

St Michael's Hospice

Presentation to Kyrle Probus Club by Paddy Nugent, 17th April 2014

FIRST impressions are important. This is good news for St Michael's Hospice, because when Paddy Nugent joined the Hospice only ten weeks ago as their new Community Fund Raising Manager, he was very impressed.

As he told members of the Kyrle Probus Club at their April meeting, he quickly became aware that the Hospice, at Bartestree, near Hereford, was a very special and happy place, and held in great esteem within the Herefordshire community.

While most Probus Club members were aware in general terms of the indispensable role which the Hospice plays, many did not fully appreciate the range and scope of the help and support offered; nor the fact that 90 per cent of the funding comes from voluntary donations.

Paddy took members through the nuts and bolts of the organisation – 16 in-patient beds; 852 active volunteers ranging from professional health carers through to the fund-raisers and the family support groups; £12k per day to run; opened in 1984 with two of the original driving forces, founder members Dr Richard Miller and Dr Jeff Kramer, still trustees today.

However, it was sometimes in the small details which Paddy related that the special purpose of the Hospice was highlighted and the great impact it had on the lives of the patients, their family and friends.

Even the story of the current re-development of the Hospice is inspirational. As Paddy said, "The Hospice could have tried to raise all the money first, but they chose to press on, relying on the proven generosity of the wider community and confident that they would rise to the challenge."

And what a challenge! Phase One for 20 new, individual rooms, designed to focus solely on the medical and emotional needs of the patients, cost £8million but is due to be opened in August. Phase Two will be based in the old Hospice buildings to provide facilities for out-patients and will cost £3million

In offering the vote of thanks, Bob Brandram-Jones thanked Paddy for an interesting, informative and uplifting talk ... not at all the sombre affair which some members might have anticipated!

Robin Nichol