

Spotlight

Issue 19 2026
FREE



Read about our
latest equipment
funding

Donate to
our Tree of
Indulgence

Join us at a
challenge event
in 2026



How Friends of ANCHOR can support you

Our wellbeing team is based in the ANCHOR Unit – the Aberdeen and North Centre for Haematology, Oncology and Radiotherapy.



SUPPORT IN THE ANCHOR UNIT

Wellbeing support

Look out for our wellbeing team in their red polo shirts. They are in the ANCHOR Unit Monday to Friday and coordinate all our services, as well as offering a listening ear and signposting support.

Complementary therapies

Our free chair and bedside therapies include massage, reflexology and mini manicures. We also offer barbering and podiatry.

Volunteer-led services

Our volunteers wear red t-shirts and a smile, and you'll see them extending their trademark warm welcome and wayfinding support to day patients and visitors. Our volunteer drivers, Listening Service and Therapet services are also there to support you as you go through treatment.

Ward assistants

Ward assistants are funded by Friends of ANCHOR to bring additional, non-clinical support to patients, visitors and staff. They're recognisable by their green polo shirts.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Retreat days

Connect with fellow patients and sample our wellbeing services at our regular retreats.

2026 retreat dates:

- February 21 • June 27 • November 7

Music and movement

Our fun, gentle movement classes are the perfect blend of mood-boosting and stress-busting for patients of all physical abilities.

Patient choir

If you like to belt out a tune in the car or sing in the shower, our patient choir is just the ticket and offers valued community-style support.

Making memories

Our team can plan and facilitate all elements of a Making Memories request. Applications to this fund are open to any family whose loved one is receiving end of life care for cancer or a blood disorder.

Treat tickets

Look out for the regular prize draws we hold in the ANCHOR Unit. You could win tickets to sporting or entertainment events, for free!

PRACTICAL SUPPORT

Free packs and provisions

The provisions we have available, like our patient packs, have all been handpicked to give practical support when it's needed most.

Our free WiFi is available throughout the ANCHOR Unit and we can loan you an iPad if you'd like to stay in touch with loved ones.



For up-to-the-minute information on all our free support, scan the QR code.

To make a service request or speak to the wellbeing team, please contact:

wellbeing@friendsofanchor.org
01224 859222

Welcome to Spotlight Issue 19



Hello readers,

This edition comes at the turn of the year, as we look ahead to 2026 and all it holds.

I hope you will feel inspired to follow along with what we do this year, or show your support by getting involved.

The following pages are packed with ideas for how you can do just that. You could take on a challenge in 2026 (P10), get your workplace involved in a fundraising effort (P18) or pledge a monthly donation to help us reach a huge milestone for the charity – 200 registered monthly donors (P20).

The year ahead holds much in store, with The ANCHOR Centre and SURE Unit both set to open their doors in 2026.

Two NHS facilities at Foresterhill, borne out of a healthcare need, and supported generously by our local community who have fundraised to make them the best they can possibly be.

These projects represent a combined £3.25m of charitable giving and fundraising by our supporters. £2m has been raised through our ANCHORED Together appeal, to equip The ANCHOR Centre with added extras that will help make all the difference during a difficult time. An ANCHOR Café will be run by our team every day, while our Information and Support Hub at the front door will be staffed by trained team members who are on hand for signposting help and support.

Our complementary therapy suite will provide welcome respite for patients, and a beautiful, serene courtyard is there for exploring - you can see it come to life on P12.

The remaining £1.25m is our pledge for the SURE Unit, which is a matched effort alongside our friends and colleagues at UCAN, who have pioneered for the one-stop diagnostic unit. Urological patient Kenny gives his perspective on the new facility on P4.

Hearing stories first-hand from the patients we support always gives me a huge sense of perspective and I feel very grateful that the North-east is behind us as we strive to always be there for those who need it.

Thank you very much.

– Sir James Milne, Chairman

Kenny's story

When Kenny was diagnosed with cancer and lost sight in one eye, he found solace in music, painting and calming his mind...



"The roles have been reversed", Kenny Allan jokes as we chat for this interview.

With a 35-year career under his belt as a newspaper journalist, Kenny is the subject of the interview now.

Having excellent attention to detail is a must for any reporter worth their salt, and for Kenny it's a trait which helped him spot the signs of prostate cancer.

At the tail end of 2022, Kenny noticed he was passing urine more often, which was accompanied by some discomfort.

He was quickly seen by a GP and was referred for a PSA check - a simple blood test designed to check the levels of prostate-specific-antigen in the blood.

With an elevated PSA level, Kenny needed a biopsy.

He recalls how he felt when his doctor indicated he was 90% sure Kenny had cancer. "It's a forewarning I was grateful for", says Kenny.

