



Jane McAllister

Scottish Fire & Rescue

“Being at Jubilee House reconnected us as a couple, rather than a couple living with cancer”



As the wife of a farmer and volunteer firefighter on the Scottish Isle of Arran, Jane McAllister is used to belonging to a tight-knit community. While recovering from breast cancer, she applied for a recuperative stay for her and her husband at Jubilee House. It was here that she found another small, but perfectly formed, community that would play an important role in her recovery.

“It had been less than a year since my diagnosis, and during that time I'd had a double mastectomy, chemotherapy and radiotherapy, so my confidence was low,” says Jane. “I'd remained strong while going through the cancer and treatment, because it was my way of getting through it. But afterwards, I felt weepy and emotions kept bubbling up. In Jubilee House, it was cossetting and comforting, everyone was so kind and couldn't do enough for me.”

Jane was joined by her husband, Charlie, on what she describes as the ‘perfect halfway house’ between real life and a holiday: “We just went and did as little as possible, relaxing, and taking time to regroup. We weren't there trying to do everything we could to make the most of our trip, we just stopped. Charlie had had to carry me through my illness, and being at Jubilee House reconnected us as a couple, rather than being a couple living with this illness as part of their relationship.”

Charlie, now retired, worked as a volunteer firefighter for 32 years. At his retirement party, not long after Jane received her diagnosis, a friend in the service suggested they contact the Charity.

“We had no idea volunteer firefighters could be eligible for support, let alone their wives,” says Jane. “I can't tell you how much it meant to both of us, being able to go to Penrith when we did. It was just what we needed at the time, gave me a wee confidence boost, and a starting block to move on with our lives from.”

www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/jane-mcallister

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