

HELLO
Winter

Hello from Hope Against Cancer and welcome to our Winter 2025 newsletter

This year we have continued to support local cancer research and clinical care that changes lives.

We are supporting three Hope Nurses at the Hope Cancer Trials Centre, we purchased a new -80° freezer, we are supporting early stage 'pump-priming' projects at the Leicester Cancer Research Centre and we are supporting two clinical research fellows, Dr Shradha Bhagani and Dr Nikila Patil.

A -80° freezer is a vital piece of scientific equipment that underpins all research. It keeps samples stable and usable for a long period of time and allows for stability in their study. Such equipment is not usually included in research grants and Hope Against Cancer is proud to have been in a position to provide one for Leicester's cancer researchers.

You will be able to read about Dr Shradha Bhagani's work in this newsletter and you can read more about the Hope Nurses and Dr Nikila Patil's work on our blog:
www.hopeagainstcancer.org.uk/hope-blog

All of this work, our funding and the support Hope Against Cancer provides for the Hope Cancer Trials Centre at the Leicester Royal Infirmary all adds up to one thing... World-class treatment and care for local people with cancer.

We have been privileged to speak with some of these people this year and shared their stories in a series called 'Why We Do What We Do' on our blog.

In this newsletter, you will find Tony's story.

One thing we have noticed that seems to cross people's diverse cancer journeys and experience at the Hope Cancer Trials Centre is the amazing staff. They are often referred to as family. People have told us that they look forward to their visits as they know they have the best possible care where they are treated like a person, not an illness.

The incredible personalised and holistic care that staff at the Hope Cancer Trials Centre provide is done while they also attend to the approximately 200 clinical trials currently happening there. It truly is a special place that could not exist without you.



Thank you for all your support.

The development of the liquid biopsy, a technique that has the potential to revolutionise treatment for cancer and much more.

At the October Business Lunch, our guests heard from Dr Rebecca Allsopp (pictured above with HOPE CEO, Nigel Rose) about the development of the liquid biopsy in the Professor Jacqui Shaw group based at the Leicester Royal Infirmary. They believe that this technique will reduce reliance on more invasive biopsy procedures supporting earlier diagnosis and monitoring of cancer by reading markers in the blood.



The liquid biopsy is already in use in some areas of the NHS and private care, as well as in the American Healthcare system.

Hope Against Cancer has supported Professor Shaw's (pictured left) research in the past and continues to do so through Dr Shradha Bhagani (pictured right) who is another member of the group.

Dr Bhagani's research has a specialist interest in triple negative breast cancer (TNBC), and the aim of the study is to seek biomarkers in the liquid biopsy which can predict an individual's response to cancer treatment.

The liquid biopsy will do this by detecting components of cancer in the blood.



Standard cancer biopsies are usually taken once and then they will become a person's 'passport' for their treatment. Liquid biopsies can be taken at regular intervals and responses to treatment can be checked close to real time.

TNBC accounts for approximately 15% of all breast cancers and is associated with poor clinical outcomes and so an understanding of which therapies a person will respond to, and which ones they won't, is vital for their best care.

Chemotherapy is a 'cover-all' treatment and it is often referred to as a blunt instrument. It poisons cancer cells as well as healthy cells and so research that guides patients towards more personalised treatment is one of the keys to the future of cancer treatments.

Hope's Head of Partnerships, Tracey Hallam, who has triple negative breast cancer, is one of the participants in Dr Bhagani's study and has had samples taken regularly throughout her treatment.



In August, the 'If Alice Can, Anyone Can' fundraising cycle ride raised an amazing £114,000 for Hope Against Cancer. Research into triple negative breast cancer is a cause close to Alice's heart and so the funds raised will be specifically directed to continue Hope's support of this research.

If you would like to read more about the support Hope Against Cancer provides for local cancer research and care, our Impact Report is available now at:

www.hopeagainstcancer.org.uk/impact-report

If you would like to request a physical copy, please email enquiries@hopeagainstcancer.org.uk or call 0116 270 0101

Tony's story

This year, Tony celebrated his 80th birthday with a Caribbean themed party for around 60 relatives and friends.

This is quite a milestone as, four years ago, it was uncertain if he would still be around to celebrate it.