In March 2023, his doctor's suspicions were confirmed - Kenny did have prostate cancer.

"My radiotherapy treatment was when I first came into contact with this lot," says Kenny, pointing out the Friends of ANCHOR charity cap he's sporting.

"As you can imagine, you're extremely nervous when you're beginning treatment. When I saw the long daunting corridor leading to radiotherapy I thought 'oh my god!'

"But what you see as you make your way along is a happy smiling face - a volunteer from Friends of ANCHOR to reassure you."

Kenny says that first impression stayed with him through the remainder of his treatment, which included 20 sessions of radiotherapy.

Finding ways to cope during a diagnosis can be difficult. For Kenny, even after permanently losing sight in one eye due to an auto-immune reaction, he continues his hobby of painting miniature figures - and he says music is another anchor of his.

When Friends of ANCHOR's patient choir cropped up, Kenny decided to give it a bash.

A childhood spent singing in the Grammar School choir means Kenny is no stranger to the hobby.

"I'm not a good singer but I enjoy choir - especially now as it's a way of relief.

"Luckily, I am now in remission, but there is still a lot of pressure and worry following

my diagnosis. There's always going to be concern about what's next - but through the choir I've met others who have gone through similar things."

"It's a great bunch of people. You walk in to each session and the choirmaster Laura and the rest of the group are always smiling. It's great fun."

Testing out the charity's services didn't stop there for Kenny. He likes to show off his 'Advanced Mindfulness Graduate' certificate to his friends every once in a while, too.

"I wasn't sleeping well, and after just a couple of sessions with the mindfulness instructor Louise, I had the tricks to practice at home."

"We were shown how to use simple breathing and counting techniques - and it worked! I still use what I learned in the course - it comes to me automatically now."

"When you're going through cancer treatment, that's the kind of thing you need."

Kenny "couldn't fault" the care of medical teams he came across during his treatment and he says he feels encouraged by Friends of ANCHOR's collaboration with UCAN to create the SURE Unit - a Swift Urological Response and Evaluation facility for the North-east.

"After I retired from the Evening Express in 2003 I moved to Cyprus with my wife Pat. PSA tests were regularly offered there," Kenny says.

When they returned to the UK though, Kenny was surprised to learn PSA tests are not routinely offered here.

"It took around four months to get my official diagnosis, but treatment started rapidly after that - so once the SURE Unit gets going, that will be such a relief as it will speed up the whole process."

"I think the partnership between Friends of ANCHOR and UCAN to make this a reality is very good. I had dealings with UCAN who were fantastic."

"No matter how positive someone may seem from the outside, you do still carry a worry at the back of your mind when you're having health problems, and the SURE Unit will alleviate some of those, which can only be a good thing."

The SURE Unit is due to open in 2026, thanks to a joint £2.5m fundraising effort by Friends of ANCHOR and urological cancer charity UCAN.

The facility, located within ARI, will provide Swift Urological Response and Evaluation for anyone who is displaying symptoms.



To read more about the SURE Unit, scan the QR code.



Fancy a **dance**?



Or maybe a **singalong**?

“Just get yourself through the door and I’ll take care of you.”



That’s our dance tutor Laura’s advice for anyone who might be on the fence about trying out our Music + Movement classes.

“We turn each session into a welcoming and joyful atmosphere, so expect good energy, breathwork, body movement and a little bit of dancing too - accompanied by laughs with new friends!” says Laura about the classes, which are designed to be suitable for all levels of physical ability.

Laura’s work with ANCHOR patients is rooted in personal experience. When her own mum Gwen Booth was going through treatment, the mother-daughter duo managed to get a regular dose of joy, by simply dancing together in the kitchen.

“My favourite part of these classes is the joy and laughter. My job is to support participants to be creative and feel comfortable within themselves. Going through a diagnosis can really take away a lot of control and confidence within your body but these classes can help people regain some confidence and movement whatever stage of treatment they are at – because it’s important to feel good!”



Dancing in the kitchen is one form of joy, but belting out a tune in the shower, or singing in the car, is surely another.

To be part of our patient choir, no singing skill is required, assures musical director and Friends of ANCHOR choirmaster Laura Pike, who’s well kent in the North-east’s performing circles, through her work with Sing, Sing, Sing.

“Everyone thinks you’ve got to be able to sing to be in a choir, but I believe everyone has a voice and tone deafness doesn’t actually exist,” says Laura.



“It’s about finding your inner voice through breath or experimentation with sound. So, it’s a class that truly is for everyone - even if you’ve previously kept any singing to yourself!

“It’s more about coming in and being together as a group - because the amount of confidence that you gain from singing in a group is very, very powerful,” Laura adds.

