



Gort Cancer Support

Supporting People affected by Cancer

JUNE 2025

ISSUE 19

Welcome to the June 2025 edition of our newsletter.

June marks the arrival of the summer solstice, a time long associated with healing, renewal and the vibrant energy of the sun. It's a season that invites reflection, rejuvenation and the setting of hopeful intentions for the months ahead.

At Gort Cancer Support we see this spirit of renewal reflected every day. It shines in the strength and grace of our clients, who meet each day with courage. It radiates through the dedication of our staff and volunteers, whose generosity and compassion are the heart of our service. And it echoes in the unwavering support of our wider community, whose kindness continues to uplift and inspire us all.

In this edition of our newsletter, we're excited to share some of the meaningful moments and milestones that have shaped our journey in recent months. From community gatherings and fundraising events to quiet, heartfelt connections within our centre, each story is a reminder of the power of compassion and unity.

Whether you've joined us for a coffee morning, shared a conversation or simply found a moment of peace at Hollyblue House we hope this summer brings you warmth, connection and renewed hope.

***"Summer's beauty lies in its fleeting nature,
urging us to embrace the now."***



The Alliance of Community Cancer Support Centres & Services

We are absolutely delighted to announce that Gort Cancer Support has recently been accepted as a full member of the Alliance of Community Cancer Support Centres & Services. This network comprises Community Cancer Support Centres across Ireland that have met the standards set by the National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP).

These centres collectively uphold a shared vision: "An Ireland where everyone affected by cancer can access evidence-based psychosocial and rehabilitation supports, provided by appropriately trained practitioners, in a location that is convenient for them."



Last year we undertook a huge amount of work to complete the application process and provide all the required supporting documentation, culminating in a peer review visit in January of this year.

By joining the Alliance, we are committed to maintaining the highest standards of service delivery for our clients. This membership ensures that we adhere to best practices across all facets of our operations, continually striving to enhance the quality and accessibility of our support services.

We are now one of only 20 centres in Ireland with full membership, with another 19 centres having associate membership. Well done to all those involved in ensuring that full membership was achieved.



Wear Blue 4 Hollyblue

This year, our blue-themed fundraiser, *Wear Blue for Hollyblue*, truly took flight, just like the delicate Hollyblue butterfly it's named after. What began as a one-day event last year blossomed into a full week of blue-themed activities and awareness from Monday 28th April to Friday 2nd May.

We were honoured to kick off the week with the support of our Honorary Director, Sadie McInerney (pictured below), one of Gort Cancer Support's founding members and a dedicated advocate since our beginnings in 2007.



The response from our community was nothing short of incredible. Local businesses, schools and individuals came together in a wave of blue to show their support. A special shoutout goes to Gort Fire and Rescue, who even turned their engine blue on social media for the occasion! We are deeply grateful for the creativity, generosity and spirit shown by everyone who participated.

The week was bookended by two sunny and uplifting coffee mornings at Hollyblue House — one to launch the event on Monday 28th April and another on Friday 4th May to bring it to a close. It was heartwarming to reconnect with familiar faces and to welcome new visitors, giving us the chance to share more about our centre and the vital services we provide.

At its heart, *Wear Blue for Hollyblue* is about raising awareness of our work and generating essential funds to continue supporting those affected by cancer. Thanks to your involvement, we're able to keep making a meaningful difference. Your support means the world.



Nutrition & Lifestyle Talk: Managing Stress for Better Wellbeing

On Wednesday 9th April we were delighted to welcome Aisling Brennan, Registered Nutritional Therapist from Vitaclinic, for an engaging and insightful talk on how nutrition and lifestyle choices can help manage stress.



Stress is something we all face but learning how to recognize when it becomes overwhelming and knowing how to respond, can make a big difference to our overall health. Aisling guided us through the effects of stress on the body, how to identify its signs and practical strategies for supporting our wellbeing through nutrition and lifestyle changes.

Our thanks to Aisling for her expertise and empowering us with tools to support both mental and physical health. We're also very grateful to everyone who joined us, especially on such a beautiful sunny afternoon. We hope you found the session both informative and uplifting.

A Fun-Filled Evening at Our Table Quiz

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who came out to support our Table Quiz at Sullivan's Hotel on Thursday 10th April. Your presence and participation made the evening a great success and we truly appreciate your continued support.

