



The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service



OLIVE TREE CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

Annual Review - 2021/22

Registered charity No. 1157386

The Olive Tree Cancer Support Centre, Crawley Hospital,
West Green Drive, Crawley, West Sussex RH11 7DH

Social media links: [Webpage](#) [Facebook](#) [Instagram](#) [Twitter](#) [LinkedIn](#) [YouTube channel](#)



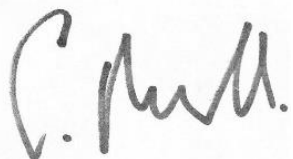
From our Chairman, Graham Nicoll

I am pleased to report that impressive progress has been made by our charity in the course of the 2021/22 financial year, and would like to thank our staff, volunteers and supporters for their dedication and hard work, which have been integral to making this happen, whilst continuing to meet our consistently high standards in service delivery

We have now started to experience significant increases in the number of new patients and users at both of our Centres, which had been anticipated following the delays in diagnosis and treatment as a consequence of the pandemic. In order to meet the increasing demand for our services, in particular in Horsham, we moved from the information hub based at Horsham Hospital to a new centre at Lavinia House, Horsham, which became operational in October 2022, offering a full range of services comparable with those already offered at our Crawley centre.

Through the course of the 2021/22 year, we raised an impressive total income of £184,000, a new annual high for the Olive Tree. This was close to the level of expenses that we have forecasted we will incur in the current 22/23 financial year. However, £82,000 of this arose from an unprecedented level of bequests from wills. The rest of our income, at just over £100,000, almost exactly matched the equivalent figure for the previous year. Given that we were operating without a Fundraising Manager for the first four months of the year (whilst in the course of recruitment), I believe that this was a significant achievement.

To support both the increased number of service users and the new Horsham location, the Olive Tree will now require a significantly higher level of income. Unfortunately, the current financial year 2022/23 has proved far more challenging, with the first six months to February 2023 seeing an income of only £34,000, resulting in a net outflow of funds of more than £65,000. As a response to this, we have focused further on increasing the numbers of, whilst maintaining the quality and relevance of, our grant applications. Though we (at the end of the 2021/22 financial year) had a healthy coverage from our reserves, these have already significantly reduced, so I implore readers of this report to consider how they might be able to support us through these very challenging times.



Graham Nicoll
Chairman



Olive Tree Cancer Support Group

The Olive Tree is a welcoming and trusted ‘safe place’ for its cancer patient community and for their loved ones, offering reassurance and relaxation at times of most need. Its empathetic and supportive team provide valued services, help and key understandings that enable and empower patients to meet challenges throughout their cancer journey.”

- The charitable object of the Olive Tree Cancer Support Group is to relieve the physical or emotional distress of persons with cancer and their partners, families, friends and carers of such persons through the provision of services.
- The Olive Tree operates from its Support Centre in Crawley and provides services in Horsham as from June 2021
- In the reporting year, the Olive Tree provided services to 13% of new cancer patients who live in Crawley, and 3% who live in Horsham (see table). So our support may be needed by many more new and existing patients, particularly in Horsham. It is now estimated that about half of the UK population will be diagnosed with cancer at some point in their life. Due to the advances in medical care, more people are being cured and surviving longer, Thus, going forward, we anticipate supporting more patients, their family members, carers and friends for longer.

Area of residence	New users at the Olive Tree 2021/22 (prior year)	New cancer cases (as of Feb 2020, no 2021/22 data)	Total area population (2019)
Crawley & local areas	126 (70)	530	112,410
Horsham area	64 (47)	1,400	143,790
Other areas	55 (23)		
Total	245 (140)	1,930	256,200

<https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/cancer-info/cancerstats/local-cancer-statistic>. Crawley and Horsham, February 2020.
Sussex Community Foundation Insight reports, October 2020

- Our services are not restricted to those living within the two town boundaries. Our users come from many local areas including Broadfield, Bewbush, Langley Green, Horley, Burgess Hill, East Grinstead, Haywards Heath and Billingshurst.

Supportive services

- We are a self-funded, independent charity, and our therapies and services complement the medical support that is given to cancer patients by the NHS. We do not offer any medical treatments or advice.
- The Olive Tree provides many different types of services to its users. We had 2,241 user visits to our Centres in 2021/2022 (up by 80% on the previous year, at 1,247 visits, a reflection both of ‘a return to relative normality’ following the pandemic and of the increasing demand for our services) with an average of 187 per month (highest month was May 22 with 247 visits). Complementary therapy continues to be the most popular reason for a visit (at 58%) followed by counselling (11%).

Horsham Centre and Information Hub

- The arrangement at the Information Hub and the sessions at Total Therapy, Horsham continued to thrive during the end of 2021 and beginning of 2022. However, it was increasingly apparent that the need for Olive Tree services in Horsham was greater than we could provide using those facilities.
- Early in 2022 the search began again for suitable accommodation and in April negotiations started with Age UK Horsham for the Olive Tree to lease part of their premises in Lavinia House.
- Whilst we incurred some frustrating delays in the process of the preparation for full opening of the Centre, all rooms at Lavinia House became operational in October 2022 and we were able to formally launch with an official celebration on 22nd February 2023.
- This now includes an office, reception area, 2 therapy rooms and a counselling room.

Long-Term Strategy

- During the past year, the Trustees, supported by senior personnel from the charity, have continued to develop our strategy, but have been cautious in short to medium term ambitions given current pressures on our financial income and limited number of personnel.
- However, we will progress with our goal to improve the awareness and relevance of The Olive Tree, initially with the aim to increase our understanding of the patient journey.
- We will continue to reach out specifically to those within ethnic minority groups and to those in socially deprived areas within the Crawley/Horsham and surrounding area. Through raising awareness of how we can support them, we anticipate a greater adoption of our services going forward. Likewise, we will endeavour to increase the awareness of the Olive Tree, and how we support, among males, with the ultimate aim of greater numbers attending our centres, benefitting from the support we offer.

Further details, including the Olive Tree financial accounts, can be found in our Annual Report 2021/22

