



Gort Cancer Support

Supporting People affected by Cancer

DECEMBER 2025

ISSUE 21



Welcome to the December 2025 edition of our newsletter.

As we wrap up another year at Hollyblue House, we want to take a moment to reflect on the incredible journey we've shared together. 2025 has been a year marked by growth, resilience and an unwavering sense of community spirit. One of our proudest achievements was becoming a full member of the Alliance of Community Cancer Support Centres and Services, joining just 20 other centres nationwide in this vital network. This milestone strengthens our ability to deliver the highest standard of care and support to those who need it most.

Throughout the year, we've continued to expand our services, welcome new volunteers and host events that bring hope and connection to our community. None of this would have been possible without your support, whether through volunteering, fundraising or simply spreading the word about what we do.



It is impossible not to acknowledge the deep sense of loss we felt following the passing of our dear friend and colleague Geraldine in October. Geraldine was so much more than a team member; her radiant smile, steadfast professionalism and genuine kindness touched everyone who had the privilege of working alongside her. She brought warmth and positivity into every interaction, making our support centre a truly welcoming place for all who called or visited. Her presence was a source of comfort and reassurance and her dedication to helping others reflected the very heart of our mission. Geraldine will forever remain a cherished part of our team and a beautiful memory in our hearts.

As we look ahead, we're excited to share updates on recent events and upcoming activities, from The Cancer Survive & Thrive Programme and Galway People of the Year Awards to the Annual Raffle and other initiatives that keep our community connected and supported.

Christmas Pop-Up Shop

We were thrilled to bring our Annual Christmas Pop-up Shop to Treasures on Market Square, Gort! We are deeply grateful for the generous use of the premises from 20th to 22nd November, which allowed us to create a festive shopping experience for our community. This special event gave us the opportunity to showcase a wonderful selection of gifts and seasonal treasures from our Hollyblue Gift Shop, along with stylish new and nearly-new clothing from our popular Passion for Fashion event earlier this year.

The pop-up shop is always a highlight for us, a chance to raise vital funds and connect with supporters in a warm, welcoming setting. Every purchase helps us continue providing essential services to those affected by cancer and we couldn't do it without your support. Thank you to everyone who visited, shopped, donated items and spread the word.



Annual Raffle

Our Annual raffle draw took place on Friday December 5th and we are grateful to Mary Flanagan for acting as an independent adjudicator.

Well done to all of our lucky winners!

- **A €3,000 Travel Voucher from Fahy Travel ~ Patricia Madden**
- €500 cash ~ Grace Loughrey
- Makita 4350ct Electric Jigsaw ~ Aoine Mahoney
- Shearwater Hotel – 1 night B&B for 2 people ~ Gerry Bourke
- Aran Jumper Handmade by Kilmacdaugh Crafts ~ Gearoid O'Cinnéide
- The Ellison Hotel – 1 night B&B for 2 people midweek ~ S & S Corbett
- David McGowan Photography Gift Voucher €200 ~ Sean Melville
- Unique hand-stitched patchwork bedspread crafted by Noreen Mulkern ~ Martha Kelly
- Ultron Perfect Steam Black – Professional Steam Hair Straightener ~ Lorraine Murray
- €100 Gift Voucher – Renew Skin & Aesthetics Clinic ~ Mary Keary
- Hollyblue Hamper ~ John & Mary Coughlin
- €50 Gift Voucher – Sullivan's Royal Hotel and Restaurant ~ Hilary Quigley

We also want to say a heartfelt thank you to everyone who purchased tickets & supported this year's raffle. Your generosity makes a real difference. This fundraiser is one of the most important events for our centre. All funds raised go towards providing supportive services free of charge to those affected by a cancer diagnosis.

Cancer Survive & Thrive

We are deeply grateful to The Marie Keating Foundation for providing the trained facilitators who made it possible for us to deliver the Cancer Survive & Thrive six-week course. This programme has been truly transformative for the eight women who participated, offering them practical tools, emotional support and renewed confidence as they navigate life after cancer. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, participants shared how much they gained from the experience and it simply would not have been possible without this incredible collaboration.

Our thanks go to Nurse Kathryn Murphy and peer facilitator Anne Mynes for their dedication, compassion and guidance throughout the course. Their expertise and encouragement created a safe and supportive environment where participants could learn, share and grow.



The programme concluded with a very special Look Good Feel Better workshop, facilitated by Mary Lee, which brought joy and confidence to everyone involved. This uplifting session was the perfect way to celebrate the resilience and strength of these remarkable women.

Galway People of the Year Rewards



On Friday, 28th November, at the Galway People of the Year Awards in the Galway Bay Hotel, we were immensely proud to see John Sullivan honoured as one of this year's recipients. This recognition is a testament to John's tireless advocacy and unwavering commitment to our community. His generosity, leadership and compassion have touched countless lives in ways both seen and unseen.

From spearheading the phenomenal Shear Our Sully fundraiser, which raised over €120,000 for Gort Cancer Support, to quietly supporting families in need and warmly welcoming newcomers, John embodies the very best of Gort. His actions speak louder than words and his dedication continues to inspire all of us.

Congratulations, John! You are a truly deserving Galway Person of the Year and we are honoured to celebrate this achievement with you. Your impact will be felt for years to come.

Looking Ahead to the New Year

We are excited to announce an 8-week **Mindfulness for Cancer Workshop** starting on 9th February, designed to help those affected by cancer cultivate calm, resilience and emotional well-being. Based on MBCT-Cancer (Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy for Cancer), this evidence-based programme combines mindfulness practices with cognitive strategies to manage stress, anxiety and the emotional challenges of a cancer diagnosis. The programme will be facilitated by Hilary Smyth of Kind Mind Wise Heart **and is completely free to participants thanks to generous funding from the National Lottery**. If you or someone you know could benefit, please contact us for details or to reserve a place.



We are also planning to reintroduce **Activator Pole Walking**, a fun and effective activity that improves balance, posture and stability, reduces joint impact and boosts strength and fitness for all ages. We are currently seeking a qualified instructor trained in Activator Pole Walking to lead the class. If you are interested or know someone who is, we would love to hear from you.

As we near the end of 2025, we want to extend our sincere thanks to all our incredible volunteers. Your time, energy and kindness are truly the lifeblood of our centre. From welcoming visitors with a smile to supporting events and fundraising efforts, your dedication ensures that those facing cancer never feel alone. We are especially grateful to our volunteer drivers, whose commitment has meant that every single transport request was fulfilled, never letting anyone down. This is a true testament to the spirit of care and reliability that defines our team.

We also want to thank everyone who supported us throughout the year by fundraising, organising events and standing with us in our mission.

If you would like to make a difference in 2026 by becoming a volunteer driver or joining our amazing team in any capacity, we would love to hear from you. Together, we can continue to ensure that no one faces cancer alone.

Wishing you all a happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year!

“When we remember a special Christmas, it is not the presents that made it special, but the laughter, the feeling of love, and the togetherness of friends and family that made that Christmas special.”

~ Catherine Pulsifer

