

doorstep

Latest news from Rennie Grove

Spring 2019

Planning for the future Rennie Grove Hospice Care Strategy 2019-22

The challenges we face across the country in caring for our increasingly elderly population regularly hit the headlines with the spotlight often falling on the pressures faced by the NHS and social care system. Although Rennie Grove only receives 13% of its annual costs from the NHS, it is already playing a key part in supporting our local NHS services to care for patients with life-limiting illness at the end of life. As we work on setting our new strategy for 2019-22, we are focusing on how we can continue to respond to the national challenges and ensure that local people receive the best end-of-life care possible.

National challenges

- More people are living to an older age, often with one or more life-limiting conditions
- 48% of them die in hospitals
- In the next 20 years the number of people dying at 85 or older will rise steeply once more
- More people are living in care homes as they near the end of their lives
- The NHS and social care system is struggling to cope with current demand

Responding to these challenges – our strategy for 2019-22

At Rennie Grove, we aim to keep people living as well and as independently as they can for as long as possible. Our 24/7 responsive hospice at home service is already very effective at giving local people with life-limiting illnesses a real choice about where they die. By planning their care and responding quickly to changes in their conditions we are able to help avoid unnecessary hospital admissions and keep people at home if that is where they want to be. On average, 90% of Rennie Grove patients who tell us they want to die at home, are able to achieve this wish. Nationally, just 22% of people die at home.

The thinking behind our new strategy has highlighted four main ways that we can help deliver high quality, end-of-life care for the increasing number of people in our local community who need it.

What we will do:

- We will work more closely with GPs and other community referrers to identify people with life-limiting illnesses who will benefit from our care
- We will encourage referrals at an earlier stage with the aim of caring for people as soon as they need us
- We will provide flexible and personalised care and support based around patients and their families and carers
- We will develop our work with care and residential homes to provide training for staff and better care for patients

The impact this will have:

- More people will have access to our care and support at an earlier stage, enabling everyone to plan better for the end of life and avoid unnecessary hospital admissions
- Patients, carers and family members will feel supported, reducing breakdowns and keeping patients at home
- Staff in care homes will be more skilled in caring for those at the end of life, reducing the need for hospital admissions
- Patients in care homes will have more choice and benefit from better end-of-life experiences

We plan to support these main strands of our clinical strategy with continuing drives to ensure efficiency throughout the organisation and to engage with and value our supporters, without whom we will not be able to provide this care in the years to come.



Keeping patients at home – Paul's story

Paul was diagnosed with a large, aggressive brain tumour in December 2015. Despite the increasing complexity of his condition, he was able to remain at home, with his family, for another two years. His wife, Beverley, explains the role the Rennie Grove nurses played in making that happen...

“Paul was always adamant that he didn't want to go into hospital or a hospice. But there's no way he could have stayed at home without the help of the Rennie Grove nurses.

Story continues on page 3

Welcome to the spring edition of Doorstep. As I mark the anniversary of my first year as Chief Executive at Rennie Grove I have been reflecting on how proud I am to be leading an organisation making such a difference to so many families in Herts and Bucks.



I have seen excellent care for patients and families being delivered every day, but I have also seen the challenges of continuing to provide this care for more people with the limited resources available. I have been very encouraged to see that we have such fantastic support from businesses, groups and individuals in our local community. It has been a privilege to meet so many passionate and dedicated supporters and volunteers without whom we could not deliver our care.

As you can see from our front page article, we face considerable challenges for the future but we have clear plans for how we can develop our services to meet them. With continued pressure on NHS finances, it is unlikely that we will see any increase in the 13% of our costs currently contributed by statutory bodies. This means that we will be more dependent than ever on the generosity of our local community to be able to care for more people into the future. As one of our valued supporters, I am incredibly grateful to you for everything you do and I hope you will continue to support the vital service we provide for our local community. I wonder if I could also ask you to do one more thing - spread the word about Rennie Grove among your colleagues, friends and family? This will really help us to widen our supporter base and meet the challenges of funding future care. Thank you once again and very best wishes.