Tony's journey with cancer began back in 2012. Regular blood tests to check his cholesterol detected some paraprotein in the blood. After being referred to the Leicester Royal Infirmary for further tests, the advice from the consultant was to go

home, forget all about the paraprotein, and get on with the rest of his life.

At the time he didn't know that this phase of blood cancer development was called 'Watch and Wait', better known as 'Watch and Worry'.

Tony heeded the consultant's advice and over the next nine years lived life to the full with some memorable holidays and activities including a 400ft abseil, a zipwire ride in Snowdonia, and watching his two teenage granddaughters grow.

Meanwhile, the regular annual blood tests enabled an early detection of something more sinister happening in June 2021. Soon after, he was unable to walk from one room to another without becoming breathless and experienced constant dizziness.

He was quickly referred back to the Oncology Outpatients at the LRI for further tests before being given the devastating diagnosis of incurable Waldenström's blood cancer.

Tony was offered the choice between conventional chemotherapy, "with all the potential side-effects this entailed", or the opportunity to participate in a new drugs trial at the Hope Cancer Trials Centre.

He felt that whatever the outcome of these new treatments would be, future generations would benefit.

Tony considers himself to be "one of the lucky ones".



Firstly, the cancer was detected early, secondly, it was growing very slowly, thirdly, the doctors reacted quickly to the situation and fourthly, he was accepted onto the trial. From his very first visit, Tony realised that the Hope Cancer Trials Centre was something very special.

It was "such a friendly and reassuring place to be when faced with unfamiliar circumstances."

The initial treatment went well, with very little side-effects and things began to improve quickly. After six weeks the blood markers were all showing signs of returning to normal.

Tony looks forward to seeing and catching up with his nursing team, who have become friends. He said that "although it seems strange to say it, considering I am being treated for cancer, I quite look forward to these visits."

Now in his 4th year of the trial, Tony returns to the Hope Centre for check-ups every three months.

He told us that, "the care and attention to detail shown by the nursing team is faultless, not only regarding the treatment but also, and just as importantly, the mental health support for both the person with cancer and their family".

Tony went on to say that he "is eternally grateful for the expertise of the medical team at the Hope Cancer Trials Centre", and he has been busy helping to raise funds for HOPE.

To date his Rotary Club have held three Sunday Lunches at the Sysonby Knoll Hotel, Melton, and for his 80th birthday, instead of presents, he requested donations to us which raised £455.

The blood cancer is still there and is currently incurable, but it is being controlled and enables Tony to have a good quality of life.

He finished by saying, "who knows what the future may hold but with the kind of advances in cancer treatment currently being done and the fantastic HOPE facility that we have right here in Leicester, the prospects look good."





We can fund such incredible research and care thanks to your amazing support

Run Leicester

On the 26th October, 18 runners took part in both the 10k and Half Marathon events at Run Leicester on behalf of HOPE.

Our volunteers were out in full force at our gazebo, chatting with the public and handing out snacks and drinks to keep our runners fuelled.



A huge thank you to Gill, Anne, David and Renata, along with Emma and Jade from Smith Partnership, who brought amazing energy, and a samba drum to cheer our runners on!

Out on the course, Tracey Hallam and her son moved between three cheer points along the route, giving our runners that extra support boost!

The feedback from our runners has been overwhelmingly positive and several have already said they can't wait to do it all again next year!

We're delighted to share that over £12,000 has been raised so far, with donations still coming in.

A special thank you goes to our runners: David, Grace, Mark, Edward, Ashley, Liam, Brook, Marc, Yolandi, Charlotte, Ruth, Elena, Elle, Lucy, Suzy, Nicola, Rowena and Suly.



After much back and forth on a date that suited everyone, the team of skydivers were due to all take to the skies and fall back down on 20th September, unfortunately the weather changed everyone's plans!

Other commitments meant a new shared date could not be found and so, instead, the adventurers jumped individually or as part of

a small group, but they all still had an amazing time!

Euphoric was probably the word that summed up their incredible experience.

Thank you to Aneal, Jo, Nicky, Jack, Nicholas, Omkar, Stan and Hope Partnership Manager Martin.



As you will have read in the earlier research article, the 'If Alice Can, Anyone Can' cycle ride from Leicestershire to Norfolk on the August Bank Holiday raised a mind-blowing £114,000!

