

There is a hidden gem in Aylesford that I hope you'll never need to find but one that we should all try and support, just in case. For 25 years the Heart of Kent Hospice, hidden among the trees at the back of Preston Hall, has been caring for people with a terminal illness. I have visited the Hospice on numerous occasions and each time it has struck me what a calm, peaceful and caring environment it has. For those in need of support through their illnesses and then dignified end of life care, the Hospice and all those who work there have been a rock for sadly too many in our community.

Many do not know that hospices are here to support people in their care. It is one of the campaigns that the national Hospice UK are running to raise awareness of the care available. I think most who have the chance to decide would prefer to choose different end of life care than in a hospital ward but some do not know it exists. With family facilities and brilliant nursing support, those last moments can be pain free and dignified.

Collectively hospices in the UK care for around 360,000 people every year and the Heart of Kent Hospice has supported nearly 10,000 local people and their families. But like everyone, the Heart of Kent faces an uncertain future financially and needs your support. Many already do support the Hospice through kind donations, both directly and indirectly through visiting their shops.

Alongside this paper I would encourage the local community to join the campaign to Get Behind Heart of Kent Hospice and help raise an additional £600,000 in 2017 so that the Hospice can secure its long-term future. Your donation will ensure that they can be there for everyone who needs them, now and in the future.