Stewart Marks

Open Up Hospice Care - A Taste of Home

March sees the launch of the national "Open Up Hospice Care" campaign. The aim is to raise awareness that hospice care should be available to all those who want it. It is especially pertinent to us here at Rennie Grove as one of the key messages is that hospice care is so much more than a building where you go to die.

You can help ensure that people get hospice care when they need it by getting involved in the fundraising component of the campaign "Taste of Home". It's easy to take part; all you need to do is to invite friends and family round for a simple meal; ask your guests to donate what they can afford and send the money you raise to Rennie Grove Hospice Care. Your donation will help ensure that we can reach even more people when they need it.



➡ For more ideas and practical help on running a Taste of Home fundraising event please visit renniegrove.org/tasteofhome

Your views count so please take our Doorstep survey

We are keen to make sure that our newsletter contains the kind of information and news from Rennie Grove that you, our valued supporters, are most interested in. So we will be really grateful if you could spare a few minutes to complete a short survey giving us your views. The survey is available online at smartsurvey.co.uk/s/renniegrovenewslettersurvey/ or if you would prefer to complete a paper copy then please use the survey enclosed.

Keep in touch:

Registered office: Grove House, Waverley Road, St Albans AL3 5QX T: 01727 731000

Tring office: Rennie House, Unit 3, Icknield Way Industrial Estate, Tring HP23 4JX T: 01442 890222

South Bucks office: Gillian King House, Hodgemoor View, Three Households, Chalfont St Giles HP8 4LS T: 01494 877200

Retail & Trading: Bainbridge House, 2 Northbridge Road, Berkhamsted HP4 1EH T: 01442 871627

✉ info@renniegrove.org

🌐 www.renniegrove.org

📘 RennieGroveHospiceCare

🐦 @renniegrove

📷 @renniegrovehospicecare

🌐 Rennie Grove Hospice Care



Registered Charity no. 1140386

Any gift in a Will, little or large, goes a long way

Gifts left in Wills make a real difference and in recent years have helped to fund one in three of our experienced, specially trained nurses.

Such gifts enable us to meet the needs of local adults and children and their families today – and also to plan ahead, safe in the knowledge that the funding will be there to secure our vital services for other families who need us, tomorrow and beyond.



We wouldn't be able to provide this vital support without the kindness of people like Emma Saunders.

Emma was just 17 when her dad Ian was nursed by Rennie Grove's Hospice At Home nurses for 18 months, until he passed away, aged 58. It was a life-changing time, and even though it was a decade ago, Emma has never forgotten the help her family received from Rennie Grove. "It was invaluable to have him with us, the people who loved him most, in the familiarity of our own home, for the last few days of his life," says Emma.

Her experience prompted Emma to write a Will

and to include Rennie Grove as a beneficiary.

Emma added, "I will be eternally grateful for the help they gave us. I know that any donation, little or large, goes a long way in helping provide their services, so hopefully it means another young person like me can receive the same level of comfort and care if a big loss is ever sprung upon them too."

➡ **For more information about how to leave a gift in your Will, go to renniegrove.org/legacy or call 01442 507344.**

A time to remember

Our annual 'Time for Remembering and Celebrating Life' events are a wonderful opportunity for those who have experienced the death of a loved one to remember and celebrate their life.

The date for 2019 is Sunday 23 June and the venues are Tylers Green Village Hall, Church Road, Penn HP10 8LP and Grove House, Waverley Road, St Albans AL3 5QX (in the grounds of St Albans City Hospital). We hold an event in Bucks and in Herts to reflect the area in which we provide services.

Each event starts at 3pm so please get in touch with our Family Support Team on 01442 890222 or family.support@renniegrove.org to book your place at what promises to be both a poignant and uplifting occasion.



....continued from front page

They arranged for physios, a speech therapist, special equipment, commode, zimmer frame, hospital bed and carers to visit four times a day.