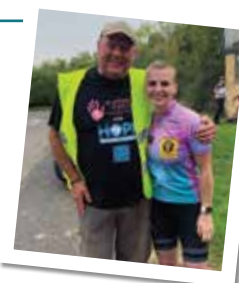
The ride was organised by Alice Greaves from Old Dalby with support from the team at Hope Against Cancer and a host of volunteers and sponsors.

Nigel Rose, CEO at Hope Against Cancer, said that "Alice is one of the bravest, most courageous and determined young woman that many of us will ever meet. This money will be transformational for our experts at the Leicester Cancer Research Centre."

Alice said, *"the day was spectacular. I just want to thank everyone who has supported, sponsored, donated and rode with us."*

The ride will return in 2026, and you are able to sign up on our website:

www.hopeagainstcancer.org.uk/hope-events



In September, the wonderful people in Ellistown held Ellistown LIVE 2025.

It was a day of fun, music and laughter that raised a fantastic £3,216!

Thank you so much to Paul and Lynn Jackson, the team and everyone who attended the day.

Make sure you save the date for the next one!

Ellistown LIVE 2026: Saturday 5th September.

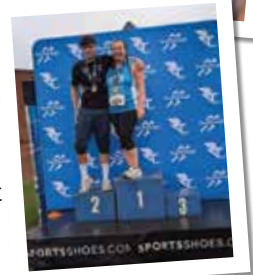


On the 19th October, self-professed 'non-runner', Gemma Chisholm ran the Rugby half marathon in memory of her dear friend Jodie Johnson and to fundraise for Hope Against Cancer.

Jodie was a wonderful advocate for HOPE, raising money and appearing in videos.

Before the event, Gemma said, "On the day of my run, it will be Jodie's birthday. So, before I raise a glass to her, I'm going to run a half marathon."

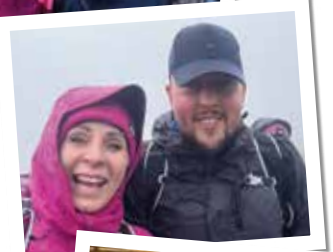
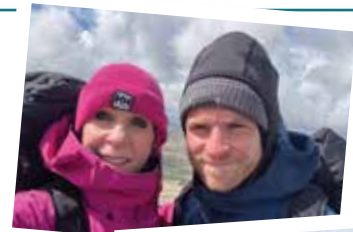
Gemma completed her run. She confirmed that she was in agony, but she was very proud to have done it for her friend and for HOPE.



Sue Smith and her son Joe, who are HOPE's Head of Partnerships Tracey Hallam's sister and nephew, recently took on a life-changing adventure on every level...

In November they took part in an expedition to lead blind and visually impaired people up to the South Base Camp on Mount Everest, and while doing so, they raised money for Hope Against Cancer, in support of Tracey and in memory of Sue's friend Caroline.

It was a true test of endurance, resilience and the mind as they helped to guide people over tough terrain while striving to vividly describe the staggering landscape and scenery.



Matt Whitley ran the famous Robin Hood half marathon for Hope Against Cancer because after his father-in-law was diagnosed with cancer, he said, "HOPE has given us exactly that..."



The Rotary club of Melton Mowbray Belvoir held its third annual Sunday Lunch in aid of Hope Against Cancer at the Sysonby Knoll Hotel in Melton in October.

This year it was a complete sell-out with almost 80 people taking over the whole restaurant. A raffle was held and with a donation from the Rotary Club the total proceeds raised was £600.





We are so grateful to Smith Partnership for choosing us as their Charity of the Year and for this wonderful cake sale which raised a brilliant £300.

A special thank you goes to the company's Leicester Charity Champions, Jade Evershed and Emma Symes-Goodman who organised everything in spectacular style!



Through four workshops held at Market Harborough Building Society on 'assertiveness in action' to boost confidence and 'discovering your values' to build a values-driven culture, Judith Chadwick and Blue Horizon HR raised a fantastic £100.



The Festival of Water at Foxton Locks was a free two-day event to celebrate the important role that the waterways of Leicestershire played in the rejuvenation of the nation's canal network 75 years ago.

Hope Against Cancer's long-term supporter John Edgar from North Kilworth Wharf attended the event and offered to share their stand with us.

