



# Gort Cancer Support

*Supporting People affected by Cancer*

MARCH 2024

ISSUE 14

## Welcome to the March 2024 edition of our newsletter.

2024 has started off even busier than last year, in which we had a **50% increase** in new clients, **110% increase** in those who require driving services, **66% increase** in those requiring reflexology services, **55% increase** in acupuncture services, **52% increase** in our counselling services and **220% increase** in our play therapy service.

Now, more than ever, we need your support to enable us to continue providing all our support services to people affected by cancer.

Fortunately, according to the National Cancer Registry Ireland, there had been a 50% increase in numbers of cancer survivors compared with a decade ago.

### 'Wear Blue for Hollyblue'

We are excited to announce the launch of our inaugural blue-themed fundraiser, "Wear Blue for Hollyblue", which will take place on Friday 3rd May 2024.



This event draws inspiration from the name of our centre Hollyblue House, which is named after the Holly Blue butterfly. This tiny blue species can be found in certain parts of the Burren. Just as this delicate blue butterfly symbolizes renewal and resilience, our fundraiser aims to uplift and support those affected by cancer.

We are asking local schools, businesses and individuals to show their support by wearing any shade of blue clothes and making a donation to our centre. You can donate online at <https://www.idonate.ie/fundraiser/wearblue4hollyblue>, drop your donation into our support centre or pay the donation directly into our bank account IBAN IE55BOFI90386766164948. Perhaps you might take things one step further and organise a blue-themed bake sale – blueberry muffins, blue velvet cupcakes and more!



All funds raised go towards providing services free of charge to those impacted by a cancer diagnosis in South Galway and North Clare.

On May 3rd dig out those blue jeans, blue dress, or blue jersey and put on your favourite blue attire. Share your photos on social media using the hashtag #WearBlue4Hollyblue and be sure to tag us.

Please tell your friends, family and colleagues about "Wear Blue for Hollyblue". Encourage them to participate and support our cause. Every euro helps!

**#WearBlue4Hollyblue**

## Peer Support

Our Peer Support Group resumed on 9th January and despite the dismal weather we were very happy to welcome everybody back.

When you are diagnosed with cancer, you may experience shock, anger or disbelief. You may feel intense sadness, fear and a sense of loss. Even the most supportive family members and friends cannot understand exactly how it feels unless they have received a cancer diagnosis themselves. This may cause you to feel lonely, misunderstood or isolated.

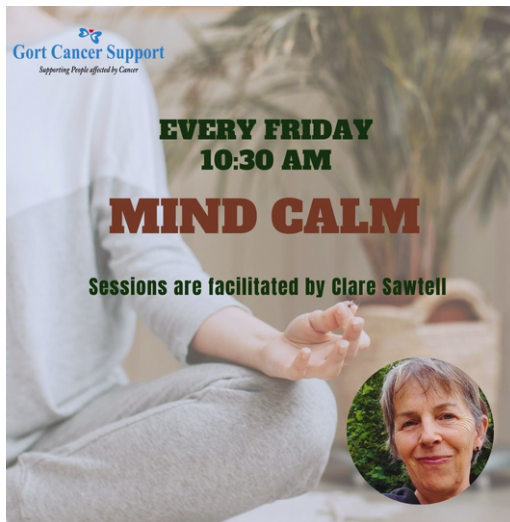
Finding a support group is a way for you to interact with other people who have similar, first-hand experiences with cancer. You can talk to them about their experiences and share your own. This can help reduce stress.

Our monthly support group is for anyone with a cancer diagnosis who is looking for a confidential space to share feelings and experiences, and thereby benefit from the support of others in a similar position within the safe and supported space of Hollyblue House. Our group is facilitated by one of our counsellors, Anne Gallagher.



***"Anything is possible when you have  
the right people there to support you"***  
***~ Misty Copeland***

## Mind Calm



Life throws chaos at us on a regular basis and in response, we just keep on pushing through, surviving on adrenaline. We over stretch ourselves; we drink another coffee; we complete just one more task. If we keep pushing ourselves all the time, we think we will eventually be able to get things done. But all that does is burn us out, drain our strength and lead to exhaustion. So we were delighted to introduce a new relaxation and meditation class on 10th January.

Mind Calm is a simple meditation technique that, with some practice, can give you a place to rest beyond the chatter of thinking. It can enable you to experience peace with what you're feeling and with what is going on in your life.

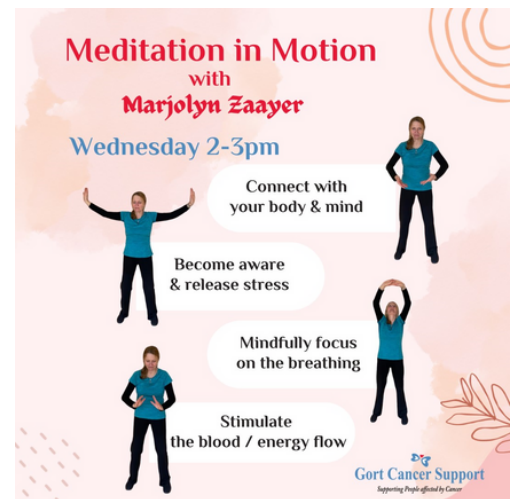
The class is free of charge & open to anyone affected by a cancer diagnosis.

## Meditation in Motion with Marjolyn.

This series of gentle flowing movements will help you to connect with your body and mind. They will also help you to release stress, tension and pain.

