



WINTER NEWSLETTER

2023



WELCOME

...and welcome to our winter newsletter and the last one of 2023

It has been a very eventful year for the Trust.

We've said a sad goodbye to some dear friends, as well as moving on from Tracy Ann House, our base for over 25 years.

We've relocated our holidays to the pretty Dorset village of Dewlish and have settled in well, getting to know the local community and hosting 3 successful trial weeks. We've welcomed new staff to the team- Jo and Josh who run the holidays along with Laura. Also Ian, our chef, who has proved very popular, keeping our staff and guests well fed!

We've held events and fundraisers, attended conferences and networking events

We've also continued to grow our online programme, with activities and support available to guests all year round.

Holidays are now on hold until February 2024 when we will have our official opening at our new base of Manor Farm Barn. Holidays will then run throughout the year to coincide with Dorset school holidays.

During the winter months, staff will take time to review all of the feedback from the trial weeks, make any required adjustments to our activity programme and ensure we are fully prepared and ready to go for the new season.

Phew! It's almost time for our team to take a well earned break over Christmas, but first they have one more treat in store!! Read on to find out more about our festive fundraiser with a difference.





NEWS

World Mental Health Day

October 10th was World Mental Health Day.

At Youth Cancer Trust we are aware of the impact a cancer diagnosis can have on a young person's mental health. It's normal to experience a range of emotions including shock, fear, anxiety, a sense of loss, anger, and depression.

Some have spoken about the expectation to be back to normal after treatment has finished, but the reality is that cancer can have a long term impact on mental health for many people.

What are we doing at Youth Cancer Trust to support our guest's mental health?

- Weekly relaxation class online open to all guests.
- Weekly Mindful Moment posts including meditations, reflections and mindful content.
- Staff available to support guests 1:1, to talk through any problems they have, and to identify and refer to specialist mental health, or other services, when required.
- Secure network of young people to engage with to prevent social isolation and encourage peer support.
- Staff plan holiday and online activities in line with the 5 steps to wellbeing: Connect, be active, learn new skills, give to others, be present.

[Click Here](#) to read our blog post on World Mental Health Day including where to find help.

WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO

Hydration Station

It was a blazing hot day for the Run Bournemouth event this year. Our volunteer team were kept busy handing out water to thirsty runners taking part.

Thanks to everyone that came along and helped out.

This popular event always has a great atmosphere, and of course a beautiful location along the Bournemouth coast line.





▶ WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO (CONT'D)

SEPTEMBER TRIAL WEEK

...A Summary From Laura

'For our exhilarating second trial week at the Youth Cancer Trust, we welcomed a fabulous group of guests journeying from all corners of the UK. Some ventured from places as distant as Hull, while one fortunate guest had just a hop, skip, and a jump to join us from nearby Bournemouth! Many of these incredible souls have found solace and camaraderie at the Youth Cancer Trust for years. This time around, they got the chance to immerse themselves in our new premises - Manor Farm Barn and Churn Cottage.

The week took a delightful turn when Brenda, our recently retired founder and newly appointed President, made a surprise appearance at our Wednesday BBQ bash! It was a heartwarming reunion, especially with some of our long-retired staff joining in the festivities. Reflecting upon Brenda's inspiring vision from a quarter-century ago, we're all brimming with gratitude. She dreamt of a charity, a haven, where support, camaraderie, and pure fun thrived. Today, we live and continue that dream.

Listening to our guests, this holiday took a more relaxed vibe.

We rolled out a lavish 'brunch' spread from 10:30 am, perfect for those who cherished a lazy holiday morning. For the early birds among us, a sumptuous non-cooked breakfast awaited from 7:30 am, paired with the refreshing option of a pool dip or a countryside walk alongside Laura's dog, Spot, setting the tone for a fun-filled day ahead.

Adventure beckoned! We tried our hand at archery, tested our football golf skills, and explored the captivating Tank Museum. Though Mother Nature's stormy mood led to a quick change from our Weymouth boat trip, the excitement didn't miss a beat.

Our week wrapped up with an enlightening peek into Manor farm's dairy. Watching the cows in their element was an experience to remember. And what better way to conclude our journey than with an Asian-themed feast and a sweet finale of ice cream tasting? A week of discovery, bonding, and sheer joy!