To help promote awareness of HOPE, North Kilworth Wharf donated an incredible luxury narrow boat holiday as a raffle prize.



Thank you so much to Jo, Katherine and everyone from the Leicestershire Craft Centre for their excellent Crafty Cream Tea Social fundraiser, which raised a lovely £381.30!



On 4th April 2026, Dr Cathy Brown and her husband Andrew Brown will leave Land's End on the first leg of a 1,103 mile walk to John o' Groats in aid of Hope Against Cancer.

This is an extraordinary undertaking, and we are very grateful for this amazing support.

To sponsor Cathy and Andrew as they take on the longest walk on our island and support vital local cancer research and care, please visit:

www.justgiving.com/page/cathy-brown-5



Thank you very much to the Wigston and Knighton Floral Society for this fantastic cheque for HOPE.

Here they are presenting the cheque to our Volunteer Ambassadors Anne and David.



On 20th June, Shearsby Village held a delightful afternoon tea party in the Village Hall.

Alongside delicious cream teas and choice of tea, coffee, Prosecco or cold drink there were stalls which included home-made cakes & savoury treats, a mystery book stall, tombola and a raffle.

They raised an incredible £1000 for Hope Against Cancer and the world-class local cancer research we support.



The Oadby 50 Plus group is a lovely bunch of around 50 people who meet every Wednesday for games, a good chat and a catch up with friends.

They recently also raised money during one of their evenings for Hope Against Cancer.



Hope CEO Nigel Rose was proud to talk to the NHS Retirement Fellowship, Leicester Branch at Leicester General Hospital about the work of Hope Against Cancer, thank you so much for the £50 donation.

the £50 donation.

Mayor of Oadby and Wigston, Clare Kozlowski, chose HOPE as one of the office's chosen charities for her year in the post.

During that time, Clare and her team hosted a range of events including Curry nights and a Carol service at Leicester Cathedral.



Thank you to Pyramid International, who are based in Whetstone, for this donation of some beautiful art to help our fundraising efforts!



Thank you so much Ashby Spa WI for the wonderful donation of £350.

It is part of the distribution of their yearly fundraising and we are delighted to be one of the chosen charities.



Award winners at the Hope office – celebrating selfless dedication to local cancer research

Leicester Cancer Research

At the Leicester NIHR BRC Excellence Awards, local cancer researchers were well represented. Many team members were nominated for awards and we were delighted that Dr Harriet Walter was awarded the Director's Award and Professor Dean Fennell and the Leicester Mesothelioma Research Programme Team won the Industry Collaboration Award.

Dr Walter runs the Hope Cancer Trials Centre with a kindness, knowledge and ability that leaves us in awe. This award is incredibly well-deserved.



Dorothy Tomlinson

Dorothy won the Kathryn Burgess Volunteer of the Year Award at the VAL Awards 2025 and we couldn't think of anyone more deserving.

Dorothy has been volunteering in various roles since she was 14, starting as secretary of her local young people's group and becoming the volunteer editor of their regional and national magazines. She volunteered at her children's schools (which she continues to do today), with the Girl Guides and Brownies, at the Women's Institute and more, all while continuing to work. She was a local magistrate for 24 years and she began to volunteer at Hope Against Cancer all the way back in 2004!



Tracey Hallam

Tracey Hallam won the Outstanding Woman with Community Impact at The Women's Awards 2025.

Tracey is the Head of Corporate and Community Partnerships here at Hope Against Cancer. She worked with us from 2017 - 2019 and since she returned to the post she left during the pandemic she has indeed been a whirlwind of community impact!

Hope's partnerships with community groups, philanthropic businesses, and our supporters is going from strength to strength, which in turn supports our funding of some of the best cancer research in the world.

The Hope Business Club

This year the Hope Business Club made a huge announcement. We started a partnership with the Ian & Clare Mattioli Charitable Trust - supported by Mattioli Woods who now sponsor the club.

The objectives of this partnership are to strengthen ties with the business community, increase awareness of local cancer research initiatives and the importance of financial planning in supporting such causes, and to generate financial support for local cancer research through joint events and initiatives.

The Hope Business Club is a true partnership between local businesses and local charity.

We have also introduced a new tier system which is designed to allow each member to support Hope Against Cancer in a way that suits them.