Music + Movement
Thursdays 1.30 - 3pm
Cairncry Community Centre

Patient Choir
Thursdays 6 - 7.15pm
Get Active @ Westburn

To sign up:
email wellbeing@friendsofanchor.org
or call 01224 859222

Our **Tree of Indulgence** needs you

Could you help us source some fantastic prizes to boost our fundraising at **Courage on the Catwalk and Brave?**

Our “Tree of Indulgence” is one of our most popular fundraising initiatives at the events. Huge trees are adorned with prize tags, each one representing a prize up for grabs. Could you help us by sourcing 5 or 10 prizes personally?

With 8000 tags sold across the events and a 1-in-10 chance of winning a prize, the Tree of Indulgence has the potential to raise a massive £40,000 for Friends of ANCHOR, but we need your help to secure prizes.



Option 1

Make a donation of your choosing online and we’ll buy gifts on your behalf. We promise to shop local!



Option 2

Head out shopping for gifts from your fave shops. Identical prizes in any multiple of 4 work really well, as it means each of our 4 shows offers high quality, gorgeous prizes.

email info@friendsofanchor.org

Option 3

Get your workplace involved in a gift drive. If you collect 30 prizes and drop them off at our fundraising office, we’ll share your photo on socials and provide marketing imagery for you to use too.

email info@friendsofanchor.org

Prize inspiration

Gifts could include beautiful homeware, pamper sets, posh bottles or vouchers for your favourite retailer.

“Friends of ANCHOR have provided me with a **once in a lifetime** opportunity”

Meet our new Clinical Fellow in Oncology, Dr Joel Allotey.

When Dr Joel Allotey’s mentor flagged up Friends of ANCHOR’s clinical fellowship to him, he saw it as a doorway to progress his career and make a difference.

A rigorous application process saw him successfully appointed in November 2025, and now, over the next three years, Dr Allotey will explore how and why breast cancer treatment can cause fatigue and poor physical wellbeing in patients.

Anthracycline - a type of chemotherapy that is commonly used to treat breast cancer - can cause those side-effects.

“In terms of cancer treatment, in the last decade we’ve seen immunotherapies, biologics and all sorts of advanced therapies emerging as options for our patients,” said Dr Allotey.

“We’re only now beginning to build an understanding of the impact these new treatments can have on patients.”

During his time spent in hospital clinics as an oncology trainee, Dr Allotey witnessed patients having significant difficulties getting on with day-to-day activities during and following treatment.

Having always had an interest in cancer therapies and toxicity management, he’s relishing the chance to have dedicated research time that could lead to new

avenues for managing patients’ side effects.

A recent pilot study undertaken in Aberdeen has built a foundation for Dr Allotey’s research, and now he will be taking a deep dive into how anthracycline affects the skeletal muscles and heart, investigating how this can lead to physical debility and affect patients’ energy levels.

“Up to 90% of patients will experience fatigue as a side effect of cancer therapy.

“That can have a considerable impact on quality of life, and a person’s ability to work or go back to school. We don’t want to accept that this is just one of the consequences of treatment.

“We need to be doing more to understand the burden of side effects that cancer treatments are causing and how best we can stall or reverse them, so that patients can get on with their lives after treatment.”

“This research is a part of that understanding, and I’m really grateful to Friends of ANCHOR for supporting the work.”

“I’ve been in clinical roles for most of my medical career so far, and this will be my first time conducting full-time research. It’s a once in a lifetime opportunity to have a fully funded research fellowship like this, at this stage in my career,” added Joel.

Dr Allotey will recruit patients with early-stage breast cancer for his study, and he’ll use specialist tests including scans, MRIs and biopsies to assess how their muscles are affected by chemotherapy.

A protective drug will be given to some of the patients in tandem with their treatment, while a control group will receive chemotherapy only.

“The main thing that I will be taking away from this fellowship is the opportunity to conduct research that matters and that has an impact on patients’ quality of life, patient care and clinical practice going forward,” said Dr Allotey.

“That’s what is most spectacular about this particular research - it has the potential to be quite impactful in terms of day-to-day practice in the future. There are no words to describe how grateful I am to Friends of ANCHOR for giving me this opportunity.”



Every red tee tells a story. Don yours in 2026!

Dates for many of our 2026 Challenge Events have now been released... fancy meeting us at the start line?

To put your best foot forward and become part of our epic family of fundraisers, get in touch today.



Pick up the phone or pop us an email today and let us know your plans:
info@friendsofanchor.org
01224 859170

Where your fundraising goes

We can assure all our fundraisers that every penny they raise is for the ultimate benefit of patients. No costs are deducted for admin fees or fundraising salaries, as those are covered in full by Balmoral Group.