Laura Hartley - Holidays Co-ordinator





▶ WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO (CONT'D)

OCTOBER TRIAL WEEK

...A Summary From Jo

With a Halloween/autumn theme in mind we got to work decorating the house ready for our guests.

A bat piñata hanging in the entrance hall surrounded by web-like weaving on the bannisters welcomed our travellers when they arrived on Monday from all around the country. As did cake and a brew.

Our week was filled with pumpkins, sweet treats and Halloween fun with a visit to the stunning blue pool and a local pumpkin patch to select pumpkins to carve and paint. Our craft room was filled with activities for all and some of our guests enjoyed time creating and making.

Our guests were treated to a hair makeover on Wednesday by the lovely Vicky. They had their photographs taken before some silly dressing up shots and an evening filled with visitors, food and fun. Some were even brave enough for a flood lit dip in the pool.

On Thursday Wally the bus braved the pot-holed road to Max Events for a knife and axe throwing extravaganza. Some of the pumpkins even became targets for the guests! We were shown around the Wonderful facilities that will be great for future groups to visit and another local contact added to our growing list of great places to visit. In the evening after a feast from Ian, we enjoyed a quiz and party games before a visit to the village pub.

During the week we even enticed some of our guests to join us for some reindeer racing in the field with the alpaca and sheep. This is for our Christmas fundraiser.

Friday came around far too soon and it was time to say farewell to our lovely guests. Packing them up with sandwiches for their journeys, we waved goodbye and reflected on another amazing week at Manor farm and the friendships and memories made.

Jo Bingham - Holidays Assistant Co-ordinator





▶ THANK YOU FOR HELPING WITH OUR TRIAL WEEK

Corin Messer

Our Photographer / Videographer

During the trial holidays we had the most incredible photographer/videographer Corin Messer, who wonderfully captured the essence of our holidays.

A few of our guests gave up some of their holiday time to share their cancer experiences on film and we would like to express our thanks to them for doing this.

You can view our guest's video's [here](#)

We also want to say a very big thank you to Corin who's sensitive, relaxed and personable manner meant that our guests felt so at ease in his company and we all loved having him with us on the holidays.

Corin was also great fun filming and editing our Reindeer Race Fundraiser for us.



Libby Bingham

Thank you also to Libby for joining us for the holiday. Libby is Jo's daughter and supported our Dance Beats Cancer event earlier in the year as our photographer.

Damo's Taxis

Huge thank you's to Damo's Taxis for ferrying our guests to and from the train station,

Walbridge Motor Company

Walbridge Motor Company for the wonderful Wally the Minibus.

Excursions

We have enjoyed our excursions out to The Blue Pool , Dorset Country Pumpkins, axe throwing @ Max Events Bournemouth .

Hair Styling

Thank you to the lovely [Vicky Gale Hairdressing](#) for coming out over to the farm for hair styling and cutting.

Mobility Scooters

Rapid Mobility Ltd have been extremely helpful in delivering us mobility scooters for some of our guests to get out and enjoy the activities we have on offer.

Thank you to all of our wonderful guests and thank you to Brenda our Founder and now President of the charity for having this vision and making it what it is today.

Until next time



Jo Bingham



Libby Bingham with her mum, Jo

STAFF

Joining The Team:

My First Year Hosting Holidays By Jo

Just over a year ago I was asked if I would be happy to join the team at YCT hosting holidays for young people with cancer in a beautiful farmhouse in the Dorset countryside. I jumped at the prospect, knowing just how important the work of YCT was and having experience of supporting similar holidays for teens with cancer many years ago. I was excited to be part of the transition to a new holiday home and continue the work started by Brenda over 25 years ago in memory of her daughter Tracey Ann.

Fast forward to October 23 and alongside Laura and Josh, I have hosted 3 successful holidays, met incredible individuals and made memories together that will last a lifetime. New friendships have been forged in a safe space where everyone is valued and accepted.

We have been fuelled by food from our jovial chef Ian and supported in all that we have achieved by Georgie and Max. Wendy has been invaluable both behind the scenes and joining us in house.

By default I got to be the driver of the mini bus and we have been on brilliant trips out with our guests exploring the local area trying out new activities and making connections with local businesses.