If you would like to know more about the Hope Business Club, please contact our Partnerships team: tracey@hopeagainstcancer.org.uk | martin@hopeagainstcancer.org.uk



Donations made in memory

A huge thank you for donations made in the memory of the following people.

Elizabeth Andrews	Elaine Neave
Robert Beck	David Neves
Derek Fussell	Graham Poole
John Harbour	Jean Thornett
Alva Holmes	Andrew Trahearn
Eric Marriot	



How you can help support vital local cancer research and care

Become a Hope Volunteer Ambassador

Our group of incredible Volunteer Ambassadors speak to local people about the cancer research and care that happens locally and help support fundraising in their area.

They are our voice in their neighbourhood, and we would love it if you would like to join us too.

Please contact Martin at martin@hopeagainstcancer.org.uk or Tracey at tracey@hopeagainstcancer.org.uk or call **0116 270 0101** to learn more.



Donate or hold an event

If you would like to hold a fundraising event, the Hope Team is here to support you in any way we can.

Please contact Martin at martin@hopeagainstcancer.org.uk or Tracey at tracey@hopeagainstcancer.org.uk or call **0116 270 0101** to learn more.

If you would like to donate to us directly, you can do so quickly and easily on the Hope website: www.hopeagainstcancer.org.uk/donate



Share your stories with us

We are always grateful to speak to people about their experience with Hope Against Cancer as a supporter, attendee at the Hope Cancer Trials Centre or anything else they would like to share.

Your stories help connect people, they help to empower and inspire others and they help to share Hope.



Leave a legacy of HOPE

Gifts in Wills are so important, they allow us to plan for the long-term and provide the Hope Cancer Trials Centre with the stability to continue with their exceptional work.

If you are making or updating your Will, please remember HOPE.

Leave us a Google review

Google reviews are a powerful tool that can help boost our website to a new audience. They are easy and free, and they lift our story online.





Supporter Spotlight: Bharat Patel

Bharat Patel was a familiar face as a reporter on Central News until he became a freelance documentary producer, and he is a long-time HOPE supporter.

His adventurous early childhood meant that by the age of eight he had lived on three continents. He was one of the first Asian reporters on British radio and television and has written all about his experiences in his autobiography, *Indian Takeaway*.

Bharat very kindly donates all the profits from this book to HOPE.

He first encountered HOPE a decade ago when the charity commissioned a new fund-raising film. At this time, he was providing media training and making films for a range of organisations including Guide Dogs and the National Holocaust Museum. Bharat understands the power of visual storytelling and agreed to make our film.

He decided to write his autobiography after filming in India following an earthquake. On a day off he visited tombs of maharajas near Bhuj in Gujarat where there were two queues for admission: one for locals at ten rupees and one for foreign visitors, who paid 100 rupees. Bharat, who was born in the area and spoke Gujarati, joined the first queue but was refused admission on the grounds that he was 'a foreigner'. The experience made him examine his identity and consider his upbringing.

He asked his family hundreds of questions, uncovering many stories, discovering that his grandfather had twice been jailed by the British for supporting Mahatma Gandhi's Independence Movement and both his grandmothers were married by the age of two, as was the custom – though this was not revealed to them until they were 16.

Indian Takeaway details his childhood in India, Africa and England and the challenges faced by early Indian immigrants.

Bharat says, 'I didn't want these memories to die so I recorded them on scraps of paper until I had enough to write my book, which views a bewildering world through the eyes of a small boy.'

When he finished the book he decided any profits would go to charity and chose HOPE because, after making our film, he had a good understanding of what we do and the difference we make in our local area. We were thrilled by the offer!

But it isn't just a case of putting the book up for sale and sitting back. Bharat often speaks at University of the Third Age events, where he sells his book to the audience. He includes stories from the book and behind-the-scenes television moments like his interviews with the world's oldest donkey and the parrot which allegedly escaped to Spain and flew back three years later speaking Spanish!

He also reveals his chaotic humorous childhood growing up in a "madcap Indian family". Until he went to Zambia at the age of eight, he had never seen anyone from Africa or Europe.

"My uncle told me English people live in a land far far away where it is always cold and rainy and so they never go outside. Some English people lived in Zambia, where it was too hot for them, so they stayed indoors. Spotting an Englishman is like spotting a tiger. You only see them rarely!"

