



Gort Cancer Support

Supporting People affected by Cancer

JUNE 2024

ISSUE 15

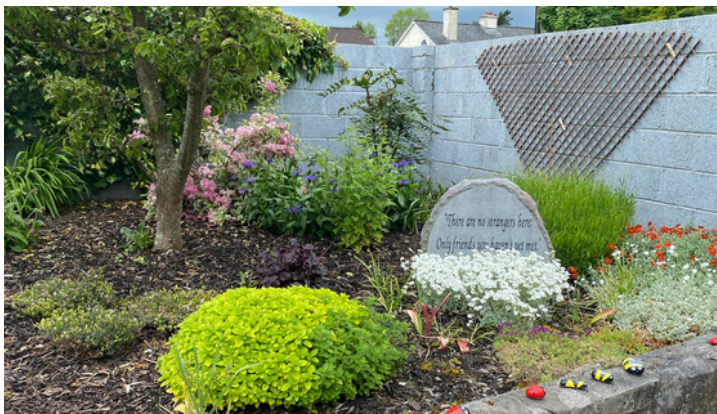
Welcome to the June 2024 edition of our newsletter.

"Summer: A Season of Hope and Renewal"

As the days lengthen and sun's warm embrace infuses everything with light and energy, we welcome the vibrant spirit of summer. In this, the summer edition of our newsletter, we celebrate resilience, connection and the beauty of life blooming anew.

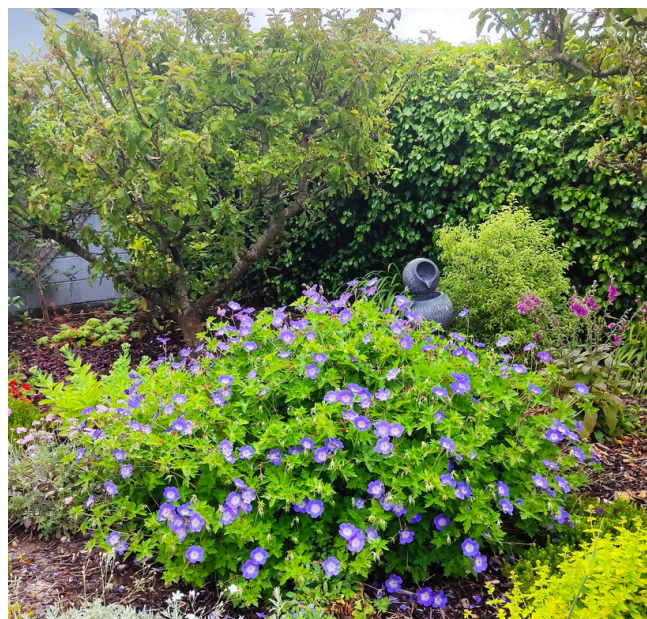
Our therapy garden is a haven where people can relax to the sound of water from our water feature, birdsong and the aroma of fresh earth, flowers and perfumed herbs, such as lavender, rosemary and sage. They are also able to touch the smoothness of a flower petal or leaf and be touched by the movement of the wind and interact with nature. The plants provide inspirational colours and peaceful contrasting palettes to reflect upon.

Viewing scenes of nature and experiencing garden smells can promote relaxation and lower blood pressure, heart rate and stress levels. The garden at Hollyblue House offers a range of therapeutic experiences, positively impacting physical and emotional well-being. Whether you're a survivor, a caregiver, or a friend standing by someone's side, this season invites us all to discover healing in nature's embrace, and ignite hope that transcends the challenges we face. So, let's journey together through these sun-kissed days, where every word is a ray of encouragement and every story a testament to the strength within us all.



*"Gardening adds years to your
life and life to your years."*

~ Unknown



Meeting with New Taoiseach Simon Harris



On April 26th, we had the pleasure of getting to meet and chat briefly with our new Taoiseach Simon Harris, who was on a visit to Kinvara.

