

VOLUNTEER VOICE

Friends of Airedale Hospital Volunteer Newsletter

Double delight as two local organisations name the Friends their charity of the year

Two local organisations have named the Friends of Airedale as their charity of the year. They are Settle & Giggleswick Golf Club and Freemasons from Olicana Lodge in Ilkley.

It means proceeds from both groups' fundraising activities over the next year will benefit our charity.

It was the work of "fantastic staff" at the hospital which prompted David Colgrave, captain of the community golf club, to choose the Friends. He was so impressed by the care and dedication of staff who looked after a close relative earlier this year, that when it came to deciding which charity to support for the next 12 months, he felt it had to be the FoA.

Said David: "A close member of the family was taken seriously ill just after Christmas and spent three weeks in Airedale. It was touch and go, but all the staff across the hospital were fantastic. I was really impressed by their care and dedication – and the sandwiches and coffees from the FoA shops were also very welcome!

"When I suggested the charity to other members, many felt the hospital was a place they could really relate to. They've all had some form of experience – either directly or indirectly – with Airedale."

David Colgrave Settle and Giggleswick Golf Club



Worshipful Master Darren Marchment seen centre of front row with members of the Ilkley Olicana Freemason's Lodge

It was the same for the Olicana Freemasons. Said Worshipful Master Darren Marchment: "Freemasons donate a massive amount of money to charity across Yorkshire and nationally, but it's always good to support a local cause with the money we raise.

"We chose the Friends because it has been supporting patient care at the hospital since it opened in 1970. It is also close to the hearts of most people in the area – either receiving care themselves, visiting someone who is – or even as someone who has worked there or knows someone that does."

In the past Settle & Giggleswick Golf Club has supported causes such as Yorkshire Air Ambulance and Yorkshire Cancer Research. It aims to raise about £1.5k - £2K through charity events held throughout the year: it kicked off with season opener, the 'Captains' Drive in', on Sunday March 29.

There is also a 'penalty' on the 7th hole where anyone mistakenly hitting their ball into the stream in front of the green is fined £1, all of which goes into the club charity pot. Said David: "You'd be amazed how much that raises!"

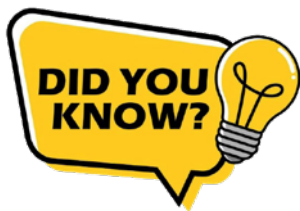
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Said FoA chairman Alison Dixon: "We're delighted that David felt moved enough by his own personal experience, to choose us as the club's charity of the year. It's a marvellous way to recognise the incredible work of the staff here."

Founded in 1874, Olicana Lodge belongs to one of the oldest social and charitable organisations in the world. Said Darren: "Freemasonry provides a structure for members to come together under common goals, enabling people to make new friendships, develop themselves and make valuable contributions to charitable causes."

"Alongside our charitable work, we also are committed to community support and the utilisation of Masonic premises to benefit our local community groups."

During 2025-26, the Lodge chose Andy's Man Club as its charity of the year, raising more than £1,500 for the cause through its food and wine event, race night, summer barbecue, black-tie ball and quiz night. See below for details of the Lodge's events which volunteers are welcome to attend.



Our latest figures show that in the past 10 years, the Friends of Airedale has raised more than £1.7 million.

That's a fabulous amount – and largely thanks to our fantastic volunteers!

Freemason Events

Ilkley Olicana Freemasons hold a number of fundraisers each year for their chosen charity....and Friends of Airedale volunteers are welcome to attend! Here's what's lined up for this year:

- **Olicana Race Night – Saturday June 13, Masonic Hall, Ilkley**
- **Olicana Quiz Night – Saturday July 18, Masonic Hall, Ilkley**
- **WM BBQ – Sunday August 16, Silsden**
- **Olicana Ladies Evening (black tie ball) – Saturday October 17, Otley Golf Club**
- **Christmas Party – Saturday December 5, Masonic Hall, Ilkley**

For further information or to book any of the above events contact Peter Smeaton petersmeaton@icloud.com

Fabulous friends keep on giving

The Friends of Airedale have provided another £4,000 worth of grants to improve patient care around the hospitaland agreed to fund a further £12,000 worth of furnishings and equipment.