They liaised with the doctor for us. They took all sorts of stressful things out of our hands so we had time just to be together.

"Just being able to talk so openly about what's worrying you... have really frank discussions – be really open – ask the questions that no-one wants to ask, but which you need to know the answers to if you're going to get through this. That's something the Rennie Grove nurses bring that should never be underestimated. You can't put a price tag on that sort of support.

"The nurses also arranged for 'just in case' medication, which gave us real peace of mind and time to think and talk about it before we needed it. This made it so much easier to deal with each stage of Paul's illness.

"Because we had the JIC meds, when we needed to call the Rennie Grove nurses out in the middle of the night, they could come and increase the dose almost immediately. It meant Paul remained as comfortable as possible and didn't have to be admitted to hospital, which he would have hated.

... there's no way he could have stayed at home without the help of the Rennie Grove nurses.

"One time we'd called them out, and Paul had gone back to sleep when they arrived. But they still stayed and spent an hour talking to me. That made such a difference; just having that support and the chance to off-load to someone who understood and could reassure me I was doing OK. Their support and the network they set up gets the whole family through. They weren't just looking after Paul but me, Kat, Andy, my parents... their care is all-encompassing.

"We were all able to be there as he passed – even our 18-year-old cat, Billy, who'd been velcroed to Paul since he got ill. That might not have been possible had we been in hospital.

"Almost a year on, I still sometimes see one of the Rennie Grove nurses in my local pub and in the supermarket. The first thing she does is to come straight over and give me a big hug. That means so much and it shows how the bond builds up between you. They are specialists in their field but it feels like it's more than just a job to them. They work with such unwavering commitment... it gives you hope and it restores your faith in humanity to see how such a tragic situation brings out the best in people."

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retail news

Expert Tom coins it in

'Look after the pennies and the pounds will look after themselves' is a phrase that applies perfectly to coin expert and Rennie Grove volunteer **TOM BLAKE**. Tom has helped raise more than £10,000 for us by meticulously sorting through cash donations from supporters to ensure that they realise their true worth. The coins come from collection boxes and buckets and from any one of our 27 retail outlets where we invite supporters to donate any unwanted currency.

Tom has found gold Sovereigns and Half Sovereigns that have raised hundreds of pounds when auctioned on eBay. He has also identified foreign coins and notes from every corner of the world that have collector's value. Even those overlooked Euro coins that make their way back home from recent holidays are rounded up by Tom who arranges for them to be taken back to Europe where they are cashed in.

"I have spent virtually all my life as a collector," said Tom, whose coin expertise means that he is known officially as a numismatist. And he is so devoted to the study of coins that he has notebooks where he has diligently written down the details of every sale for the six years that he has been a Rennie Grove volunteer.

"It all adds up," says Tom, who hopes to double the £10,000 that his keen eye has already raised for Rennie Grove, a cause that has become particularly important to him following the loss of close relatives to cancer.

"I hope we can make a lot of money for Rennie Grove. Let's keep it coming," he says.



Super Sandra

Three of Rennie Grove's charity shops are lucky enough to benefit from the creative skills of volunteer SANDRA CRANNAGE.

Sandra has been volunteering in Rennie Grove's shops for more than five years splitting her time between Holmer Green, Tring and most recently our boutique-style shop in Berkhamsted.

Shop manager Pauline Cairns said: "Sandra has real creative talent and is it mostly down to her that our team scooped the runner up prize in a national charity shop window competition recently. In addition to working in the shop and producing wonderful window displays, Sandra makes display items in her own time too and her natural creative flair really helps to entice people into the shop."

Sandra said: "In my working life I created floral displays for weddings so I am pleased to be able to make use of those skills to create items to enhance our shop windows. Over winter I made garlands using ivy and greenery and I'm currently making hearts for Valentine's Day.

"The secret of a good window is to work with what you have; I like to pick out a dress then accessorise it using jewellery, a bag and shoes."

A big thank you to Sandra and to our legion of shop volunteers and staff who all contribute to making our shops the destination of choice for shoppers seeking a quality bargain and a warm welcome.