We spoke about the government's funding of cancer support centres and the reliance of these centres on the generosity of their communities to fund vital services for thousands of people and their families affected by cancer.



Wear Blue for Hollyblue

Our inaugural blue-themed fundraiser, "Wear Blue for Hollyblue", took place on Friday 3rd May 2024.

Hollyblue House is a sanctuary for people with a cancer diagnosis and their families. Here, they can find solace, camaraderie and a peaceful environment away from the challenges of their illness. We have become integral to the wellbeing of countless people undergoing cancer treatments and to that of their families.

However, as we receive so little by way of State funding, we are always looking for new ways to raise funds to ensure the continued operation of our services. We asked local schools, businesses and individuals to show their support by wearing any shade of blue clothes and make a donation to our centre.

Once again, we were blown away by the support we received. Everyone who took part really pulled out all the stops for their "Wear Blue 4 Hollyblue" event with everything from blue clothes, blue hats and fascinators, blue balloons, blue tablecloths, blue food, blue drink and even blue hair. Without backing from the community we would not be able to continue providing vital services to friends & neighbours affected by a cancer diagnosis. Some of our directors, staff, committee and volunteers are pictured here. It was marvellous to have our Honorary Director, Sadie McInerney, in attendance looking resplendent in blue.



'How can Grief be facilitated in the Counselling room?' by Anne Gallagher

Grief counselling is a form of psychotherapy that aims to help individuals cope with grief and mourning following the death of a loved one.

Everyone experiences and expresses grief in their unique way, often shaped by how their community honours the process. It is not uncommon for a person to withdraw from their friends and family and feel helpless. Others may feel angry and frustrated.

A therapist offers a safe, confidential space for the person grieving to be able to talk about their loved one and their feelings of loss, while feeling supported, without the risk of upsetting other family members or friends.

One can expect a wide range of emotion and behaviour associated with grief. In all experiences, the grieving person benefits from the support of others. Where such support is unavailable for various reasons, counselling may provide a welcome option. Similarly, where the process of grieving is interrupted for example, by simultaneously having to deal with practical issues of survival, counselling can provide an opportunity for the individual to find peace in a safe, uninterrupted space.

Grief counselling facilitates the expression of emotion and thought about the loss of one's family member/ partner, including sadness, anxiety, anger, loneliness, guilt, relief, isolation, confusion, or numbness. It includes thinking about the challenges that follow loss and coping with the difficult changes in their lives. Often people feel disorganised, tired, have trouble concentrating, sleep poorly and have vivid dreams, and experience change in appetite. These too are addressed in counselling.

Anticipatory mourning also occurs when a loved one has a terminal illness. This can limit that person's ability to stay present and experience the precious time left together.

If anyone reading this has lost a loved one through cancer, or is worrying about their loved one's journey with cancer, please contact us at Hollyblue House where we can offer you confidential grief counselling, in a safe, therapeutic environment.

"Grief is like the ocean. It comes on waves ebbing and flowing.

*Sometimes the water is calm,
and sometimes it is
overwhelming. All we can do is
learn to swim."*

~ Vicki Harrison



*Anne Gallagher,
Accredited Psychotherapist, IACP*

Men's Health Awareness Event

Men's Health Week 2024 took place from Monday, June 10th to Sunday, June 16th. This annual event aims to raise awareness of preventable health issues for males of all ages, encourage healthier lifestyle choices and promote early detection and treatment of health difficulties in men. The theme for this year was **'Know Your Numbers'**, emphasizing the importance of understanding key health indicators.

We were delighted to host a Men's Health Awareness event to coincide with the start of Men's Health week. This event took place in the Studio behind Hollyblue House on Monday 10th June at 7pm.

Guest speakers on the night were Dr Richard Joyce, a local GP, Martin Dunne, one of the counsellors at Hollyblue House, John Wall, who is living with a stage 4 cancer diagnosis and James Hastings, currently undergoing treatment for cholangiocarcinoma.