We have enjoyed all that Manor Farm Barn has to offer. Late night pool dips, fire pits with marshmallows, games room karaoke and farm tours with the lovely Vicky, always on hand to share her passion for the animals and ensure our guests get to see the workings of the dairy first hand.

Our trials have been a huge success and I am excited to welcome new guests to join us in our holiday home again next year.

Jo Bingham - Holidays Assistant Co-ordinator

Volunteering for the October Holiday

'As someone who's grown up around cancer ,yet not experienced it for myself, I was unsure how I would feel being around people who live with it day to day. I worried it would make me unsettled and remind me of the times of uncertainty within the diagnosis of my dad. However, it was quite the opposite, it was so refreshing to hear these wonderful people's stories and have a safe space where they can all share their own experiences and not have to worry about how the others might react as they relate to one another.

Within conversations with the guests it was so lovely to hear that they felt they could have a holiday away from all the unpredictability of life and have a safe and joyous place to make new memories, new friendships and have time to relax and enjoy being present with each other without the pressure to do anything they don't want to do.

Youth Cancer Trust is so important and without the help of amazing donations, volunteers, fundraisers and the awesome staff behind the charity , these holidays and memories would not be possible. I am proud to be part of such an amazing cause.'

Libby Bingham - Holidays Volunteer



YCT OUT AND ABOUT

Shine Conference

The team attended the Shine conference in London at the start of October. The day featured a number of great speakers, sharing opportunities and informative workshops.

We were delighted to have a stall at the event and the opportunity to chat to young people about our holidays. We even got to catch up with some of our YCT guests in attendance.



Christmas Craft Fayres

Our online crafting sessions are always popular. We have many talented crafters amongst our staff and guests, who love to share their skills with each other.

So we decided to display all of these wonderful creations at Christmas craft fayres in the Dorchester area. As well as helping us get to know our local community, it's also a great opportunity for guests to showcase their work and raise money for the charity at the same time.



Online Programme

Our team prepares a variety of content to share in our Facebook Group each month. This includes Mindful Moments, opportunities to share and discuss topics, inspirational stories, fun, competitions and lots more.

Our themes throughout winter are the 5 steps to Wellbeing, with a different step being explored each month.

We also like to highlight important dates, for example, religious festivals, awareness campaigns and days of remembrance so our guests can share in these together.

In October we met via Zoom for our annual Halloween party, with games and mayhem. Our team always enjoy the chance to dress up, and we love it when our guests join in too!

For bonfire night we posted out cosy kits to guests including glow sticks, hot chocolate, sweets and fluffy socks. Then we met online to enjoy a fireworks themed lyrics quiz and to watch some clips of the best and most bizarre fireworks displays from around the world!

We are now looking forward to our Zoom Christmas party which is always popular and full of surprises.



GUESTS

KIRSTY & KATIE

Our online programme began in 2020 during the early days of lockdown. Staff member Wendy hastily set up a secure Facebook group for guests to keep in contact whilst we were closed for holidays. As the days turned into weeks then months, the Facebook group chat turned into zoom meet ups and eventually evolved into the online activity and support programme we currently operate today, alongside our holidays.

It was during one of these early zoom meetups that 2 of our guests Katie and Kirsty first met online. Regularly attending the activities, their friendship grew and they started to call and facetime each other outside of the activities hosted by the charity.

Months turned to years and the pair kept in touch, sometimes speaking several times a day, even though they had never met. However, when Kirsty got married in May 23 she knew she wanted Katie to be there and the friends met in person for the first time on Kirsty's hen do. Katie then had the chance to watch her close friend get married to her partner of many years, David.

To make this story even more special, Youth Cancer Trust were delighted to have both Katie and Kirsty attend our October trial holiday, an opportunity to spend some quality time together. We made sure we put them in rooms next to each other and apparently they chatted late into the night!!

YCT FUNDRAISING TEAM

A message from our Fundraising team who work hard around the country, collecting donations and raising awareness in supermarkets and the community.

"We wanted to thank everyone for all the time and support this year, especially Georgie and Wendy, who are always there for us when we need it. Here's to 2024!"

 **THANK YOU GUYS,
MERRY CHRISTMAS
EVERYONE"** 

Our Fundraising Team have also put out an urgent appeal for volunteers in the Derby and Newcastle areas in the run up to Christmas.



