

History

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1990

Mayor of St Helens, Councillor Ken Cleary, raised more than £28,000 for the proposed Hospice during his year in office.

St Helens Council generously donated four acres of land in a quiet, peaceful location, convenient for local rail and bus services. It is also in close proximity to Whiston Hospital and borders both Knowsley and St Helens Boroughs.

1991

A Steering Committee, led by Lady Kirsty Pilkington, was formed to assess both the need and the financial viability of a Hospice.

For three years, the Mayors of St Helens chose to utilise their annual Mayor's Charity Appeal to support the proposed Hospice.

1992

The Committee was set up to raise the money needed to build the Hospice – estimated at £1.8m which included the cost of the building and equipping the unit, with any surplus being allocated to the first year's running costs.

A Business Plan was prepared.

A Project Group was also formed to oversee the design and building of the Hospice.

1993

On Sunday, 28th February the Mayors of St Helens and Knowsley gathered with a packed congregation at St Thomas Church, Westfield Street, for a special celebration service as the campaign to raise £1.8m moved into top gear.

1994

An outline specification of the Hospice was prepared.

The first shop in Westfield Street, St Helens, opened moving to premises in Bridge Street in March 1996.

The Fundraising Office opened in Corporation Street. Due to the expansion of the Hospice activities and lack of space, the office then moved upstairs above the shop in Bridge Street in 1995 and then subsequently to Claughton Street in early 1997.

1st September 1994 – the first employee appointed was Les Johnston as Director of Fundraising.

1994/1995

As part of the fundraising efforts, the Willowbrook Hospice Lottery was launched with the first winners being drawn on 15th September, 1995 by Billy Butler and Wally!

Architects, quantity surveyors, builders appointed.

18th February 1995 marked the raising of 1 million towards making the dream tangible and achievable.

1996

Lord Derby, a patron and supporter of the Hospice, turns the sod and the building work starts at Portico Lane.

1997

The Hospice, originally known as St Helens & Knowsley Hospice, opened its doors to its first Day Therapy patients on 20th July.

A second shop, in Earlestown, opened.

A Service of Dedication for the work of the Hospice was held on Tuesday, 20th May in the Hospice Chapel.

The first Tree of Lights event was held in the grounds of the Hospice in December 1997.

1998

The Hospice admitted its first in-patient in July 1998.

1999

On Tuesday, 18th May 1999 Her Royal Highness, Princess Alexandra, officially opened the Hospice. From this date the name of the Hospice changed from St Helens & Knowsley Hospice and was known as Willowbrook Hospice to convey reassurance, comfort and tranquillity in a lovely environment.

2000

The small shop within the Hospice Reception started selling small gifts and cards.

2004

The Community Macmillan Team was based on site at Willowbrook as part of the integration of Hospice, Hospital and Community for the benefit of patients and families.

2005

Neil Wright, Chief Executive, appointed in April

2006

Our third shop, located in Thatto Heath, opened.

Healthcare Commission Inspection Report credits Willowbrook with being the only Hospice in the country to meet all required standards.

2007

Willowbrook Hospice has been open for 10 years and celebrates its anniversary by holding various fundraising events in aid of the Hospice.

Our fourth shop, located in Prescot, opened in April 2007.

The Future

It costs 5000 per day to run the Hospice. Only one third of the running costs of the Hospice is provided by the Government; the other two thirds of this money has to be raised from the generosity of the local community.

A further shop is planned in Rainford in 2007 to raise much needed funds.

Ten years on, consideration is having to be given to expansion of the building to improve facilities for patients, their carers and families and to accommodate an Outpatient Clinic and Day Therapy facilities.

