ACORN CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

ANNUAL REPORT 2025-26

Overview

The financial year of 2025-26 has seen the Acorn Cancer Support Group continue to make good progress in re-establishing it's pre-Covid level of activity and membership. In meeting our core function of providing emotional and social support for cancer patients, and their carers, in our local areas of Huntingdon, Ramsey and St Ives, we continue to play an important role in the path to recovery.

We further aim to ensure that the widest possible public awareness of our services is maintained, and look to continue to work with other local, and national agencies, in delivering these activities. Our regular monthly meetings in Huntingdon, Ramsey and St Ives deliver a choice of complimentary therapy sessions, delivered by professional therapists and at no charge to our members. Take-up for these sessions remains encouragingly strong, with extremely high positive feedback. A more detailed look at these activities is given further into this report.

Therapist sessions are only part of the story however, and the social interaction provided by our meetings, together with a lunch, is also highly regarded by our membership. A monthly Film Club is well supported and a regular programme of activities is operated throughout the year. Over the twelve month period of this report our members have enjoyed three Ladybird boat outings with lunch; garden and tea parties; informal lunches; presentations and displays, as well as the more formal events of our summer and Christmas lunches. New events for this year included a theatre trip, a barbecue and bowls afternoon, and a pottery workshop.

In conjunction with other agencies, respite care has also been arranged and utilised by our members.

Such events and more, will be planned again for the coming financial year.

Membership

We continue to seek to grow our membership, and thanks to our hard-working core of volunteers, we possess the resources to accommodate further intakes. Our meeting facilities at the Parish Hall, Bury; The Neurotherapy Centre in Huntingdon, and the Methodist Church Hall in St Ives, are all able to cope with increased numbers. A more detailed look at Acorn membership shows the following headline information.

	Year 2024-25	Year 2025-26	Difference
Total Attendance at Group Meetings	818	904	86
Comprising:- Patients and carers	471	524	53
Volunteers / Guests	252	262	10
Therapists	95	118	23
Group Events			
Film Club	233	199	-34
Summer Lunch	63	72	9
Christmas Lunch	67	78	11
Boat Trips	59	58	-1

Structure

The Acorn Cancer Support Group is administered by a Board of Trustees, comprising seven members. A recruitment programme for additional trustees is in place. The Board of Trustees is supported by trained volunteer Team Leaders, as well as a number of specialised volunteers in roles such as HR, IT and social media.

Therapists

Individual relaxation sessions are provided by highly qualified and experienced complementary therapists, who offer relaxation sessions in aromatherapy, reflexology, massage and Reiki. Seated exercise sessions are also provided on a group basis, with individual advice for members, also being available. Therapies delivered this financial year are summarised as follows:

Therapies	Year 2024-25	Year 2025-26	Difference
Individual relaxation therapy sessions.	192	216	24
Seated Exercise	636	699	63

Therapist Feedback Surveys

On a regular basis, those members receiving therapist treatment are invited to complete a therapist satisfaction questionnaire. The most recent was conducted in March 2026 and the results summarised below:

Over the month of March and covering all three of our regular meetings, a satisfaction survey of our members receiving therapy and seated exercise was completed and the detailed results are shown below.

Twenty seven members who received either massage, reflexology or aromatherapy were all asked to complete the survey form, which they did, and one hundred and eight responses were received. Members were asked four questions. Was the therapy beneficial; were you comfortable with the treatment; would you recommend the treatment and the therapist to others, and in general how beneficial are the meetings?

A score of one was the most negative response and five the most positive. Out of a maximum positive total score of 655 our therapists received 650 positive points. These are truly impressive results and our therapists are to be congratulated.

All meeting attendees were also invited to comment on their seated exercise experience and again the replies were overwhelmingly positive. Sixty four attendees enjoyed this exercise and many made mention of the great fun involved. Again our seated exercise practitioners are also to be congratulated.

Procedures Updates

Over the course of the year a number of essential operating procedures and policies were revised and training courses attended. The Operations and Policies Manual was updated and electronically stored. The Members and Volunteers Handbooks were updated as was the recently introduced Therapists Handbook.. Health and Safety Policy, including risk assessments, and food preparation, Safeguarding Policy, and Data Protection were all updated. Eight members and therapists also successfully completed a first-aid training course and have been been duly certified.

Our Funders

The Acorn Cancer Support Group is entirely funded by donations and we very much would like to acknowledge and thank the following organisations, groups and individuals who have supported us this year with funding. Being an entirely volunteer-run organisation, all funds received are spent directly to the benefit of our members and the Group, and are essential for the continuation of the Group services.

Donors for the year 2025-26 include Macmillan Cancer Support; The Huntingdon Freemens' Trust; The PEM Charitable Trust; St Ives Rotary Club; Ramsey Rotary Club; The St Ives Mayoral Charitable Fund; Local Masonic Lodges; Localgiving; The Ramsey Hospital Charity Shop; The Holywell- Cum- Needingworth Bowls Club and a significant amount of fundraising from individual members, therapists, and friends of Acorn. A successful public raffle for a Newmarket Race evening was also held.

Going Forward

All the activities contained within this yearly report are essential for us to meet our objectives to alleviate anxiety or distress through mutual support, relaxation therapy and seated exercise, and to show members through social interactions with others, that despite a diagnosis of cancer, they can still have a good quality of life. The Acorn Cancer Support Group will continue its innovative approach to achieving these aims.

A priority is to attract those newly diagnosed and affected by cancer, and who we have not been able to help so far. Our ongoing upgrade of our public relations materials and social media activities, we believe, will enable us to get our message out to many more members of our

community who are coming to terms with their diagnosis, and dealing with the impact that cancer has on not just their lives, but on their family, friends and carers, as well.

Alan Ward
Secretary
On Behalf of the Trustees of the Acorn Cancer Support Group

03.07.26

Welcome to The Acorn Cancer Support Group - The Acorn Cancer Support Group (acornsupportgroup.org.uk)