URGENT REQUEST
for Volunteers / Fundraisers

We have been given some dates for some Tesco's stores in the Derby Area and Newcastle and would ask anyone that can even spare half a day or a day to help would be awesome thank you.

We are also looking for someone that can help us with admin one day a week. Hybrid working from home. Please contact me directly.

Paula Mann
(Head of Fundraising) 07789 810632



Team Average Joe's

THANK YOU / FUNDRAISERS

Ambassador Joe Musker's 70th Birthday Fundraiser

Our Ambassador Joe Musker turns 70 on 2nd December. He is asking for donations to Youth Cancer Trust if anyone would like to donate £5 (the price of a pint) or another amount of your choice.

You can donate via Joe's Just Giving page [here](#)



Team Average Joe's

Thank you to the 'Average Joe's' who took part in the Battle Cancer event on October 15th. It is an event where CrossFit athletes, people who attend a gym regularly or people who take part in other types of fitness can come to help make a difference for a charity of their choosing and every pound equals one extra rep so every one of them counts!

A huge thank you to Briony, Connor, Chris and Jessica for their incredible efforts on the day and raising £600 for us.

Go team 'Average Joe' !

Stuart and Rachel Fay

We would like to express a huge thank you to Stuart and Rachel Fay, the parents of one of our guests Gemma Fay.

Gemma was one of the winners of last year's Christmas Card competition with her beautiful festive robin design.

Gemma very sadly passed away this year and in memory her family asked if we could sell the cards again this year to help raise money and awareness for us.

Gemma came on one of our holidays in 2022 and we were very touched when she chose us as one of her charities to receive donations at her funeral. Over £1,200 has so far been raised by Gemma's family and friends to help support other young adults affected by cancer.

It is very hard to express how grateful we are to Gemma and her family for thinking of us during very difficult times.

If you'd like to purchase a pack of Gemma's Christmas cards please follow the link to our website [here](#)



Gemma Fay's Christmas Card



COMING UP

Great Gatsby Ball

Our Christmas fundraiser this year is a decadent evening of vintage glamour. The Royal Bath Hotel, Bournemouth is the setting for our Great Gatsby Ball with live music from Swing Unlimited, dance performance and a 3 course Christmas meal. Our thanks to Jack Kings Beach Residence for hosting this event with us.

www.youthcancertrust.org/events



Dance Beats Cancer

We will be hosting our Dance Beats Cancer show again in the spring. Inviting local performers to take part in an inclusive evening of dance performance.

If you'd like to perform please contact wendy@yct.org.uk.





▶ REINDEER RACING - OUR CHRISTMAS FUNDRAISER!

Youth Cancer Trust team have been 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, past some bemused alpacas, and towards the finish line. (With the promise of tea and cake after the race.)

But which of Santa's reindeer was the fastest?

Did Prancer prance her way across the finish first? Did Dasher make a dash for it? or did Comet shoot like a well, a comet!, down past the chickens for first place?

All will be revealed on Wednesday 20th December at 10am, when we will show the full race on our social media and website.

With a small donation of £2 you can pick who you think will be our reindeer champion. Everyone that donates will be entered into a prize draw to win a £150 Amazon voucher.

Check out our start line video [here](#) to meet the reindeer and pick who you think will win the race:

How to enter the prize draw:

1. Make a donation of £2 on [Just Giving](#).
2. Type in the comments which reindeer you are cheering on.
3. Don't forget to tick the box to share your contact details with us.

You will be entered into a prize draw to win a £150 Amazon voucher. We will contact you if you are selected.

You can enter as many times as you want to. It's £2 per guess and you will receive an entry into the prize draw for each one.

You can view our start line video and meet the reindeer via:

[Our website](#)
[On Facebook](#)

We will add the full race and reveal the winning reindeer on Wednesday 20th December at 10am.

We'd like to say a huge thank you to Corin Messer, our wonderfully talented photographer and videographer for making the video and donating £100 towards the Amazon voucher for the prize draw.

Enquiries to wendy@yct.org.uk

Thank you for your support throughout 2023
From all of the team at Youth Cancer Trust we'd like to wish you a very
Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