EVERY PENNY of EVERY POUND
positively impacts patient care



Glasgow Kiltwalk
April 25-26



Edinburgh Marathon
May 23-24



Aberdeen Kiltwalk
June 7



Ride the North
Date TBC



Dundee Kiltwalk
August 16



FoA Skydive
June 7



Beast Race
September 12



Edinburgh Kiltwalk
September 13



Loch Ness Marathon
September 27

Check out our calendar of 2026 fundraising

An oasis of calm at The ANCHOR Centre

Lovingly-designed outdoor spaces within The ANCHOR Centre will give patients and their families a chance to enjoy fresh air and beautiful surroundings during their visits.

As part of our ANCHORED Together appeal to enhance what is already planned to be a state-of-the-art facility, we've commissioned a special outdoors project that will provide an oasis of calm.

Award-winning garden designer Kirsty McLean is behind the plans for the outdoor spaces, which include an accessible courtyard on the ground floor of the new ANCHOR Centre.

Here, she lifts the lid on how the courtyard has been designed, while 3D visuals show what the space will look like when fully planted.



The outdoor spaces at The ANCHOR Centre will be funded through our **ANCHORED Together** appeal, a £2m campaign generously supported by the people of the North-east.

The appeal will also pay for a first-of-its-kind complementary therapy suite, enhanced equipment and treatment chairs, an ANCHOR cafe and an Information and Support Hub. Keep your eyes peeled for more updates in our next edition.

What is the inspiration behind the spaces you're creating?

The courtyard can be enjoyed by patients on their visits to The ANCHOR Centre, and it will also be seen from inside the treatment space, thanks to large windows overlooking it.

With that in mind, I wanted to evoke thoughts of warm, sunny colours - perhaps even creating the feeling of a holiday abroad, where you would bask in warmth and watch the world go by.

There are warm sunny colours, with blue and white mosaic tiles and soft terracotta planters with green, large-leaved planting to evoke a sense of peace and relaxation.

We hope that through the design we can bring something uplifting for patients to focus on, or simply a moment of welcome distraction, that reminds them that there is something beyond this place and point in their life.

What's one of your favourite features that you have planned for this project?

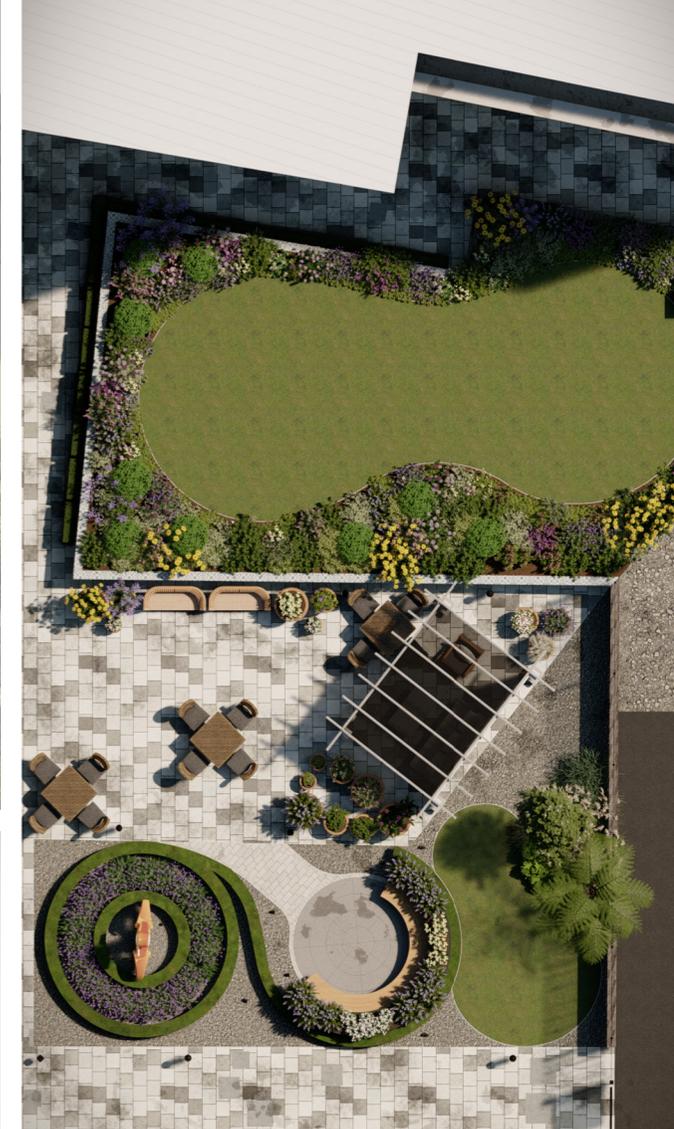
That is so hard to answer because there is not one favourite feature but instead, it is the sum of all of the features that I hope will bring a positive emotional response that gives the onlooker a feeling of warmth, calm, safety and hope.



