



# SUMMER NEWSLETTER

## 2022



## YCT NEWS

After 2 years of being closed during the pandemic, we were excited to finally be able to open our doors again in May this year. The sun has been shining on us and there is a buzz of excitement from the guests, who are happy to finally be able to enjoy their holiday.

We've been making the most of the weather with lots of water sports this season. Guests have also played mini golf, created and painted their own pottery designs, visited local attractions and relaxed on the beach. As ever, our art shed and BBQ / karaoke night have been popular on-site activities.

Despite being closed, we continued to provide a service for our guests throughout lockdown, developing a full online activity and support programme that now runs alongside our holidays.



**On behalf of Youth Cancer Trust, we want to express our deepest sorrow at the passing of Her Majesty The Queen. We extend our sincerest condolences to His Majesty The King and The Queen Consort, and the whole of the Royal Family on her passing.**

**Our team have provided additional support to any guests experiencing distress at the news.**



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## YCT NEWS (CONT'D)

Activities have included a weekly yoga and relaxation session with Frances Folan. As well as, a comedy night, murder mystery, crafts, escape rooms, bingo and much more.

We've also been able to link our online and holiday guests up to enjoy activities such as baking and quizzes together. We host peer support sessions and guests have been able to access 1:1 coaching or attend a 6-week coaching course, with professional and personal development coach, Jane Woods.

In addition, guests have access to 'Realshare' a new secure sign in section of our website where they can access articles, resources and the activity programmes. They can also watch again any online activities they missed.



## YouTube

To find out more about our services, videos are available on our YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/YouthCancerTrustYCT>

## STAFF

Welcome to Laura Hartley and Hal Hillman who have both joined the staff team. Laura came onboard during lockdown to help with our new online programme. Since we re-opened, she has been helping to run the holidays with Brenda.

Hal has joined us recently to help with admin support, social media and helping us develop our online services.

We celebrated Queen Brenda of YCT during our Jubilee BBQ in May.

Wendy celebrated 10 years at Youth Cancer Trust in June.





## GUESTS

Having been closed for our holidays since the covid pandemic started we were all really excited when the first holiday of the season came along in May and was one of the hottest summers we have seen in Bournemouth for a long time.

Thankfully there was plenty of opportunity to keep cool with lots of water based activities. Many of our guests tried paddle boarding for the first time down the harbour in Sandbanks. This was not easy especially in the slightly choppy waters but the instructors were always impressed with how well everyone did and they commented on how much they enjoyed having our groups to take out.

If that was a bit too strenuous we also had some more leisurely trips on the local boat cruises around the stunning islands of Poole Harbour and one group even went on a day trip to Swanage via the local boat taking in the dramatic and spectacular Jurassic coast.

The rib rides to Old Harrys Rock were speedy and wet compared to the steady, quieter sails with Poole Sailability.

We thank Poole Sailability for allowing our groups to join their weekly sessions and providing us with the opportunity to help man the deck!

Our days were also busy with other leisure activities such as mini golf, walks on the beach, after supper swims at the hotel pool and time chilling in the house playing pool and video games or watching movies. The art shed had lots of visitors who took the opportunity to relax with a paintbrush, add to the group wall hanging or get to grips with crocheting.

No two holiday was the same and some groups had the opportunity to spend a day at Beaulieu Motor Museum and other groups had the sessions on the potters wheel creating their own clay pots. What ran through all the holidays was the sense of fun, support and making new friends. The last evening was always marked with a BBQ and singing karaoke.

A huge thank you to all of our supporters for making these holidays happen. We were able to host 38 young cancer patients and 19 of their companions (sibling, partner or friend) from all across the UK and the Republic of Ireland.