Mindfully focusing on your breathing as well as your movements will help stimulate your blood and energy flow. It will relax and strengthen your body and mind as well as improving your posture, balance and general wellbeing.

The class is suitable for all ages and abilities and is open to anyone affected by a cancer diagnosis.



## Table Quiz

Many thanks to everyone who supported our table quiz in Sullivan's on Thursday 22nd March. It was a great turnout and we hope you all enjoyed the evening.

With an amazing score of 92 out of a 100, well done to the winning team of Michael Mahon, Joseph Keehan, Diarmuid Diviney and Tony Diviney. Our runners up were Paul O'Donnell, Gerard O'Rourke and Michael Joyce.



We want to thank our excellent quizmaster, Tom Prior, for preparing all the questions and overseeing events last night.

A special Thank You to Mary Cunniffe and the team in Sullivan's hotel, Áine Kelly, Angela Keane, Anne McInerney, Regina Monaghan and PJ Downey for all their help in relation to this event. We are grateful to anyone who donated a prize for the event.



## Volunteer Morning

It was so lovely to have several of our volunteers get together in the studio at Hollyblue House on 20th February. They don't often get the opportunity to meet and chat.

We really appreciate all that our volunteers do to help in our centre, whether it's being a 'Meet & Greet' volunteer and welcoming all visitors to our centre, or whether they are one of our many volunteer drivers who bring people to their chemotherapy or radiotherapy appointments. A special thanks to Angela Finn, our volunteer representative on committee, for her delicious baking for today - it went down a treat.

If you have a few hours a week to spare and are interested in finding out more about volunteering in our centre, then please get in touch on 086 172 4500.



## Best wishes Maura Costello

Some of our committee and volunteers gathered on 29th February to say a fond farewell to our Treasurer Maura Costello, who's moving away from Gort to be nearer family.

It's hard to find the right words to convey our gratitude to Maura for all she has done for our charity over the last 7 years. Always accurate and precise with her figures but equally one to enjoy the banter, Maura will be sorely missed. All the best Maura!



## St Patrick's Day Parade

It was great to have both committee members and volunteers participating in this year's Gort St Patrick's Day Parade. This year's theme was Sports & Leisure, which provided us with an ideal opportunity to showcase some of the activities available in Hollyblue House, such as Yoga, Activator Pole Walking, Tai Chi and Chair Yoga.



We were blessed that the day stayed fine and there was a great crowd in Gort to witness the colourful parade of local groups, sports clubs and organisations.



Participating in this event was a wonderful opportunity for us to raise awareness about the services we provide.

## Easter Flower Demonstration

It was a pleasure to have Mary Cannon of Florabunda Florist at Hollyblue House on Thursday 21st March for an Easter floral demonstration.

Mary is so skilled in what she does that she makes it look so easy. She flew through five arrangements in a little over an hour, keeping us entertained with her advice and tips along the way. The five fantastic arrangements were raffled off at the end of the night and well done to all our winners who had something beautiful to take home with them.



***"Where flowers bloom, so does hope"***  
***~ Lady Bird Johnson***



## Reflexology

Reflexology continues to be one of the most popular services that we provide in Hollyblue House. In February we were delighted to welcome another reflexologist, Amanda Lynch of Hummingbird Reflexology, to our team.

Reflexology is a type of massage that involves applying different amounts of pressure to the feet, hands and ears. It's based on a theory that these body parts are connected to certain organs and body systems.

Certain individuals with a cancer diagnosis find reflexology helpful for reducing stress, assisting with pain management, improving sleep quality, enhancing circulation and providing emotional support.

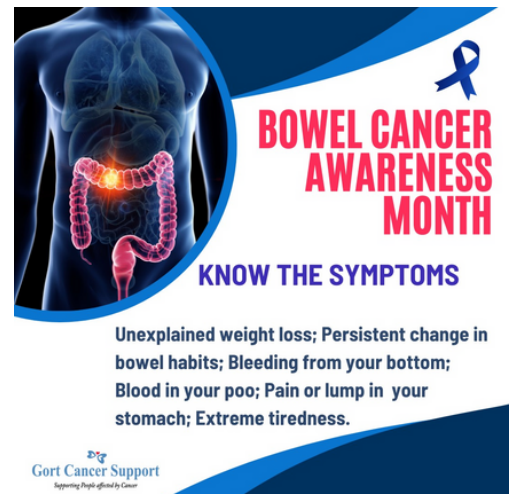
If you are affected by a cancer diagnosis and would like to avail of reflexology then please contact us.

## Bowel Cancer Awareness Month is fast approaching

April is Bowel Cancer Awareness month. Bowel cancer, also known as colorectal cancer, is one of the most common cancers worldwide. It affects the colon (large intestine) and rectum.

Bowel cancer occurs when abnormal cells grow uncontrollably in the lining of the colon or rectum. It often starts as a polyp (a small growth) that can become cancerous over time. Symptoms may include changes in bowel habits, blood in the stool, abdominal pain and unexplained weight loss.

Bowel cancer awareness is vital for prevention and early detection. Early detection significantly improves the prognosis. It is therefore important to know the possible symptoms of this type of cancer. Please contact your GP if you have any concerns about changes in your body.



**THANK YOU!**

*'The most truly generous persons are those who give silently without hope of praise or reward.'*  
~ Carol Ryrie Brink

Once again, **thank you** for your continued support and being a crucial part of our mission to provide support, comfort and hope to those navigating the challenges of cancer. Without your help we would be unable to continue to provide the vital services we offer.