Kirsty McLean

Planning for and planting a space like this requires careful foresight and a thorough maintenance plan. Has it been tricky to create something suitable?

The first consideration has to be maintenance, and how these spaces can be properly cared for. Thankfully, Friends of ANCHOR will be recruiting a volunteer team to help with that work, keeping the spaces tidy and beautiful. This is a garden that's designed to last, and will look even more beautiful as the years pass.



“Everyone has something to say and **it’s a real privilege** to get to listen to their stories”



Sitting down to have a chat and hearing people’s stories is what makes Shona Strachan tick.

When she retired after 40 years as an occupational therapist in 2022, she had her heart set on continuing to work with people – and she feels so lucky that she gets to do so in her volunteer role at Friends of ANCHOR.

“I love the NHS and I love people,” says Shona.

“Volunteering in the ANCHOR Unit reminds me of that lovely season when I first became an occupational therapist and had time to speak to my patients – before I became a manager.”

Since joining our hospital volunteer team in 2023, Shona has settled into the perfect role for her, working every Friday as one of our three Listening Service volunteers.

Rather than acting as counselling or a means of giving formal advice, our Listening Service is just that – an avenue for patients to speak, and feel heard.

“We’re really there to allow patients an opportunity to speak. It could be topics they don’t wish to discuss with family, like funerals or getting a will organised. Maybe they’ve had bad news, they’re far away from home or they’re a bit anxious – or maybe they really just want to chat.

“It’s a wonderful opportunity for them to talk without any expectations on them.”

“I think one thing that people quickly realise when they are given a diagnosis is the sheer amount of admin that comes with cancer or a blood disorder,” Shona adds.

“There are the appointments, new and sometimes intimidating environments, keeping track of medications, hospital visits – it’s a lot. Letting someone verbalise everything they’ve got going on, and letting them talk it out – that can be very helpful and for me, it’s a real privilege to be able to help in some small way.”

Shona also helps spread some smiles and joy every second Friday, accompanying volunteer colleague Stephanie with her golden retriever therapist, Harvey (who is a bit of a celebrity now).

Shona says Harvey’s visits open up normal conversations and a different type of interaction that doesn’t revolve around cancer, giving people a break in routine – especially if they are missing their own furry friends at home.

“We have a bit of banter when we go around with Harvey, and sometimes I’ll pick up that a patient has more to say so I’ll make sure I go back to them for a chat.”

When she first joined Friends of ANCHOR as a ‘welcome and wayfinding’ volunteer, Shona immediately felt at home in the team, which she says feels like a big family – with many inspired to volunteer for similar reasons.

Shona lost her mum Connie nearly 21 years ago to lung cancer. Despite Friends of ANCHOR being in its early years at that time, she still remembers the charity’s tulip pin badge her mum wore.

“Mum would have got a huge amount out of the support Friends of ANCHOR now offers, and it’s always so encouraging to see that offering grow. The community in the North-east is so generous with its time, money and volunteering – it all helps,” she says.

Listening to patients’ worries and woes is what the role is all about, and Shona says she feels brilliantly supported by the charity and our volunteer coordinator Denise.



“Denise is very good at her job. She makes time to go and visit every volunteer during their shift and check that everything is ok that day – she must cover miles! As volunteers we’re well supported, with very good training that’s specific to our roles – and there’s a real community feel in the team. It’s a fantastic charity and I feel very fortunate to be part of it.”

Fancy volunteering in any of our hospital roles?

- Welcome team
- Patient transport
- Listening service

Email: denise.smith@friendsofanchor.org

Fundraiser focus

We love celebrating the fantastic efforts of some of our fundraisers in each edition! This is just a snapshot of what's been happening lately.



If you'd like to fundraise, email
roxie.davidson@friendsofanchor.org



£2,633.50

BETHANY AND HENRY SHAND

How did you spend your school summer holidays when you were a kid?

Bethany, aged 7, and Henry, aged 5, decided to challenge themselves to a summer of activities and fundraising.

The brother and sister duo wanted to run, walk, or cycle one mile every day during their summer break in 2025 - in memory of their grandad Dushan, who was cared for in the ANCHOR Unit.

A pair of true superstar fundraisers, they exceeded their mileage target, adding on plenty of extra steps, strides and bike outings.

Bethany and Henry have caught the fundraising bug and are already keen to set themselves another challenge - we can't wait to see what comes next!



£53,473.31

JEMMA'S LEGACY

In 2025, friends and family of the late Jemma McRae celebrated her life, during the year she would have turned 50.

An Aberdeen dancing stalwart who founded her own school, Academy Street Dance Studio, Jemma was also a champion of the cause for Friends of ANCHOR. She took part in Courage on the Catwalk in 2015 and continued to fundraise through her "Giggle Cafe" of friends, family, dancers, and her daughter Izzy.