The atmosphere was lively and full of friendly competition as teams put their heads together to tackle a wide range of questions. Congratulations to our winning team (Tom, Eva & Tomás Costelloe, Cathal Murray), who are pictured here receiving their prizes from our Chairperson, David Kelly. Well done to all who took part, you made it a night to remember!

A special word of thanks goes to our fantastic quizmaster, Tom Prior, whose thoughtful preparation and smooth hosting kept the evening running seamlessly. We're also very grateful to Mary Cuniffe and the wonderful team at Sullivan's Hotel for their hospitality and assistance in making the event possible.

We'd like to acknowledge everyone who helped behind the scenes, from those who corrected answer sheets and tallied scores, to our dedicated committee members and volunteers who gave their time and energy to ensure everything ran smoothly. Events like these not only raise vital funds for our services but also bring our community together in a spirit of fun and support. Thank you once again to all who joined us, we hope you enjoyed the evening as much as we did!



A Blooming Success: Easter Floral Demonstration at Hollyblue House

We were thrilled to welcome the wonderfully talented Mary Cannon of Florabunda Florist, Loughrea, to Hollyblue House on Monday 14th April for a truly special evening of Easter floral artistry.



Mary captivated everyone with her creativity and flair, presenting a series of stunning floral arrangements that beautifully captured the spirit of the season.

The evening concluded on a high note with a raffle, where four lucky winners each took home one of Mary's exquisite creations. One particularly delighted guest also won a charming Easter egg basket, adding a sweet touch to the festivities. Pictured with Mary are Bríd Deignan, Christina O'Leary, Angela Finn, Sharon Kelly and Margaret Brady, each beaming with their beautiful prizes.

A heartfelt thank you to Mary for sharing her time, talent and expertise with us. Your generosity and passion brought so much joy to the evening. We also extend our sincere thanks to everyone who attended and supported the event. We hope you enjoyed the evening as much as we did and left feeling inspired and uplifted.

Look Good Feel Better

We were thrilled to see such a fantastic turnout for the Look Good Feel Better Ireland self-care workshop held at our Studio at Hollyblue House on Monday 24th March. A huge thank you goes out to Mary Lee of Chez Lee Beauty Clinic, who facilitated the free skincare and makeup workshop. Mary, who recently won the 2025 Model of the Year Goss Award, brought her expertise and warmth to our support centre, helping individuals currently undergoing or recently completed cancer treatment. Her dedication and skill made the event truly special, providing much-needed support and confidence to all participants.



We are also deeply grateful to Look Good Feel Better for their unwavering support in allowing us to host these invaluable events. Their generosity in providing the wonderful cosmetics and brushes has been instrumental in making our workshops a success. These high-quality products not only enhance the experience for our participants but also help them feel more confident and cared for during a challenging time. Look Good Feel Better's commitment to improving the lives of individuals undergoing cancer treatment is truly commendable and we are honoured to collaborate with such a dedicated organization.

Standing Shoulder-to-Shoulder for Men's Health Week 2025

We were proud to host a special Men's Health Awareness Event at Hollyblue House in celebration of Men's Health Week 2025, embracing this year's powerful and timely theme: *"Shoulder-to-Shoulder: Connecting for Health."*

The evening was thoughtfully planned to bring our community together and highlight the importance of connection, open dialogue and proactive healthcare for men. It served as a reminder that taking care of one's health, both physical and mental, is not a solitary journey but one that is strengthened through support and shared experience.

We were honoured to welcome a panel of inspiring guest speakers. Dr. James Harte, a respected local GP, spoke about the importance of regular health checks and early detection. Maura Dolan, one of our dedicated counsellors at Hollyblue House, addressed the emotional challenges men often face and the value of seeking mental health support. We were especially moved by the personal stories shared by Kilbeacanty native Benny Fahey and our own director, David McSweeney. Both men generously opened up about their experiences with cancer, offering powerful messages of hope, resilience and the importance of reaching out for help.

Throughout the evening, our speakers explored the value of self-awareness and routine health screenings, the importance of building emotional resilience and the need to advocate for one's own wellbeing. They also spoke about the strength that comes from standing together, supporting one another and fostering a sense of community.

This free event was open to all and we were delighted to see such a strong and engaged turnout. It was not only an informative evening but also a deeply moving one, reminding us all that health is not just a personal responsibility but a shared commitment.

We extend our sincere thanks to everyone who attended and helped make the evening such a success. We hope it sparked meaningful conversations and inspired positive steps toward better health and wellbeing.