## THANK YOU FROM OUR GUESTS

*"I am leaving this holiday feeling more confident and happy! So thankful for this opportunity and the scooter! I've had the bestest time! I even liked being part of the boys crew :-)"*



*"This is the most fun I've had since I've started treatment"*



*"Thank you all for being so kind and welcoming"*

*"Kayaking was so much fun, so freeing"*



*"I enjoyed the mix of active and calmer activities and free time to go off to the beach too."*



*"Thank you for being understanding and lovely. I am so grateful I could try paddleboarding and kayaking in a safe and supportive environment"*





## YCT CREATIVES

### GUEST'S ART PROJECT

This season we've been working on a group art project that both our holiday and online guests can get involved in.

Guests are given fabric squares they can decorate however they choose. They can access all the craft supplies in our art shed or our team can send them a craft kit.

Completed squares are then joined together with ribbons to create a colourful and meaningful art piece to decorate Tracy Ann House, and join together our community.



## YCT PET CLUB

Find out how pets are helping our guests through treatment.



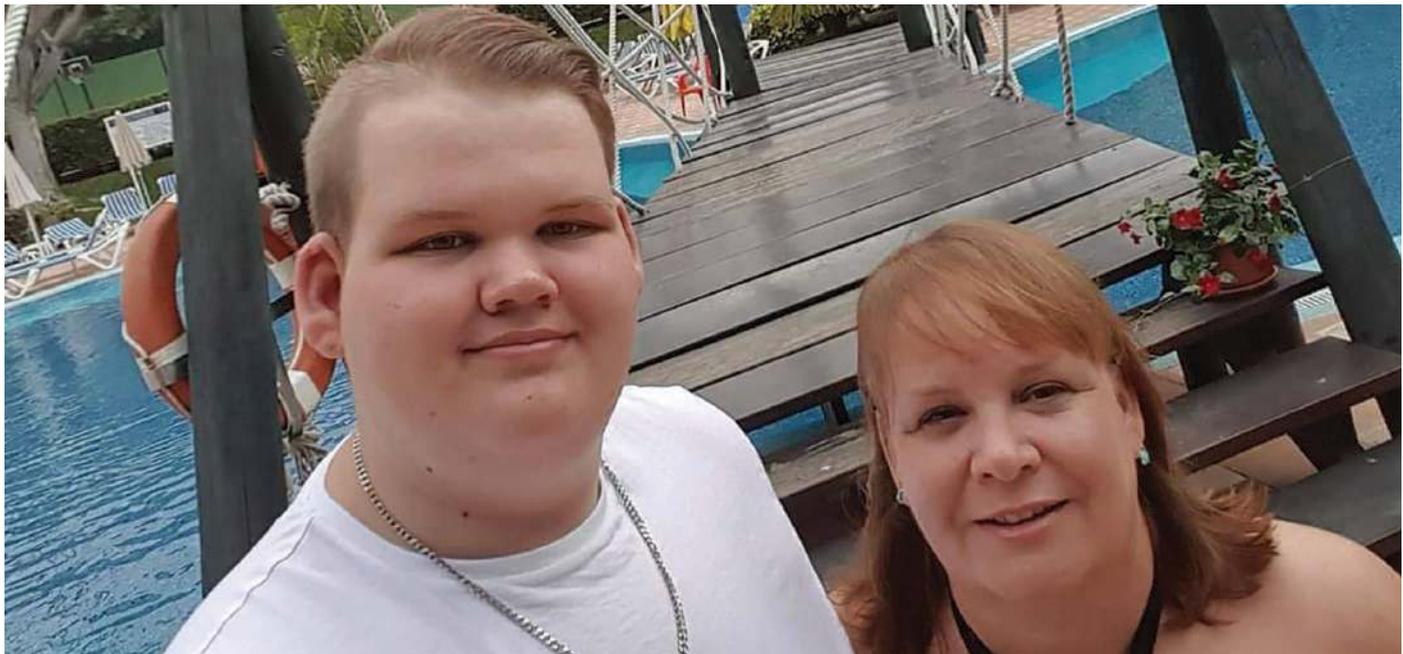
### Ben and Paris

"This is Paris. She's turning 5 next month. She's a French Bulldog who I rehomed a year ago.