Jemma's community has continued her legacy of fundraising, and to mark the date that would have seen Jemma celebrate her 50th, a special party was planned.

Jemma's mum Marlene, her daughter Izzy and Academy Street Dance Studio co-directors and friends Gillian and Joanne were behind the afternoon tea held at the studio.

Throughout the week of Jemma's birthday, students from the school were invited to write messages on keepsake hearts, which were passed along to Jemma's family.

Over the years, a remarkable amount has been raised in Jemma's name, adding to her own personal fundraising achievement of £13,874.45.

Now, thanks to the ongoing love, support and generosity of Jemma's community, the sum raised has reached over £50,000. What a legacy!



£30,000

HEATHER MILNE

At 91 years old, Heather has no plans to slow her fundraising efforts. It all started in 1998, when she began to sell homemade toffee to raise cash, following her own treatment for cancer.

It was in 1998 that Heather had a small idea that has turned into something truly remarkable. She would create her own word and trivia puzzles and sell them for just 25p each, to raise a few funds.

Now, Heather is the author and creator of 161 separate quiz iterations!

Her brain teasers are posted out to the tip of the country in Orkney and John O' Groats, all the way down to the Scottish Borders.

With quizzes now selling for £1 and still being enthusiastically snapped up, Heather says she feels "blown away" by the success of the scheme, which she says runs on word of mouth and generous repeat buyers. (If you'd like to buy one, please get in touch.)

Heather's friends credit the success of her fundraising to the seemingly endless trivia and quiz questions that flow from her - for Heather though, her motivator is "a positive attitude and my husband Charlie, who is the love of my life".



£16,821.16

THE HUTCHEON FAMILY

When Seonaid sets off on a fundraising adventure, every step she takes is in honour of her late son Alex.

Since Alex passed away in 2019 aged just 22, Seonaid and her husband Sandy pledged to continue the fundraising legacy that their son personally pioneered.

Alex took part in Brave 2018, raising the roof in the process - as well as nearly £3,000 in fundraising.

Seonaid and her friends, as well as connections of Alex's, have continued to grow that number to what it is today.

Her son is always her motivation, and Seonaid has even set herself some challenges she never thought she'd be able to achieve. She and her friend Linda completed the West Highland Way in 2022 and they've tackled two Aberdeen Kiltwalks as well - but it's not all strenuous hikes and walking boots.

Seonaid also organised a 'Ladies in Red' afternoon tea in Cullen, which raised £3,400 for the family fundraising pot. She's also regularly in her own red tee, volunteering at Brave and Courage on the Catwalk.

*Thank you to ALL our fundraisers
- your support means the world!*

Support from **local** businesses



From matching bonnets to muddy t-shirts, here's what two local companies have been doing to fundraise - and how you could get involved too.

Fancy getting your workplace involved? Contact the fundraising team to hear more or to game plan your support: info@friendsofanchor.org



Cala Homes North

THE EVENT: Cala's inaugural golf outing

THE REASON: In loving memory of a colleague

THE FUNDRAISING: £4,221

Look closely and you'll see Cala's golfers all wearing matching bonnets in this group shot.

It's a heartfelt tribute to their late colleague Brian Jamieson, who was fondly remembered at the company's first big golf outing at Craibstone Golf Course in Aberdeen.

Complete with great golf, on-course games and Cala's trademark warmth and hospitality throughout, the day also featured some very thoughtful touches in memory of Brian, with speeches and Hawaiian-style hats inspired by Brian's own love of floral shirts.

In keeping with their love of golf, the local branch of Cala also support our in-house Golf Event faithfully every year, with sponsorship and top-tier prize donations.

Sponsor an event

Join the line-up of local sponsors who help make our fundraising events a reality!

- Sponsorships range from £250 to £20,000
- Recognition at our events, to audiences of up to 1,000 people
- Sponsorship helps cover every penny of event costs, so we can maximise our support to patients

Stock Spotlight

Enjoying this edition? We'd be really grateful if you could stock our magazine in your workplace to help get the word out about what we do.

- A simple but significant way to show your support
- Let us know how many copies you'd like, and we'll deliver them to you. It's that easy!

Sign up for a year of support

Rally the troops and see what you can achieve with a season of fundraising. Here are some ideas to get you started...

- A walking challenge to kick start the new year
- Plan a summer of events with entry donations to Friends of ANCHOR. Family fun days, summer barbecues, and office bake sales all go down a storm

Take on a Kiltwalk team

For an easy, affordable challenge, sign you and your colleagues up to take on the Aberdeen Kiltwalk on June 7, 2026.

