

Leeson Carlyle

Supported through grief

Leeson Carlyle turned to Highland Hospice's bereavement services after realising he was struggling to cope following the death of his wife Sue.

"I thought I had had time to process the likely outcome but death is never straightforward," he said.

Sue had been diagnosed with breast cancer in 2022. By February 2024, the illness was terminal, having spread to her liver and bones. She spent seven weeks in the Hospice's inpatient unit before she died in August, aged 68.

"When Sue was in the Hospice I was very impressed by the level of care she received," Leeson said. "It was beyond anything I could have hoped for."

After her death, Leeson realised he was struggling more than he expected.

"I thought I could manage because she'd been unwell for years," he said. "Within a few weeks it was clear that I couldn't."

"Leeson discovered the Grief Café and later joined the Sharing Spaces programme."

After Sue's death Leeson received a bereavement pack from the Hospice. Through this and further information from the Hospice website Leeson discovered the Grief Café and later joined the Sharing Spaces programme.

"I had two major concerns," he said. "The first was whether my wife had had a good death. The second was that after 40 years of marriage, I didn't know who I was."

Leeson recalled the last days with Sue. His son had travelled from Oxford to visit, and on what would be her final day, Sue was barely conscious.

"I was concerned she might have expected to see us the next day," he said. "She wasn't responsive, and that really troubled me. It was devastating for my son. Although she wasn't conscious to us, I wondered if she felt she had been robbed."



Bereavement Services



Through Sharing Spaces, Leeson came to terms with that first worry.

“The answer was that it was as good as it was going to be. You will never know the answer to that question, so you have to move on.”

Rediscovering Self

The second concern, finding his own identity after decades of caring for Sue who had lived with a spinal injury for many years, led Leeson to one-to-one bereavement support. Beginning in February 2025, he met fortnightly for six months, then monthly for three months.

“Most of that time was spent figuring out who I was,” he said. “I had this 40-year gap. It required a lot of self-analysis.”

Bereavement support helped him reconnect with his own life.

“It’s made a huge difference because I felt empowered. I think I figured out the type of things I like and how things might look in my life going forward. I was alone, my son is remote, and I had no way of dealing with the concerns myself. Bereavement support was of huge benefit.”

Now Leeson volunteers at the Hospice, helping run Grief Café sessions, the very service that first supported him.

“I’m just happy to contribute and hopefully widen the reach of those services,” he said. “Through the Grief Café and Sharing Spaces, I met others who were grieving. It helped me know I’m not alone.”

“Bereavement support was of huge benefit.”

