

News Release

13 December 2018

Robert White Centre Official Opening

A very special guest helps officially open a new £9 million cancer centre for Dorset

Dorset's new multi-million-pound state-of-the-art cancer treatment centre was opened by Martin Clunes OBE this week. The official opening at Dorset County Hospital was on Wednesday night (12 December) with almost 200 guests including charity donors, staff, patient representatives and health officials watching as the actor revealed the commemoration stone.

The £9 million centre is an extension of the Poole Hospital-based Dorset Cancer Centre. The Dorchester unit is equipped with the latest linear accelerator (LINAC) which enables patients to receive the best-possible radiotherapy treatment. This means that cancer patients in the north, south and west of the county can receive this care in their local hospital, instead of having to travel to Poole for treatment.

The facility also includes a £1.75 million Cancer and Haematology Outpatients Department funded by the Cancer Appeal run by Dorset County Hospital Charity. This was supported by hundreds of donations from individuals, community groups as well as Trusts and Foundations.

This building has been funded in part by an extraordinarily generous legacy from Poole businessman Robert White. Robert White was treated for cancer at the Dorset Cancer Centre, part of Poole Hospital, and sadly lost his battle in November 2015. Before his death, he had resolved to support the hospital and its county-wide cancer services to benefit others and decided that he would fund a new cancer unit, now named The Robert White Centre.

Martin Clunes said: "It was my privilege to be able to officially open the new Robert White Centre.

"The incredibly generous support from the community for the DCH Cancer Appeal, as well as Robert's generosity, leaves a remarkable legacy for patients with cancer in Dorset."

Dr Mike Bayne, who treated Robert White and is oncology consultant at Poole Hospital, joined guests at the official opening. He said: "It was a privilege to be Robert White's oncologist and I am delighted to see that his amazing legacy has enabled the opening of the Robert White Centre here today.

"His amazing gift has enabled us to create cancer services which match the best in the world and makes a step change in care for all our patients and their families battling cancer."

Simon Pearson, Head of Fundraising, DCH Charity expressed their thanks: “We have received extraordinary support from across our community for the Cancer Appeal. Thank you to everyone for their generosity. This support will benefit cancer patients at DCH for years to come.”

The cancer outpatients unit is already in operation and the new radiotherapy unit is expected to open in early 2019. Overall, it is estimated that each year around 5,000 cancer patients and their families will benefit from the services in the Centre.

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PHOTO CAPTIONS (Please credit Finnbar Webster):

Picture one (RWC_Opening015): Martin Clunes with the Lord Lieutenant of Dorset Angus Campbell and Chairman of Dorset County Hospital Mark Addison.

Picture two (RWC_Opening019): from left – Chief Executive of Dorset County Hospital Patricia Miller, Robert White's Oncologist Dr Mike Bayne, Chief Executive of Poole Hospital Debbie Fleming, Martin Clunes, Lord Lieutenant of Dorset Angus Campbell and Chairman of Dorset County Hospital Mark Addison.

Picture three (RWC_Opening027): Martin Clunes with his wife Philippa and members of the Buckham Fair Committee.

Picture four (RWC_Opening025): Karen Bev, General Manager of Oncology at Poole Hospital shows guests the new linac radiotherapy machine.

For more information please contact Dorset County Hospital's communications team on 01305 254683, 01305 253394 or communications@dchft.nhs.uk