I wanted a dog for company as I have not been able to work during treatment.

Paris came at the most perfect time. She has been a massive comfort blanket during my treatment and also my motivator, even my best friend.

Paris would match my energy, so if I was weak from treatment, she would spend the day lounging around with me. But she would also motivate me to go for that evening walk and fresh air which done us both the world of good!"



## WILLIAM'S STORY

'I remember the day I was told I had a brain tumour. I was 9 years old, celebrating receiving the Golden Pupil Award at my Primary School. I stood proudly in front of my class and parents, holding up the piece of work that had won me the title.

After the presentation my parents hugged me and told me 'We have to go now'. Together, we got the bus to the hospital, where we received the news.

The following day I spent in Oxford hospital, receiving tests, MRI scans and injections. My tumour was removed on the Monday morning. My mum and I barely slept the night before; we ate chips and watched the Incredible Hulk together.

When it was time to go into my operation I said goodbye to my parents, not really understanding what I was having done.

I woke some time afterwards to see a bright, almost blinding light. I drifted in and out of consciousness, sometimes waking to see Doctors and Nurses in the room, sometimes to see teddy bears had been placed in my arms. One time I woke to see my parents with me. I was so happy to see them, but still could not stay awake.

Often, I was sick, even projectile vomiting across the room. All week this continued until I was allowed to return home on the Friday.

Age 13, I was told I had a brain tumour again. The Doctors didn't know if my original tumour had re-grown, or if it was a new one. This time, I had to wait a whole year to have it removed. There was debate over whether I should be taken to a junior or adult ward.

I was so depressed, even experiencing suicidal thoughts.\* I was already being bullied in school and now had the additional angst of managing a tumour.

Finally, it was time for my operation. I'd spend the weekend in hospital before the operation on Monday. On the way there, I saw something terrifying; a statue of the Grim Reaper. I thought maybe it was a sign, that time was up for me.

The process was the same as before, lots of tests prior. Then drifting in and out of consciousness during recovery. My type of tumour sits in the Pituitary Gland just behind the eyes. It is called Craniopharyngioma. However, I like to name them to keep things fun. The first was 'Arthur' and the second 'Alfred'.

Damage to the Pituitary Gland means I also now have a condition called Panhypopituitarism. I cannot produce any hormones or steroid. So, I cannot grow or go through puberty. Luckily, I have medication to help.

I would like to mention that all of it wasn't as bad as it sounds. I have had all my family with me, backing me all the way. Step by step they have helped me overcome my fears and my weaknesses. My mum has always been there for me, even when she split up with my father. My sister has always helped me back up off the floor - after she takes a picture obviously! My nan has helped me reach heights I could never imagine. I am grateful I have had my family around me to help me through everything.

I discovered Youth Cancer Trust in 2022 and have recently returned from my first holiday. I am a keen gamer and hoping to help the team to host online gaming nights with other guests.'

\* We understand the emotional impact that cancer can cause and our team identify and refer to specialist services where appropriate.



## EVENTS

### DANCE BEATS CANCER

The Dance Beats Cancer show returned to The Lifecentre, Bournemouth on 25th May for another spectacular evening of dance performance in aid of Youth Cancer Trust. The popular annual event raised £1400 to support young cancer patients.

The Dance Beats Cancer project began back in 2015 with the aim to create a piece of dance for film to raise awareness about the work of the Youth Cancer Trust.

The film features stunning, iconic scenery from across Dorset. It represents many dance genres, joining together local and professional dancers, also featuring artists, graffiti artists, a fire performer, magician and acrobat. Included is footage of a community dance day on Bournemouth Sea front with over 200 participants. The film's narrative tells the story of a young person's cancer journey and the music is by local music producer Fraser Freeze.

