

History

Historical information about the formation of St. Margaret's

Within a year of a dynamic and encouraging presentation by Dame Cicely Saunders in 1979, St Margaret's Somerset Hospice Limited was registered as a Charity on January 7th 1980. Furious fundraising activities and events sprung up in aid of the hospice and numerous presentations were given to raise awareness of the need to build an In-Patient and Day Care Unit in Somerset.

Home Care started in 1982 in Taunton covering a radius of 3 miles. In February 1983, the Frank Bond estate donated land to the Charity. After four years of fundraising, championed by 'The Friends Association', the 16 bedded In-Patient Unit and Day Centre in Bishops Hull, Taunton opened in June 1987, providing companionship, friendship, support and access to medical services for the terminally ill.

The name St Margaret's was chosen because of the link with continuing care that had been provided by the old hospital and leper colony in Hamilton Road, Taunton since 1160. It was named after the patron saint, St. Margaret of Antioch. The old leper house has now been converted into flats having been rebuilt after it was destroyed by fire just a few years ago.



By 1994, the Education Centre opened to promote education and professional development of St Margaret's staff and other health care professionals across Somerset and neighbouring counties.



The need was identified to provide a greater equity of provision of Specialist Palliative Care in the East of the county. So in 2000, the fundraising effort was, once again, resurrected and an appeals committee formed in order to raise £4.5 million to build a hospice in Yeovil to help cover the eastern side of the County. After two years of fundraising, an additional 16-bedded In-patient Unit and Day Centre opened in Yeovil in December 2003.

St Margaret's Somerset Hospice Ltd, was now providing In-patient and Day Centre facilities at St Margaret's in Taunton and St Margaret's in Yeovil. Both units were fitted with the most up to date, specialist facilities, and equipment of the time, providing spacious yet homely, comfortable yet private, care and designed to meet every possible need of the patients and their carers.

However the biggest growth in our services over the years has been within the community. St Margaret's in the Community includes our Community Palliative Care Nurse Specialists (CPCNS) - formerly Home Care Nurses, domiciliary visits by our Consultants, and our 'hospice at home' service which we provide in partnership with the NHS and Marie Curie Cancer Care.



You would by now think that we had completed all we needed to do, but no, the hospice in Bishops Hull had become tired, lacked modern facilities and our service had long outgrown the space available. In 2005/06 we launched our appeal to build a new in-patient unit and day hospice. In October 2008 we officially invited the local community to see for themselves the brand new facilities which they have so generously supported. In January 2009 we fully opened the new wing and day hospice.

We are extremely proud of these facilities; they are testament to the quality of care that we will be providing for the next 25 years.