Gort Cancer Support Named Benefact Group Health & Wellbeing 2025 Winner

We are honoured and deeply grateful to have been selected as one of the ten recipients of a £5,000 award from the Benefact Group's Movement for Good – Health & Wellbeing 2025 initiative. This generous funding will make a meaningful difference in the lives of the families we support.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to everyone who took the time to nominate us, your support helped make this possible. We are especially thankful to the Benefact Group for recognising the importance of our work and choosing to invest in our mission.



The funds will be directed towards our Play Therapy service, a vital programme that provides emotional support to children aged 4 to 12 who have been affected by a cancer diagnosis, either their own or that of a loved one. Through guided play in a safe and nurturing environment, children are given the tools to express their feelings, process difficult emotions and develop healthy coping strategies.

We were also delighted to welcome Scott Hayes of Ecclesiastical Insurance, part of the Benefact Group, to Hollyblue House recently. It was a pleasure to meet Scott in person and share how this funding will directly benefit the children and families we serve. Pictured here with Scott are Mary and Cara.

This award is not just a financial boost, it's a reminder of the power of community and the importance of supporting emotional wellbeing alongside physical care. Thank you once again to everyone involved.

Annual Thanksgiving Mass

We were blessed with a beautiful evening for this year's Annual Thanksgiving Mass.

A heartfelt thank you to Fr. Pat for leading the celebration, his thoughtful words touched us all and reminded us of the power of gratitude and the strength we find in community. We're also deeply grateful to everyone who played a part in making the evening so meaningful, from those who helped prepare the Mass, contributed to it or supported behind the scenes.








A special word of thanks goes to the talented musicians who generously support this event year after year. Your music brings a special spirit to the evening and adds so much to the atmosphere.

To each and every one of you who joined us, thank you. Your presence, your warmth and your continued support mean the world to us. It was wonderful to see so many of you stay on afterwards to share in refreshments and conversation. Your ongoing support is the heartbeat of Gort Cancer Support. It's what allows us to continue offering care, comfort and connection to those in our community who need it most. We hope you enjoyed the evening as much as we did. Let's continue to come together, celebrate and uplift one another with the same kindness and community spirit that makes Gort Cancer Support so special.

Upcoming Events

Survive & Thrive Programme – September 2025

We are delighted to partner with the Marie Keating Foundation to host the Survive & Thrive Programme, a 6-week support initiative designed for individuals who have completed cancer treatment. This empowering programme helps participants adjust to life after treatment, offering guidance on emotional wellbeing, fatigue management, nutrition and physical activity.

 Dates: Wednesdays 17th September – 22nd October 2025
 Time: 10:30 AM
 Contact: Fiona at 087 9657144 / 01 628 3726
 Email: fsullivan@mariekeating.ie
 Register: Survive & Thrive Programme – September 2025

Free to attend – limited places – registration essential.

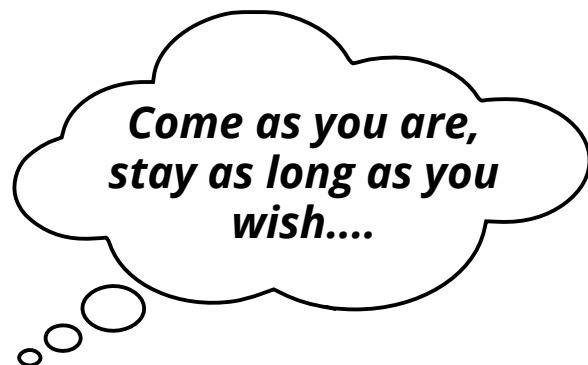


Mindfulness for Cancer – Drop-In Sessions

 Dates: Commencing Monday 8th September
Facilitator: Hilary Smyth, RGN, MSc, Meditation & Compassion Teacher
 Time: 10:30 AM
Website: www.kindmindireland.com

Participants will learn tools to:

- Improve wellbeing
- Live more fully
- Manage uncertainty with confidence
- Cope with distress
- Build resilience for future challenges



Finally

As we look ahead to the coming months, we remain deeply grateful for the strength, generosity and spirit of everyone who walks through the doors of Hollyblue House. Your presence, whether in person, in thought or in support, makes all the difference. Together, we continue to build a community rooted in compassion, resilience and hope. Wishing you a peaceful and uplifting summer from all of us at Gort Cancer Support.

