



ACORN CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25

Overview

The financial year of 2024-25 has seen the Acorn Cancer Support Group make further progress towards recovering its pre-Covid pandemic position. 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 patients', their carers' and their family's, 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 and refreshments, garden parties, informal lunches, presentations and displays, as well as the more formal events of our summer and Christmas lunches. Such events and more, will be planned again for the coming 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 2023-24	Year 2024-25	Difference
Total Attendance at Group Meetings	795	818	23
Comprising:- Patients and carers	459	471	12
Volunteers / Guests	243	252	9
Therapists	93	95	2
Group Events			
Film Club	193	233	40
Summer Lunch	86 (25 th Anniversary)	63	-23
Christmas Lunch	73	67	-6
Boat Trips	63	59	-4

The Acorn Cancer Support Group is administered by a Board of Trustees, comprising six members plus one co-opted Trustee, whose appointment will be confirmed at the AGM. Further Trustees are being sought. The Board of Trustees is supported by trained volunteer Team Leaders, as well as a number of specialised volunteers in roles such as HR 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 2023-24	Year 2024-25	Difference
Individual relaxation therapy sessions.	168	192	24
Seated Exercise	595	636	41

Therapist Feedback Surveys

On a quarterly basis, those members receiving therapist treatment are invited to complete a therapist satisfaction questionnaire. The most recent was conducted in March 2025 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.

Sixteen members who received either massage, reflexology or aromatherapy were all asked to

complete the survey form, which they did, and forty-eight responses were received. Members were asked three questions. Was the therapy beneficial; were you comfortable with the treatment and would you recommend the treatment and the therapist to others? A score of one was the most negative response and five the most positive. Out of a maximum positive total score of 240 our therapists received 238 positive points. These are truly impressive results and our therapists are to be congratulated.

Members were also invited to comment on their sitting exercise experience and again the replies were overwhelmingly positive. Fifty-three members 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 updated and training courses attended. A complete Operations and Policies Manual was compiled and electronically stored and distributed. The Members and Volunteers Handbooks were updated and a Therapists Handbook designed and distributed. Health and Safety Policy, including risk assessments, and food preparation, Safeguarding Policy, and Data Protection were all updated.

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 2024-25 include Macmillan Cancer Support; The Huntingdon Freemans' Trust; St Ives Rotary Club; The St Ives Mayoral Charitable Fund; Local Masonic Lodges; Localgiving; The Ramsey Hospital Charity Shop; Janet Church Interiors and a significant amount of fundraising from individual members, therapists, and friends of Acorn.

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
03.06.25

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