

40th Birthday – delivering outstanding care for 40 years

It all started in 1981 when Dr Peter Gillam, a consultant physician in Salisbury, felt there was a great need for better palliative care provision in the area.

Terminally ill patients were cared for on general wards, with limited provision made for their end of life needs. He became a founding member of Salisbury Hospice Care Trust, now known as Salisbury Hospice Charity. The original aim was to establish a Home (Domiciliary) Nursing Team and a Day Centre. Derrick Alford, then Mayor of Salisbury, chose the charity for the Mayor's Appeal and the work began.

The trust continued to raise funds and it was through the incredible generosity and support of the local community that over £500,000 was raised which paid for a purpose-built hospice.

On 29th September 1987, HRH The Duchess of Kent officially opened what we know today as Salisbury Hospice. Originally the Salisbury Macmillan Unit, named in acknowledgement of their help in funding the nursing posts for the first three years.

A popular misconception...

After the initial 3 years there was, and never has been any further funding from Macmillan.

The hospice has evolved and expanded over the years. Some note-worthy dates and milestones:

1987 – Salisbury MacMillan Unit is opened by HRH The Duchess of Kent

Funded entirely by money raised in the community, the building with its six-bedded in-patient unit, was handed over to the NHS who had planned to take over full responsibility for its running costs. Financial constraints on the NHS meant this could not happen and the charity pledged to meet the shortfall in funding required.



1995 – The hospice renamed as The Salisbury Hospice and an extension providing a further 4 beds opened

During the time of extension and rebuilding of the hospice, it was decided to rename the building to avoid confusion and reflect that no funding was received from Macmillan. A very important new feature was the Peter Gillam Day Centre.



“As Senior Nurse/Manager I was responsible for all aspects of the nursing and running of the hospice but was also involved with the trust, taking minutes at the meetings, writing thank you letters and anything else that needed doing.”

Caroline Waldman

2011 – New Flooring Installed

The hospice temporarily relocated to the main hospital while new flooring was installed to conform to infection control guidelines.

2014 – Hospice wins grant for major refurbishment

£528,000 was awarded by Help the Hospices and the Department of Health to refurbish and update the hospice. Once again, the hospice relocated as the 12 weeks of work were undertaken. Improvements included more on-suite bathrooms and an additional room making all 10 rooms single occupancy. Better patient, visitor and volunteer facilities with an emphasis on internal design, art, colour and lighting all created a more comforting and sensitive environment.

2016 – Hospice at Home launched

Providing hands-on care during the last stages of a life limiting illness. Supporting families and allowing patients the choice of where to die. The service is fully funded by Salisbury Hospice Charity.

In some ways the service is very different to how it was when it began 40 years ago, but in other ways perhaps it hasn't changed at all. Patients and their families over the years have received the same loving, nurturing, exceptional care which has had a huge impact on thousands of lives, and indeed deaths, in our community. Some staff seem to have been here forever, others are new to hospice care but all have a real desire to make living and dying the best it can possibly be.

There are reminders around the hospice of the wonderful people who helped make this possible, most especially the Peter Gillam Day Care Centre which reminds us daily of Dr Gillam and the incredible vision he had.

Over the years the contribution made by Salisbury Hospice Charity to purchase care for patients at the hospice has risen steadily and the charity now aims to raise over £1.5 million each year to ensure patients and their families continue to receive this vital and exceptional care for the next 40 years. Your support really is our future.