / SUPPORTERS

A big thank you (cont'd)

Belinda's Dance Academy

Belinda's Dance Academy are long term supporters and regular performers at Dance Beats Cancer. They held a fundraising Christmas raffle for the Trust and raised £100.



Alice Ellen Cooper Dean Charitable Foundation

Thank you for your generous grant.

Norman Family Charitable Trust

Thank you for the regular donations.

Dorchester Round Table Charitable Trust

Thank you for the generous £1000 donation.

Castle View Colten Care Home , Poundbury

Thank you to the residents for choosing the Youth Cancer Trust as their charity of the year.



IN MEMORY

In Memory of Karl Hopton

Karl Hopton was the friendly face behind Heritage Bridge Ales in Blandford, Dorset, and a good friend of our amazing chef, Ian. They were planning a fun Easter event to help raise money for Youth Cancer Trust and Karl's charity, but very sadly, Karl recently passed away.



Ian wanted to honour his friend Karl in a special way, so he decided to cook for our first Youth Cancer Trust holiday week in 2024 for free. We're extremely grateful for that.

Ian said, "I wanted to do something important in Karl's memory that he would be proud of."

We would like to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt condolences to Karl's family and friends.

"Karl was a beloved member of the Blandford community. He was a guiding light of kindness and friendship. Everyone he met was won over by his amiability, generosity and contagious laughter. He was the essence of community and caring. His legacy will encourage us to savour each moment, be grateful for the people we meet and revel in the joy of living"

These are selected quotes from Karl's obituary.



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▶ GET INVOLVED

We are always very grateful for any support. If you'd like to help, here's some ways you can get involved.

Make a Donation

Donations are welcomed via our website:
www.youthcancertrust.org

Purchase Something From Our Wish List

We always need items to support our holidays and online programme. If you'd like to donate towards a specific activity please view our wish list [here](#).

Fundraise for Us

Fundraising is only limited by your imagination! You really can do anything to support Youth Cancer Trust, from sitting in a bath of beans, organising a dance-a thon, running a marathon or hosting a coffee morning.

Anyone can organise their own fundraising event and we are here to support you all the way.

Take On A Challenge

Taking on a challenge is the ideal opportunity to not only raise funds, but get fit and achieve a lifetime goal. There are many different challenges you can get involved in. Our friendly team are happy to help you find the right one for you.

To find out more ways you can support us, please visit our website:
www.youthcancertrust.org/support-us

YOUTH CANCER TRUST FIND OUT MORE



To find out more about our services visit our website at www.youthcancertrust.org or contact our friendly team.

Videos about our services can be found on our [YouTube channel](#):



[Facebook](#):



Experience an unforgettable journey of connection, growth, and respite at our Youth Cancer Trust Wellbeing Holiday, happening during all the school holidays in 2024!

This special retreat, nestled in the heart of Dorset, offers young people living with and beyond cancer the chance to engage in a range of activities, and the opportunity to meet peers who truly understand.

It's a unique chance to enhance wellbeing, boost confidence, and reduce isolation in a supportive and fun environment. Don't miss out on making new friends and creating memories. Enquire now to find out more and secure your place on this transformative holiday!

Enquire now - www.youthcancertrust.org/free-holidays/enquire





Website: www.youthcancertrust.org

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Phone: 01305 584064

Postal Address

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Holiday Enquiry Form: <https://www.youthcancertrust.org/free-holidays/enquire>