Ashley Banjo from Diversity sent the team a message of support when the film was released in 2017.

The film was launched during an evening of dance performance, that was so successful, it has now become an annual event. The film went on to win Silver in its category at the Charity Film Awards in 2019.

The annual shows are packed with performances from talented local and visiting dance companies. It boasts an impressive collective CV with past and present performers featuring on TV shows such as Britain's Got Talent, The Next Steps, The Greatest Dancer and Got to Dance.

Like the film, it features a variety of dance genres including ballet, contemporary, street, fusion, Chinese, commercial, breaking and popping.

DBC Photos: Daniel Keckes





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## DANCE BEATS CANCER (CONT'D)

The Dance Beats Cancer film and shows have not only met the goal to raise awareness about Youth Cancer Trust, they've gained national recognition, and built a huge community of friends and supporters sharing their talents and giving their time in support of young people with cancer.

*'Our aim is to keep growing and sharing our work so that we can reach out to more young cancer patients in need of support. We strive to make our annual dance shows bigger each year and fill them with jaw dropping performances. We create an atmosphere where everyone is welcome and valued, from seasoned professionals to first time performers.'*

Wendy Parrott – Youth Cancer Trust.  
(Dance Beats Cancer Team)

### Thank you to everyone that has supported us!

You can watch our award-winning Dance Beats Cancer film here: <https://youtu.be/MTgLT8869hc>

An article about our Dance Beats Cancer show featured in Dorset Biz News as one of their top 10 most read articles of the week. You can read it here: <https://www.dorsetbiznews.co.uk/gallery-spectacular-dance-beats-cancer-show-raises-magnificent-1-4k-for-youth-cancer-trust/>

## CASINO ROYALE CHRISTMAS BALL

Our Casino Royale event took place at the Royal Bath Hotel, hosted by Jack at Kings Beach Residence and Derek Smith Youth Cancer Trust. The glamorous evening featured live acrobatics and dance performances, a DJ and prize casino.



## BOX BEATS CANCER

After delays due to the pandemic, we were finally able to host our Box Beats Cancer event in December. Well done to Derek Smith and Stella Payne for putting together a fabulous evening, to all of our boxers who took part and to Marc Smith who trained with everyone to get them ready for their fight. Also to Debbie and Seb for your help and support and our photographer, Daniel Keckes.



**Thank you to everyone that attends, supports and volunteers at our events.**



## THANK YOU

We were approached by **April Six** at the start of the year. They have chosen us to be their charity of the year and are keen to help out with fundraising and raising awareness about the work we do.

They got stuck in straight away to help us get out garden ready for re-opening. It was a pleasure to have them join our staff on the 6th April. By the end of the day, our garden was weed- free, our pond was gleaming, our BBQ had been scrubbed, the patios all pressure washed and our art and therapy rooms were cleaned out and re-stocked by the team. They even headed down to the beach hut to give that a clean out too.

Our guests have loved spending time in the garden this summer and have enjoyed using all of the art and beauty supplies April 6 provided.

Without your help, our busy staff members would have struggled to get the garden ready in time. Thank you for everything you have done for us.

Thank you to everyone else that supports us, volunteers for us and promotes the work we do. Apologies we can't give a mention to all of you – but we truly appreciate you! Your support makes a huge difference in enabling us to keep providing services for young cancer patients.

## WHAT'S NEXT FOR YCT?

We decided to have a shorter season this year so we can evaluate and make improvements to our services. We felt this was important as the world has changed since the pandemic, and we want to ensure we are still offering the best possible service to our guests. We also want to monitor the impact of Covid over the winter months.

Our online activity and support service will still be available as staff work on any necessary improvements.

Our priority has been providing services for our young people. However, we do hope to be hosting some fundraising events in the near future. Please check our Facebook and Instagram pages for updates.

We'd like to thank everyone for their patience and understanding during the difficult times we've all been through recently.