Two new sets of informal dining tables and chairs have been presented to Ward 7 (female surgery), and the charity has also paid for the servicing and repair of 12 wheelchairs for the hospital chapel.



Dining out on Ward 7. Seen l-r Ionela Mierlas, healthcare support worker; Danielle Cook, junior sister; Michelle Archer, healthcare support worker

Approved and in the pipeline are grants for eight specialist palliative chairs, eight patient chairs for Ward 20 and a package of games and activities for patients living with dementia on the Acute Assessment Unit. A hot drinks machine for patients receiving chemotherapy treatment on the HODU ward is also due to be installed.

The £3,000 worth of furniture for Ward 7 was agreed by Trustees following a request for tables and chairs for the day room. Said ward manager Danielle Dalton: "The idea is to encourage patients to leave their beds and socialise with others at mealtimes. This can be really important following surgery but not something we were previously able to offer without anywhere for people to go. We're delighted that the Friends were able to help us with this and

to see patients using the new facility."

Lead chaplain Liz Maitland was equally pleased when the charity agreed to fund the cost of vital repairs and servicing to its fleet of wheelchairs. Said Liz: "We rely on volunteers being able to bring patients along to our Sunday services in these wheelchairs each week. The cost of repairs was nearly £1,000 so we were incredibly grateful when the Friends agreed to step in and help."

Said FoA chairman Alison Dixon: "Presenting much needed equipment and 'extras', which the NHS can't fund, to wards and departments around the hospital, is an essential part of our aim to improve the patient and visitor experience at Airedale. We're always delighted to help out where we can."



The Rev Liz Maitland, Lead Chaplain at the hospital chapel seen with one of the 12 serviced and repaired wheelchairs

New Trustee

Jan Knockton has joined the Friends of Airedale board of Trustees.

A volunteer in the main entrance shop since 2024, Jan felt it was the right time for her to “give back and help support others” now she’s back living locally. She says she has also had lots of support from the hospital over the past few years in caring for relatives.

Jan’s varied career began as a telephonist. She then became a PA for many years to the managing director of a local company, after which she and her husband bought and ran a post office in Heysham, near Morecambe, for eight years. Jan found this was a challenging and rewarding job, working with the community.



After selling the post office and relocating back to Airedale, she continued to work with the post office until retirement.

Jan now loves spending time with her daughters, four grandchildren and a great granddaughter who all – luckily – live locally. They all enjoy family walks and holidays together.

She also enjoys visiting her sister and family in the South which often include trips to London to see West End productions. Her hobbies include gardening, walking, jigsaw puzzles and absolutely anything involving crafts: Jan is one of the staunch group of crafters who love knitting, crocheting and producing fabulous items to raise funds for the Friends.



The Friends of Airedale AGM is to be held on Monday September 14 at the Glusburn Institute & Community Arts Centre. We hope as many of you as possible will be able to attend and, with that in mind, hope to run a bus from the hospital to the Institute on the day. Look out for more details in the next issue!

A BIG HAND FOR HELEN

Meet Helen Tomes, a volunteer in the Friends’ main entrance shop for the past year – and a firm believer in the power of ‘putting back’!

A retired occupational therapist, Helen’s last post was with Bradford Community Healthcare Trust. She moved up from Birmingham 10 years ago, now lives in Riddlesden and recently passed her first master’s degree in Health in Retirement. It taught her a thing or two about the benefits to wellbeing of being a volunteer.

Helen told us: “A few months into my retirement, the novelty of so much free time had already worn off, and I needed something regular to do, where I felt I was making a difference, even in a small way.

“A few hours in a local charity shop and being a house guide at East Riddlesden Hall, balanced with holidays and seeing friends, was a good start. Research shows that giving as little as two hours a month and up to three hours a week enhances mental wellbeing, and

having up to three separate volunteer roles was rewarding. Exceeding this would either provide no extra benefit or could feel overwhelming and rather like being at work but is always a personal choice.