👉 If you'd like to find out more about joining our team of volunteers, please go to renniegrove.org/volunteer or email us on volunteer@renniegrove.org

retail news

Maylands shop – one year on

Just before Christmas, our Maylands shop in Hemel Hempstead celebrated its first anniversary.

Manager Sam Darvill said, "Most of Maylands Avenue where we are sited is under construction which means that come Friday afternoons we have an influx of workmen who come in for a fresh t shirt to wear to the pub as they finish early! We are next to a tanning shop which is hugely busy and while waiting their turn we get a lot of their customers in our shop.

We've enjoyed becoming part of the community and recruiting a new band of volunteers who have worked really hard with us to make our first year such a good one. I'm really happy to see some regular faces who visit us because they feel we are worth the trip. One customer comes from Chesham each week and others are using our service which really compounds for me and the volunteers why the charity is so important."

👉 To find your local shop, please go to renniegrove.org/shoplocations



Join our team

We have 27 shops across Bucks and Herts and our retail team is the face of Rennie Grove in the community.

Visit renniegrove.org/jobs to take a look at our current vacancies.

WEIRD, WONDERFUL AND WHACKY

Take a look at some of the unusual items that have been donated to some of our charity shops recently:

- * A single mounted antler
- * A stylish piggy bank
- * A cat toilet training system



And although we can make use of practically all donations, one that we were sadly unable to make use of comprised empty and almost empty paint pots along with an almost used up toilet roll and another which was a can of worms - literally!



goodbye

Just recently we have said – or are just about to say - fond farewells to several members of the Rennie Grove team who have worked with us at all levels across the organisation, in a variety of roles, some for many, many years. To each of these people we would like to say a heartfelt thank you for your contribution and dedication. For those who have moved to pastures new we wish them well in their new ventures and to others who have retired we wish them good health and happy days.

Sue Varvel announces retirement



Sue Varvel has announced that she will be retiring from her post as Director of Nursing and Clinical Services in May 2019 after a spending 31 years of her career at Rennie Grove and, previously, Iain Rennie Hospice at Home.

Talking to Sue about her time at Rennie Grove, she told us: “Looking back, I feel so lucky that I have been in an organisation where I was able to maintain and develop the caring ethos of nursing that took me into the nursing profession in the beginning. I am immensely proud of the service that Rennie Grove delivers and how the 24/7 hospice at home service in particular has been able to adapt and grow while still maintaining a high quality service for an ever-increasing number of patients and families. I believe this forms an excellent foundation on which to build into the future.

“Our hospice at home service has been delivering high quality hospice at home care in the community for nearly 35 years and has exactly the model of care that the government and NHS see as the way forward. Rennie Grove is already a key player in palliative care in the region and with its unique

approach is well-placed to play a leading role in shaping the provision of services in the future.

“What is so special about Rennie Grove is the loyalty and support we receive. I am so proud of the support we get from our local community and so grateful for the continued commitment which has meant that as fundraising targets go up to enable us to care for more patients, the community always steps up and delivers what is needed. It’s a true community service – funded by the local community, for the local community.

“I also see tremendous loyalty among our staff and it is immensely encouraging that we continue to attract high quality staff, especially given the current national shortage of nurses. I have worked with some wonderful people during my time and learned so much from everyone, growing not just as a nurse, but a person too.

“I feel privileged that I have been able to influence care for patients over the years but it is the right time for me to leave now. Of course I will be incredibly sad to leave everyone but I know that I will stay in touch and will watch with great pride as Rennie Grove continues to grow and flourish. I would like to take this opportunity to wish my successor well and I hope they have the same wonderful career at Rennie Grove that I’ve had.”



We are also saying goodbye and thank you to Rennie Grove’s Trustee and Treasurer, CHRIS LANGFORD.