We extend our heartfelt thanks to our guest speakers who shared their valuable experiences and insights with remarkable candour, enriching the event and inspiring us all to prioritize our health, well-being, and self-care. The talks covered self-awareness, physical health checks, mental well-being and the importance of advocating for one's health.

We also wish to thank everyone who joined us that evening, especially those who shared their own experiences and reemphasised the importance of seeking medical help as early as possible if you discover a bump, lump or any changes to your body.

If you have any concerns about your health and wellbeing, no matter how small it may be, don't let fear of feeling foolish stop you seeking medical advice because as Dr Richard Joyce said "it's better to be a living fool than a dead hero".



"First of all thanks so much for your lovely welcome yesterday evening. The centre there is something else, I've never seen anything like it and serving such an amazing group of people. You had four wonderful participants as well with their amazing stories and it was great to be able to meet and talk to everyone before and after their contributions".

The Cathaoirleach Awards

The Cathaoirleach Awards are an annual initiative to acknowledge the commitment of individuals and groups who participate in unpaid community and voluntary activities and the significant impact their actions have on quality of life in their communities.

It was an honour to have received a Highly Commended award in the Social Inclusion Category at the recent Cathaoirleach Awards Ceremony, jointly run with Galway County Council & Galway County Public Participation Network which represents over 1,300 community organisations throughout the county.



The Judging Panel commented as follows:

"This group continues to carry out remarkable work for individuals and families throughout very difficult periods of their lives, and their work also focuses on a huge range of wellbeing activities involving high levels of volunteerism".

Annual Thanksgiving Celebration and Mass

We extend our deepest gratitude to everyone who made our recent celebration a resounding success. A special shout out to Father Tommy for saying the Mass. His words touched us all and reminded us of the importance of gratitude and community. The beautiful melodies and harmonies created by the choir and musicians elevated the entire event. To everybody who joined us on the night, thank you for being part of our community. Your presence made the celebration even more meaningful.

Behind the scenes, the dedicated committee and volunteers worked tirelessly to set up the venue and ensure everything ran smoothly and after the festivities stepped in to tidy up. Thanks to everybody's hard work our premises were ready for use bright and early the following Monday morning.



Finally, we want to thank each and every one of you. Your ongoing support helps sustain our cancer support centre and allows us to serve our community. We hope you enjoyed the evening as much as we did. Let's continue to come together, celebrate and support one another.

Coin Counter

Thanks to the generosity of the Gort Credit Union Limited Community Fund 2024, we have been able to purchase a coin sorter and counter. This enables us to be more streamlined and efficient in counting all the coin from our countertop boxes. We have our countertop boxes in many business premises in Gort and the surrounding area and we are so grateful to these businesses.

If you have a box, jar, bottle or bag of coins lying around you home and don't have time to count it, please consider donating it to us and it will help us continue supporting many of our friends and neighbours affected by cancer.



Standing Order

Could you spare **5 EURO** per week?

We adopt a holistic approach towards our clients and their family members by providing a range of activities and social events, which will enhance our clients' wellbeing and coping skills. These include adult and adolescent counselling, children's counselling/play therapy, reflexology, acupuncture, lymph drainage, meditation as well as art classes, yoga, tai chi and more. We also arrange drivers to bring individuals to their oncology appointments, chemotherapy sessions or radiotherapy treatments in Galway if required.

Sadly, we have seen an exponential increase in the numbers accessing our services. Now, more than ever, we need your support and generosity to enable us to continue providing all our support services to people affected by cancer. We would appeal to you to support us in any way possible.

We would be extremely grateful if you would consider completing the attached standing order form and committing to donating to Gort Cancer Support on an ongoing basis.

If you require more information, please call us on 086 1724500.

Please return completed standing order forms directly to your bank or to Gort Cancer Support, Hollyblue House, Garrabeg, Gort, Co. Galway, H91 WFP8.

Thank you for your kind support.

