



Friends
At the heart of RJAH

LET'S BE FRIENDS

SUMMER 2026 NEWSLETTER

ANNUAL AWARDS HELD FOR VALUED VOLUNTEERS

We are delighted to have honoured the contributions of our volunteers at our annual awards ceremony.

The event was held in the main entrance of RJAH on Monday 1 June, kicking off Volunteers' Week - an annual nationwide celebration recognising the incredible impact of volunteers across the UK.

The ceremony brought together Friends staff members, trustees, and volunteers - serving as a heartfelt tribute to those who generously dedicate their time to supporting the hospital.

A fantastic number of volunteers gathered as the charity presented four awards: Volunteer of the Year, Volunteer Team of the Year, the People's Choice Award and the Chairman's Award.

Victoria Sugden, Friends CEO, said: "Our volunteers provide 15 different services across RJAH and collectively dedicate over 10,000 hours of their time each year to supporting patients, staff, and visitors.

"It was a pleasure to recognise the achievements of our valued volunteers, whose time, energy and enthusiasm make a real difference to everyone at RJAH."

Volunteer of the Year was awarded to Paul Haines, - his friendliness, forward thinking, and willingness to help both patients and staff make him a truly exceptional volunteer. Runner-up in this category was Jenny Upshall.

Volunteer Team of the Year was awarded to the Gardening Team - a group who have worked incredibly hard over the past 12 months to lovingly transform RJAH's green spaces into pockets of peace and tranquillity, for the benefit of patients and staff. Runner-up in this category was the Shop Trolley Team.

The Chairman's Award went to Gill Middleton, a kind-hearted and tenacious volunteer, whose positivity radiates out to patients and staff.

The People's Choice Award went to Julie McCabe. Julie was nominated by her peers for being an instrumental member of the Veterans' team - often going the extra mile to organise celebration events and creating a community feeling within the Veterans' Hub.



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event snaps





CO-OP SUPPORTS GARDENING FOR HEALTH SCHEME

We were delighted to welcome a team of 21 Co-op colleagues from across the West Midlands, the North West and North Wales for a day of corporate volunteering in support of our Gardening for Health scheme.

From planting trees to creating a wildflower meadow, their hard work helped to create calm and welcoming spaces for patients, visitors and staff

If you or your organisation would like to get involved in a volunteer day, please contact: sophie.taylor113@nhs.net.

Co-op members can also support the Gardening for Health scheme directly by selecting the League of Friends as their chosen cause via the Co-op membership app.

FRIENDLY NEWS...

FRIENDS GET INVOLVED WITH THE GREAT BIG GREEN WEEK

June saw our charity take part in The Great Big Green Week – the UK's biggest celebration of community action to tackle climate change and protect nature.

Running from 8–12 June, the event featured the launch of our Plant a Promise scheme alongside a Seed Exchange, encouraging staff, patients and visitors to make small but meaningful commitments to the environment.

Mike Fish, Garden Manager, said: "Plant a Promise and the Seed Exchange are all about bringing our community together, encouraging people to take small actions that can make a big difference, and helping us create an even greener environment for everyone at RJAH. I'm pleased they were well received."

The initiative supports RJAH's Green Plan, the hospital's sustainability strategy for reducing its environmental impact while continuing to deliver high-quality patient care.





ANOTHER SUMMER OF SAILING FOR SPINAL PATIENTS

We are proud to work in partnership with the Lyneal Trust, funding a series of trips each year for patients from the Midlands Centre for Spinal Injuries at RJAH. These outings offer far more than a day on the water – they provide friendship, fresh air, independence, confidence and the chance to enjoy a wonderful experience with family and fellow patients.

On our latest trip we were delighted to welcome Helen Morgan MP aboard to learn more about the life-changing opportunities Lyneal trust provide through their fully accessible canal boat trips.

We're grateful to everyone involved in making these trips a success year after year.

SUPPORTING RJAH...

THERAPEUTIC GARDENING SESSIONS HELD FOR PAEDIATRICS

Young patients on Alice Ward have been taking part in therapeutic gardening sessions led by Gardens Manager Mike Fish. The activities make use of the ward's therapeutic garden, which was created last year, helping children engage with nature and enjoy a creative, hands-on experience during their hospital stay.