“I had not considered volunteering for FoA, having spent my professional career in the health service, I thought I had had enough of hospitals! Research shows a small proportion of volunteers continue to use their professional skills, but most choose to engage in areas that provide opportunities to learn new skills and make new friends, and I had decided to take the latter approach.

“When one of my volunteer roles came to an end, a friend and longstanding volunteer with FoA, suggested I give it a try. I do not use any of my clinical skills! Instead, I have learned how to operate a till system, work a coffee machine and perform



all aspects of stock rotation. There are still days where I am all fingers and thumbs, but the friendly staff and customers and the generosity of fellow volunteers more than make up for it.”

Helen shares her remaining retirement time gardening, going for walks and enjoys the cinema, theatre, photography, crafts and travel.

The Friends of Airedale's noble fundraising team has been at it again, raising more than £1,200 through a Valentine's Day raffle, Easter eggstravaganza, pop-up jigsaw stalls and a Teddy Bear Trolley raffle.



Valentine's Day throw made by Jan Knockton



Valentines Craft Stall Team l-r – Janet Airdrie – Val Hargreaves – Jan Knockton – Joan Godfrey

All heart

A grand total of £613.40 was raised at the FoA Valentine's Day raffle, held in the main entrance on February 5.

First prize was a Valentine's throw made by volunteer Janet Knockton. The second prize was a cake won by a lady who celebrated her birthday on Valentine's Day. The cake was made by Cynthia Openshaw, the wife of Trustee David.

Said event organiser Joan Godfrey: "The raffles and craft stalls are a success due to the support and generosity of our lovely volunteers, knitters, hospital staff, patients and members of the public.

"We were all frozen to bits due to the cold draughts from the never-ending

opening door. We survived thanks to lots of hot soup, cups of tea, coffee and hot chocolate.

"We received a £20 donation from a man who had found the £20 note in the street the day before and asked his wife, who works at the hospital, to donate it to FoA.

"Customers also loved receiving a free hand made heart, crocheted by patients receiving treatment in the HODU unit.

"Thanks as ever to the team who manned the stall - Janet Airdrie, Val Hargreaves, Janet Knockton and Michael Pickles from the shop who helped us with dismantling the tables."

Eggs-citing times!

An Easter raffle on Thursday April 2, featuring some 13 hampers, a homemade Simnel cake and an array of hand knitted and sewn craft pieces, raised £415.50. The stall was manned by Joan Godfrey, Janet Airdrie, Lesley Spencer, Mandy Browne and Rachel Craven with support again from Michael Pickles.



Janet Airdrie – left – and Mandy Browne seen on the Easter raffle stall

Said Joan Godfrey: "Once again our Easter raffle went down egg-ceptionally well! Our lovely colourful display (courtesy of generous donations) was admired by many and the delight of our prize winners makes it all worthwhile. Thank you everyone for your ongoing support."

Going to pieces

A trio of 'pop-up' jigsaw stalls raised some extra pennies for the charity: one on Monday February 23 raised £59; on March 9, £81; and April 16, £43.

Bearing up

The charity's first ever mobile raffle saw Louise Marren and Val Hargreaves raise £169 when they took a decorated Teddy Trolley around the hospital. Their mission to find the giant teddy a new home was successfully accomplished after persuading staff, visitors and patients to buy a winning square on their grid sheet. A delighted hospital staff member scooped the top prize teddy with six other people also winning a goody.



Louise Marren - left - and Val Hargreaves with the Teddy Trolley



Baby Oliver Lewis

Model baby

Meet baby Oliver Lewis, seen modelling an outfit knitted by a Sutton-based neighbour of a FoA volunteer. Said Joan Godfrey: "Young Oliver is the nephew of Emma Lewis, a junior nursing sister on Airedale Hospital's Critical Care Outreach team. Emma has bought quite a few knitted items from us at various craft events. We were delighted to receive the pictures and permission to use them to support our events."

More to come

An all-day sale of knitwear, blankets, craft items and jigsaws was due to be held in the hospital's main entrance area on Monday April 27. Other dates to look out for: a Lucky Dip on Thursday May 14; and a Teddy Bear's Picnic Raffle on Thursday July 9.