

# Mac News

*The latest Weston General Hospital cancer news, views and announcements*

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## **Christmas comes early to the Macmillan Centre**

We would like to thank Homebase for the kind donation of this beautiful tree (picture above). Homebase has gone above and beyond this year, donating a Christmas tree to every single Macmillan Centre in the country.

Even though the hospital is closed to visitors the Macmillan Centre is still open and is here for anyone who has been affected by cancer. You can call the centre team on 01934 881078 / 881079 weekdays 9am - 4pm (closed bank holidays).

## Personalised Care and Support (PCS)

The cancer support worker role was introduced to carry out holistic needs assessment (HNA), an element of the recovery package bought about by Macmillan to support patients to live well, with and beyond a cancer diagnosis. Here at Weston, there are six of us working alongside the cancer nurse specialists (CNS). We provide emotional and practical support, empowering patients to take control of their care. We are able to help cancer patients navigate the health and social care system, signposting to existing support within the community.

We support CNSs by dealing with non-complex tasks allowing them to support the more complex and medical needs of the patient, so a good optimisation of resources. There are a lot of services and resources available in the local geographical area and CNSs aren't necessarily familiar with what's available. Support and information are ever-changing and the support workers are kept informed and up-to-date via the Macmillan Support Centre.

As a result of the impact of a cancer diagnosis many patients express feelings of anxiety which we know can have a detrimental effect on treatment and recovery. If we as support workers can help reduce that anxiety by providing the necessary tools then we can have a direct impact on the patient's recovery and health in a positive way.



## Matrons Musings: Amanda Bessant



My choice of profile picture made me think about individuality and how this can be shown in something as unsuspecting as footwear.

As you can see I am an advocate of the more robust, comfortable, mode of footwear made by a certain Dr (other makes are available!).

We often take our footwear for granted; we can spend a large part of the day on our feet, footwear can make a difference in how we feel but also how we are perceived.

Some of us opt for comfy as a pair of slippers, as a priority, while others will class comfort as irrelevant and the focus is all about the look.

For some, the look could be a pair of 10-eyelet Dr's purple velvet boots, whereas, for others, the look could be a skyscraping leopard-print stiletto.

Shoes can tell a lot about a person, what is relevant for one is not for another and we can display our individuality through them

One thing we all have in common is no matter how stunning a pair of heels can be, by the end of the day (and often way before!) there is nothing more marvellous than taking the offending articles off and breathing a wonderful sigh of relief!

# A farewell from the Oncology and Haematology Day Unit (OHDU)

The Oncology and Haematology Day Unit is sad to announce that one of their lovely nurses has finally hung up her lamp. Pat Harper worked as a staff nurse on the OHDC for seven years and has now retired from nursing.

Pat worked as a nurse for 48 years with 29 of those years at Weston General Hospital which shows her dedication to the NHS and is a tremendous achievement.

Patients always felt safe and well cared for when Pat was on shift. She was always smiling and full of fun which makes her very popular with both colleagues and patients.

The day unit is lacking a little sparkle now Pat has left.



## We Are The Haem Team!



The Macmillan Haematology Team in Weston consists of three CNSs, (Hilary Fouracres, Amanda Pike and Tracy Hardley) and our Cancer Support Worker, Lesley Bowskill.

We care for all patients suffering from a Haematological condition, whether malignant or benign. Most of our patients have myeloma, lymphoma or leukaemia, however, we also have patients with lifelong conditions such as haemochromatosis or anaemia, and we support patients undergoing bone marrow transplant in Bristol. Some of our patients have regular blood product transfusions to support their quality of life.

Whilst Weston doesn't have a dedicated Haematology ward, we always oversee and support patients who are admitted, working alongside the ward teams as needed. You can also contact us for advice on haematology matters.

We can be contacted on extensions 3404, 7404 or 3316, and Lesley on extension 3991. You can also contact us via the Macmillan Centre.

## Urology Team welcomes Wendy

To coin the words of a well-known campaign- hello, my name is Wendy. Having completed a fixed-term contract as a lung cancer specialist nurse, I was extremely fortunate to be selected for a post as a uro-oncology nurse. It has been a challenge restarting in a new speciality and especially in one with five cancer sites. One aspect of my new role that I particularly enjoy is delivering bladder cancer treatments. I have always preferred to be a hands-on nurse, which is a bonus to maintain and use clinical skills. It is also gratifying to know that there is plenty of potential for future development, both in knowledge and practical skills.

Urology is not only diverse in sites but also the range of patient experiences with cancer and having a large proportion of patients receiving curative treatment or living with and managing low-grade cancers for many years. It is a refreshing counterbalance to the serious side of cancer nursing.

I am also pleased to say that urology provides plenty of opportunity for some carry-on humour and that no member of the team appears to be above participating in this.



# Last word: Nikki, PCS team lead

Contact the  
Macmillan Centre:  
01934 881079  
Extension 5078  
or 5079

**For information, support or  
just someone to talk to,  
call 0808 808 00 00 or visit  
[macmillan.org.uk](http://macmillan.org.uk)**



A friend once told me 'do what you love and then do it some more!' That phrase has never rung more true for me than now when we find ourselves amidst a second lockdown and the in the most challenging of years, I've found what I love!

I would describe myself as quite an anxious person, particularly about my health, having had cancer twice in my lifetime. It has left an emotional scar that is ever-present; sometimes a background hum, other times an in-your-face cacophony of noise that I find very hard to ignore. Coldwater swimming, however, takes me out of myself; it literally washes any stress or anxiety and is an absolute tonic at the end of the working day. I'm like an excited child when I'm getting my swimming costume on and packing my bag ready to swim.

On arrival at the lake, I get out of my warm gear, pop on my swimming hat, boots and gloves, my smile is literally ear to ear at this point! As I walk down the steps into the lake the excitement builds a little; the first few steps are cold (obviously). I pause on the step when the water is waist height take a big deep breathe, as I exhale I swim off into the lake.

Initially, there is some tingling pain mainly in my arms, but as I swim I start to get used to the feeling and strangely my body sort of warms up! My mind during this point is doing what I think is most clever, it is overriding all my natural fears, it's forcing me to think of the water, how it feels on my body, I feel of the fresh air on my face; its mindfulness experience.

As I swim I look around at the sights, people-watch, gaze over the sea to Wales, to the gorgeous iconic Clevedon Pier. I can hear the water lapping around me as I push on through, the sound of silence or the hum of fellow swimmers and astounded observers. Nighttime swims are the best, as I roll on to my back a clear starry night often presents herself, it's in these moments that I feel so much gratitude for my life, for being able to experience mother nature at her best. For me, cold water swimming is my perfect moment in time, where I am brave, strong, and invincible and cancer doesn't exist.

I have found what I love, and I most definitely will keep doing it, I hope you have found your love too, and if you haven't you may well be surprised when you do!

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