Chris has been volunteering with us for over 27 years, initially as the charity’s Treasurer when the job included helping to write up the books through to providing strategic support and advice as the role has evolved. Chris said, “During my years in the role I have been privileged to work with many enthusiastic and committed people and I have thoroughly enjoyed my involvement. The fantastic care given by the nurses and family support team has always been centred on helping keep patients and families together at home and I always get a very proud feeling when meeting people who say what wonderful care they have received from Rennie Grove.”

Chris has also been involved in a number of fundraising events - he was the inaugural Chairman of The Hospice Lottery Partnership when it formed in 1997 and together with Vice Presidents, Bob Mayson and Peter Drury, has been responsible for raising over £280,000 from 12 successful sports evenings and a further £80,000 from 2 wonderful concerts at the Abbey, St Albans. We are very pleased that Chris has no plans to retire from fundraising and already has plans for another concert in the Abbey in July!

Mary Robson

It was with great sadness that we learned of the death of Mary Robson in January. Mary was one of the five nurses who worked together to care for Iain Rennie, our very first hospice at home patient, in 1985. Mary and her husband Eric both subsequently played significant roles in the founding of the new charity Iain Rennie Hospice at Home, now Rennie Grove Hospice Care. We send our deepest sympathies to Mary’s family.

volunteers



Therapy dogs bring joy to day hospice patients

Kasper, Freddie and Scooby are a trio of Pets As Therapy (PAT) dogs that regularly visit the Day Hospice at Grove House bringing comfort, affection and tail wags to our patients, volunteers and staff.

Jane and Freddie visit Grove House on Wednesdays. Jane said: "Freddie is a true member of the volunteering team and he enjoys receiving pats and cuddles and definitely knows where to find the dog treat jar! I enjoy meeting and chatting to the patients. I was supported by Rennie Grove so wanted to do something to thank them for their help."

Anna and Kasper visit Grove House on Thursday afternoons. Anna said: "We love it! Admittedly, Kasper's love may well stem from the knowledge that the nurses have a stock of dog biscuits but nevertheless he has a waggy tail throughout the time we spend there. I love it because it is such a happy atmosphere and I have met and chatted to so many lovely people. It's great to be able to share my beloved Kasper with others, he is a particularly beautiful and calm presence to spend time with, and it has been very gratifying to notice that even people who initially claim a dislike of dogs have found him so."

Poppy Montgomery-Ward, Clinical Services Manager at Grove House said: "PAT dogs make a wonderful addition to our Day Hospice activities and our patients are always thrilled to see them."

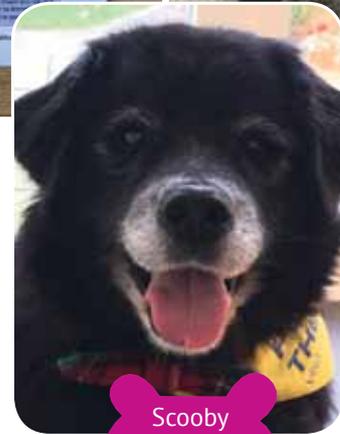
Karen and Scooby have been visiting Grove House for almost 4 years and now Scooby is hanging up his lead and taking a well-earned retirement. Karen said: "Scooby will miss his visits - especially the fuss and biscuits - because everyone is so friendly and welcoming and you get such a good feeling to see the smiles on people's faces when Scooby trots into the room."



Kasper



Freddie



Scooby

👉 **If you would like to know more about the PAT charity and how to join with your dog (or cat) please visit petsastherapy.org or call 01865 671440 and to enquire about visiting Grove House please get in touch with our Volunteering Team on 01727 731020 or email volunteer@renniegrove.org**

Complementary therapy

Anne Clarke joined our team of volunteer therapists when she saw how much a friend with breast cancer benefited from our services.

"The minute I walked through the doors of Grove House back in 2013 I knew it was where I wanted to be, and that becoming a volunteer was what I wanted to do. It felt welcoming, safe and full of care and love," recalls Anne. "It's a wonderful place to be part of and see."