Bharat's experiences differed substantially from his expectations.

If you would like a taster, BBC Sounds have an abridged version of *Indian Takeaway* on their website – you'll need to google 'BBC Sounds,' 'Bharat Patel' and 'Indian Takeaway'. This audio version contains only 8,000 of the 67,000 words.

Indian Takeaway is available to purchase on our website.



The gift of HOPE

The concept of hope is not set in stone. It has different meanings for different people, yet we all understand the value of having hope.

This year, we have been speaking with friends of the charity who have a lived experience of cancer about what the word hope means to them.

We have had these messages made into decorations and we are sharing them in a range of different ways.

Each day in December a new one will appear on our social media and our website.

Across Leicestershire and Rutland organisations and businesses are displaying a tree of HOPE on which all the decorations are hanging. Alongside these there are collection tins and QR codes that link directly to our JustGiving campaign page.

We are privileged that businesses from all across our region have chosen to support a decoration through sponsorship.

We also have individuals, organisations and community groups fundraising for us with Christmas jumper days, quizzes and more – every person involved is helping to give the gift of HOPE.



If you would like to support the campaign, please contact our Partnerships team:
tracey@hopeagainstcancer.org.uk
martin@hopeagainstcancer.org.uk
 or call **0116 270 0101**



Alternatively, you can donate here:

www.justgiving.com/campaign/gift-of-hope-2025
 or scan the QR code.

At the end of December, if you or anyone you know has any unwanted gifts, please consider donating them to Hope Against Cancer, each one will be well-received and help us to fundraise in 2026.

Thank you



If you would like to contact our Partnerships team, please email Tracey Hallam: tracey@hopeagainstcancer.org.uk
Martin Robinson: martin@hopeagainstcancer.org.uk
or call **0116 270 0101**

You can find out all the details for our events on our website.



Scan the QR code or visit www.hopeagainstcancer.org.uk/hope-events

Hope and Soul: Saturday 10th January

From 7:00pm until 1:00am at 2Funky Music Cafe, get ready to dance the night away to some soulful tunes and beat the January blues, all in aid of HOPE!

The night will feature the British Collective, namely Don-e, Junior Giscombe and Omar.

These greats of British soul have performed, written for and recorded with many of the world's legends, including Stevie Wonder, Phyllis Hyman, Erykah Badu, Leon Ware and Angie Stone.

With a live performance from the wonderful singer Rhia-Cherie and DJ Paul Lewis on the decks throughout the night, it is sure to be one to enjoy!

You can book to attend on the event's ticket page: www.fatsoma.com/e/dcmzlvog/hope-and-soul



Then further on into 2026 we have:

If Alice Can, Anyone Can: 29th August

The 'If Alice Can, Anyone Can' fundraising cycle ride from Leicestershire to Norfolk returns in 2026.

Take on 125 miles in one day in aid of world-class local cancer research and care!

The 2025 event was an overwhelming success.

You can read all about it on our blog:

www.hopeagainstcancer.org.uk/hope-blog and you can see our montage on our YouTube channel [@hopeagainstcancerUK](https://www.youtube.com/@hopeagainstcancerUK)



We have two Business Club Lunches where our guests connect with each other and hear inspiring stories from the dual perspectives of a local person with a lived experience of cancer and a local researcher.

The first one is on 30th April at Leicester Racecourse.



Challenge the Wild: 17th - 19th June

Challenge the Wild takes teams of intrepid fundraisers to the Lake District for an adventure like no other!

Take on the adventure of a lifetime and face your fears with Challenge the Wild in the breath-taking Lake District, all while raising vital funds for Hope Against Cancer.



Our Annual Golf Day: 26th June 2026

We only have a few team places remaining for our annual golf day at Luffenham Heath Golf Club. If you would like to join us, please contact our Partnerships team.

Our guests include senior business leaders from across the region and the day offers an extraordinary opportunity to network, build relationships and present your brand to key players in the business world through sponsorship.

Contact us or visit our events page to learn more.



The Hope Ball Returns: 9th October

We haven't held a Ball since 2018 and people were so eager for its return that tickets were sold out just three days after it was announced!

If you would like to join our waiting list, please email tracey@hopeagainstcancer.org.uk