The most recent session was held in the garden's weatherproof glass room, providing a welcoming space for patients to take part regardless of the weather.

The workshops are currently delivered on an ad-hoc basis, with plans being developed to introduce a regular weekly afternoon planting session for children on the ward.



Hospital Friends fund new paediatric cot for RJAH



We are delighted to have funded a new specialist paediatric cot to help provide safe, comfortable care for the hospital's youngest patients.

The new Inspiration 2 Cot has been purchased to replace one of the ward's existing cots, which are now more than 10 years old.

Designed specifically for paediatric care, the new cot offers enhanced safety features and functionality, including electrically operated height adjustment, adjustable side rails, battery back-up in the event of a power failure and improved accessibility for clinical teams caring for children. It is fully compliant with the latest paediatric bed safety standards.

The funding demonstrates the hospital Friends ongoing commitment to enhancing the experience of patients and supporting staff with equipment that goes above and beyond what NHS budgets can provide.

Victoria Sugden, Friends CEO, said: "Children receiving treatment at RJAH deserve the very best

care in an environment that is safe, comfortable and reassuring for both them and their families.

"Our existing cots have served the hospital well for more than a decade, but they are now reaching the end of their lifespan and can no longer be repaired when faults occur.

"We were lucky enough to receive a generous donation in lieu of an 80th birthday party that has part funded this cot – ensuring that young patients continue to benefit from modern, reliable equipment during their stay."

Suzanne Marsden, Alice Ward Manager, said: "This new cot will make a real difference for our youngest patients and the staff caring for them. It provides enhanced safety features, improved functionality and greater reliability, helping us to deliver the highest standards of care.

"We are extremely grateful to the League of Friends for their continued support and generosity."

£1500 AWARDED FROM TESCO STRONGER STARTS

A huge thank you to everyone grabbed a blue token and supported our bid for a cash boost from the Tesco Stronger Starts scheme - we're over the moon to have been awarded £1500.

Victoria Sugden, Friends CEO, said: "This funding will help us provide additional play equipment and resources for our therapeutic garden, enhancing an outdoor space designed to support children receiving care at RJAH. The equipment will encourage play, aid physical and emotional wellbeing and help make hospital visits more positive for hundreds of young patients and their families each year."



NEW BARIATRIC CHAIR FUNDED FOR ORTHOTICS

We're pleased to have kitted out the Orthotics department at RJAH with a new bariatric chair. The new chair is a welcome addition to their busy waiting area – designed to provide optimal comfort for individuals requiring additional support, ensuring safety and dignity within a healthcare setting.

Bariatric chairs in hospital waiting areas offer several benefits that enhance patient experience and staff efficiency; including increased independence, reduced physical strain and additional stability.

Catherine Jones, Orthotics Clinical Lead, said: "We would like to extend our thanks to the League of Friends for their generous donation of a bariatric chair for our waiting room. This contributes to a welcoming and inclusive environment for all patients and visitors – ensuring that everyone can access our service with dignity and ease."



CHARITY CORNER..



RJA H CHARITY AND ADRENALINE SPORTS SET TO GO THE DISTANCE TOGETHER

RJA H Charity has been announced as the flagship charity partner for the Chirk 10K and Ellesmere 10K events in 2026, alongside organisers Adrenaline Sporting Events.

The two events, which will take place on Sunday 12 July in Chirk and Sunday 23 August in Ellesmere, are expected to attract hundreds of runners from across the region, all raising money for good causes while enjoying two of Shropshire's best-loved running routes.

This year, RJA H Charity is encouraging supporters, local businesses, community groups and first-time runners to get involved and take on the challenge as part of Team RJA H.

For more information and to claim your charity place, please visit the dedicated website: <https://rjah20thrive.com/events/>

Alternatively, you can contact:

Tel: 01691 404401 / 404588

Email: rjah.fundraising@nhs.net

HOW WE WORK...

OUR MISSION

All the money raised by The League of Friends goes to supporting the front-line staff, patients and their relatives at The Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.

From providing toothbrushes to funding an endoscopic surgical kit, we are at the heart of RJAH as a good friend should be. Together, our staff, volunteers and trustees do all they can to support, enhance and improve the environment, facilities and care delivered.

GET IN TOUCH

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For updates visit:



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