Nearly six years later and complementary therapist Anne is one of the valued and indispensable members of the Rennie Grove family, working closely with nursing staff and other volunteers. "We're a team," says Anne, who offers patients a calm and gentle space to unwind and unravel their thoughts and emotions.

"I sometimes carry out Reiki, an ancient Japanese therapy to balance natural energy flow, combined with gentle music, massage oil, aromatherapy oils in a diffuser and fluffy white towels to create a non-medical experience in a medical setting. Sometimes people come to my room because they need support and I will direct them to the nurses and perhaps mention other services that are available, but sometimes people just want to relax and I'm very happy to be there for them."



👉 **If you are a qualified therapist and would like to join our team working either at Grove House or in patients' homes in Herts and Bucks please get in touch with our Volunteer Services Team on 01442 890222 or volunteer@renniegrove.org**

A Day in the Life ...

Following 25 years in the nursing profession in a range of front-line and managerial roles, **THERESA MANN** joined Rennie Grove Hospice Care as **Head of Nursing and Clinical Services (Bucks)** in August 2018.

0830 Theresa's day usually starts by answering emails and liaising with her nursing teams in Bucks, dealing with any matters that may need her input. Rennie Grove's IT system means that Theresa can do this from any of our bases or remotely via her laptop and mobile phone if she is attending an external meeting.

1000 Theresa's first meeting of the day is at South Bucks Day Hospice at Butterfly House in High Wycombe; Rennie Grove has a really good relationship with the staff working there. People are often surprised to learn that Rennie Grove works so closely with other hospices, but it is quite usual for hospices to work together to meet the needs and wishes of their patients. Some patients choose to receive the majority of their end-of-life care at home before spending their final few days in a hospice building.

Joining Theresa at the meeting is her team. They make up the Bucks Leader Group that meets twice a month. As well as a list of priority actions that the group set when it was first established and to standardise practices across the four nursing teams in Bucks, the group deals with professional matters as they arise and considers ways of improving the service for patients.

Successes so far include creating a new Central Nursing Team to help even out the workload and reduce some travel time, and redesigning the monthly data and statistics report that goes to the senior management team so that it contains more detail and is easier to interpret.

Today the group are using their meeting time to get together with the Director of Clinical Services at Butterfly House to explore ways of increased joint working, making services as supportive as possible so that they benefit



the quality of life for patients and their loved ones. Actively encouraging patients to attend Physio or Complementary Therapies at Butterfly House is a great way of enabling this in practice.

1300 Theresa arrives at Gillian King House and after catching up on emails and having a quick lunch she makes a phone call to a family member who had written in about the care their loved one had received. The feedback was very positive but there were a couple of questions asked that would be much more

easily explained by having a conversation. What our patients and their families tell us about our services is very important to us. Sometimes it means that we can make changes or improvements or pass on positive feedback to nurses involved in delivery of care to a loved one.

1400 Theresa meets with one of her nurse specialists to make final arrangements in advance of interviews taking place the following day. They run through the questions each will ask and review the candidates' application forms.

1600 The last hour of the working day is spent reading and responding to emails and catching up with documents that need to be read and actioned.

1930 Theresa's day hasn't ended yet. She's accompanying one of her senior nurses and a colleague from the volunteering team to speak to a local women's group.

After an introduction and a talk from one of the Rennie Grove shop managers, Theresa continues with an overview of the work of Rennie Grove Hospice Care and explains about the importance of the charity's volunteers and supporters. The nurse follows on with a very well-received talk about her role

as a Specialist Nurse caring for patients at the end of their lives and some of her amazing and uplifting experiences.

Theresa's role is varied and wide-ranging. Every day she provides support and clinical leadership to Rennie Grove's nursing teams across Buckinghamshire. A key part of her role is to raise the profile of Rennie Grove and the role of our nurses with healthcare organisations in Bucks.

Theresa's reflection on her role "I knew about Rennie Grove from professional and a personal experience before I joined the charity and I love working here. The quality of care our nurses provide to their patients is second to none and I am so proud to work for a charity that is able to care for so many patients at home."