- Each staff member pays for their own entry. It costs just £20
- Set up a group fundraising page and get some training walks organised. What better reason to actually take a lunch break and get some fresh air



Aberdeen City Council

THE EVENT: Various fundraisers culminating in The Beast Race 2025

THE REASON: Team building and a shared goal

THE FUNDRAISING: £8,549.96

Bonus points go to Aberdeen City Council's social work and support teams. for brilliantly themed team names - Criminally Unfit and Law and Disorder.

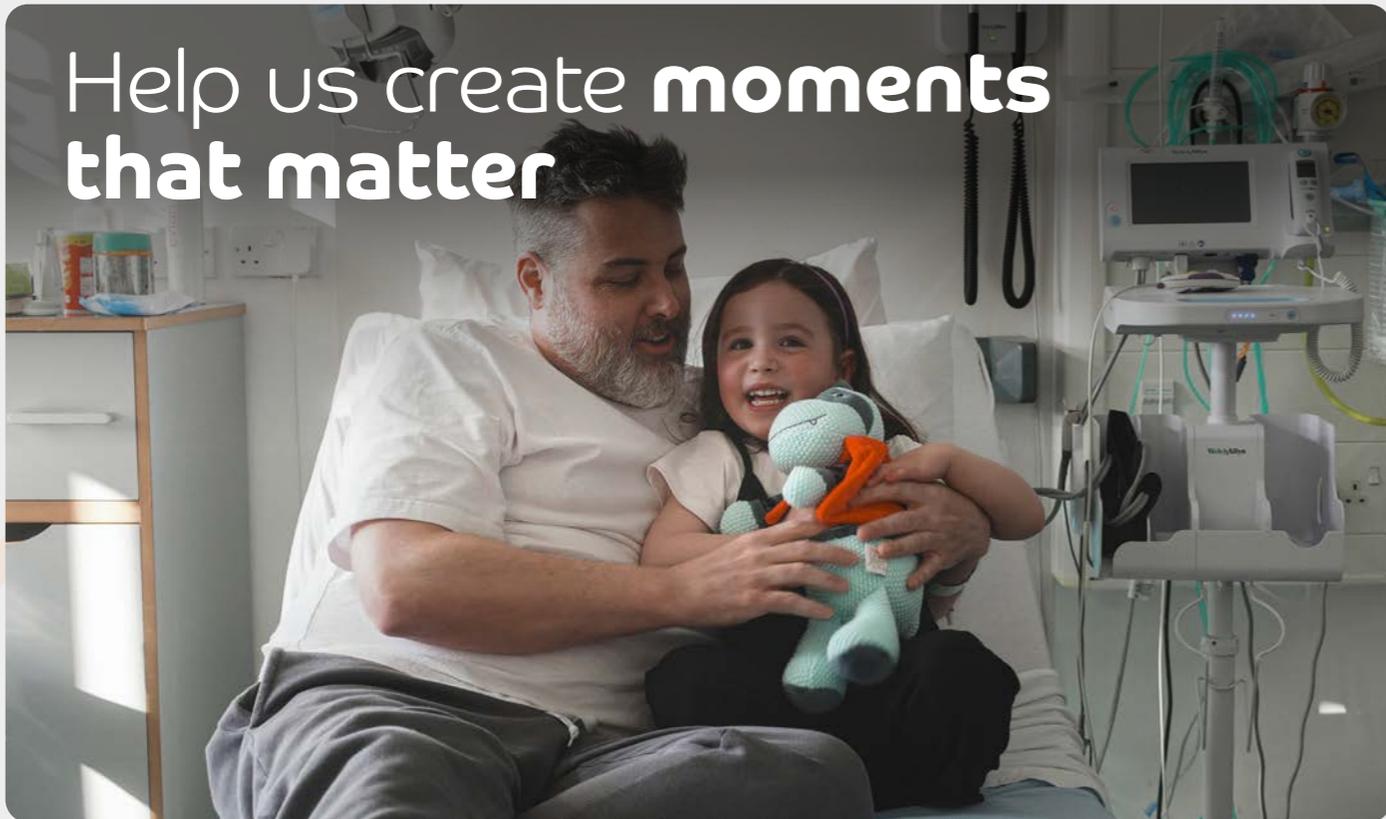
This hard-working and caring bunch of colleagues signed up to a summer of fundraising, with numerous bake sales in the office and a live music night at the iconic Blue Lamp in Aberdeen.

The culmination of their fundraising was a huge team effort for the Beast Race, a muddy, obstacle-laden 10km race that's held on the banks of Knockburn Loch each year.

In all, 23 staff from the department donned their charity t-shirt and a brave face to push, pull, run and crawl their way through the gruelling course, which ends with a freezing flume slide into the loch!



Help us create moments that matter



£40

...covers the cost of a magical festive day for a family of four affected by cancer



£100

...is a meaningful contribution towards a Making Memories experience, like a chance to be a pilot for a day!



£550

...gives 10 people the chance to cheer on their loved one at Courage on the Catwalk or Brave

You can make it happen!

Every monthly donation helps us deliver these small but powerful moments for patients facing cancer in our region.

As this edition goes to print, we're enormously grateful to have the support of 194 individuals who make a donation on a monthly basis.

Could you **help us reach 200**, to deliver our daily support and moments that matter?

Call Roxie on **01224 859099** to discuss making a regular donation today.

You can also email: roxie.davidson@friendsofanchor.org



Our monthly donors receive invites to regular donor coffee mornings, to hear firsthand what their donations are supporting

New equipment enables surgeons to treat early-stage breast cancer at ARI

The new imaging tool sees NHS Grampian adopt the latest surgical approach for some early breast tumours.

A new imaging system funded by Friends of ANCHOR is helping surgeons at ARI operate on early-stage breast cancers.

Miss Beatrix Elsberger, a consultant breast surgeon for NHS Grampian, is one of the medics using the new IC Flow imaging system, which Friends of ANCHOR funded at a cost of £36,500.



She said: “It is an enormous benefit to have this new equipment. It allows us to use a new method of surgery, which is a great alternative to the standard technique used to find the sentinel lymph node in early-stage breast cancer patients.”

During the standard technique, patients awaiting breast surgery have radioactive dye injected at the ARI Nuclear Medicine Department just before they come to theatre for their operation.

The injected dye travels from the breast to the lower armpit (axilla), where the sentinel lymph nodes are located. The dye means surgeons can find “gate keeper” lymph nodes to check that there has not been a spread of cancer cells from the breast into the armpit.

A recent shortage of radioactive dye, and the strict handling regulations in place for

the material, limits these operations to theatres within Aberdeen Royal Infirmary.

Now though, by replacing the radioactive dye with immunofluorescent dye, surgeons have the option to perform these procedures on a day-case basis both within ARI and in other centres.

Beatrix said: “Thanks to this equipment we don’t have to rely on radioactive dye, which means that in the future we’ll have the option to move some of these straightforward cancer operations to Stracathro Hospital.”

Stracathro Hospital, a small district facility near Brechin, is a Regional Treatment Centre dedicated to a high volume of day-case operations. By booking suitable patients in for surgery at Stracathro, Beatrix says we could see waiting times come down:

“From an operating perspective, this new imaging camera has improved our flexibility within the breast services team, enabling us to use an additional theatre facility, which has the potential to help reduce surgery waiting time for our breast cancer patients.

“Many breast units in the UK and worldwide need to move away from the standard technique because of variable obstacles.

“We are very pleased to have Friends of ANCHOR’s support in enabling NHS Grampian to follow suit, as demand on resources and facilities is on the rise due to more early detections of cancer.”

Patients who meet the criteria for the new method will have a fluorescent dye injected ahead of their operation. The IC Flow imaging tool easily picks up the bright green colour of the dye as it moves through the lymphatic system to signal the location of the sentinel lymph node in the armpit.

“We are not interested in resecting random lymph nodes,” explained Beatrix.

“We want to identify the correct first lymph node that the breast cancer could have spread into. By removing and analysing this lymph node we gain valuable information, which helps us build an individualised treatment plan for the patient after surgery.

“We have a very dedicated and caring breast theatre team at ARI, and they go above and beyond in their roles. We are fortunate to have a fantastic group of staff who are fully supportive of new methods and who will always do what they can do keep pushing forward to find new and better ways of caring for our patients.”



Let’s get **specific**

In the past six months, Friends of ANCHOR has enabled:



is the value of a Scottish Government grant secured by our funded Clinical Chair in Oncology Prof Anne Kiltie



is the sum won by our funded research fellow Dr Claire S Whyte following Friends of ANCHOR’s £135,000 grant



is the number of times our helpful orientation videos have been watched by patients preparing for treatment



families have received a precious piece of jewellery to remember their loved one by



inpatients have had their days brightened, thanks to a visit from our therapist Harvey



nurses and medics have benefitted from our development and training opportunities

Here’s what that **support** means to patients...

“Friends of ANCHOR are a magnificent group. They help keep patients and their families in positive spirits, and provide you with a P&J every weekday. These lovely people have made my stays in the ANCHOR unit much more bearable.”

“The support you get fae Friends of ANCHOR is exceptional. If they can provide it they will and if they don’t know the answer to your query, they will find out for you.

Keep up the good work - your support is much appreciated.”

“I have just completed two surgeries and radiotherapy for breast cancer. I found the care packages very useful and comforting to know someone was thinking about me during the process.”

We're here for compassion,
care and hope.

Thank you for your support.



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