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Communications Department

Royal United Hospital
Combe Park
Bath
BA1 3NG

Tel: 01225 826230 / 821459
Mobile: 07557 756658 (office hours)

Ruh-tr.communicationteam@nhs.net
www.ruh.nhs.uk
<https://twitter.com/RUHBath>

Media Release

Hamish Mackie's Swifts sculpture begins to take flight

British wildlife sculptor Hamish Mackie has shared a glimpse into his workshop, where he is busy on a sculpture commission for the new Dyson Cancer Centre at the Royal United Hospitals Bath (RUH) NHS Foundation Trust.

Entitled 'Swifts' and representing a pair of swifts in flight, the sculpture will form part of the inpatient courtyard in the new centre. **The video**, filmed in Hamish's studio in Oxfordshire, shows the internationally renowned British sculptor making the armature – a framework around which a sculpture is built, when a sculpture cannot stand by itself.

The armature has been designed to come apart, allowing Hamish to work on the swifts individually from all angles. The next stage will be to sculpt the original in plasticine and capture the aerodynamic and fast moving nature of these beautiful birds.

The final larger than life sculpture will be cast into bronze and mounted on a limestone plinth where it will form a focal point for the open air first floor courtyard in the centre.

Hamish Mackie said: "Swifts have a well-deserved reputation for being aeronautical masters of speed and precision flying. A migratory bird, they cover huge distances every year of around 200,000km. They even sleep and mate on the wing, remaining in the air for many months at a time. Swifts are monogamous and visit the UK in summer to breed and then winter in Africa. They have long scythe-shaped wings and a forked tail.

"With this sculpture I wanted to convey a sense of freedom, of thermals and high-speed flight paths. The understanding of their long journey to Britain every year and the happiness seeing them evokes, makes them the ultimate symbol of hope. They are the perfect bird to sculpt for the new Dyson Cancer Centre at the RUH."

This special artwork has been made possible through a kind donation from a local individual who is a long term supporter of the Trust's charity RUHX and wishes to remain anonymous.

The use of natural light, external spaces, greenery and artwork are all known to have a positive effect on healing and overall patient experience and have been incorporated into the design of the centre, based around a land, water and sky theme.

The new Dyson Cancer Centre will provide a cancer services hub for half a million people in the South West and remains on track to open for patients in autumn 2023. The purpose built centre will bring together the majority of the RUH's cancer services, including research, under one roof, providing oncology, chemotherapy and radiotherapy services and a 22-bed inpatient ward. Keep up to date with the latest progress on our website www.ruh.nhs.uk/dysoncancercentre or check our social media accounts @RUHBath

Ends

Notes to Editor:

The Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust provides acute treatment and care for a catchment population of around 500,000 people in Bath, and the surrounding towns and villages in North East Somerset and Western Wiltshire. The hospital provides healthcare to the population served by four Clinical Commissioning Groups: Bath & North East Somerset CCG, Wiltshire CCG, Somerset CCG and South Gloucestershire CCG.

The Trust provides 759 beds and a comprehensive range of acute services including medicine and surgery, services for women and children, accident and emergency services, and diagnostic and clinical support services.

In 2015 The Royal United Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust acquired the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases (RNHRD) NHS Foundation Trust. The RNHRD treats patients from across the country offering services in rheumatology, chronic pain and chronic fatigue syndrome/ME, cancer related fatigue and fatigue linked to other long term conditions such as multiple sclerosis.

The RUH is changing - we have an exciting programme of redevelopment underway transforming our site and further improving the services we provide. The Trust has opened the purpose-built RNHRD and Brownsword Therapies Centre and is now working towards the new Dyson Cancer Centre. For more details visit: www.ruh.nhs.uk/about/fit_for_the_future

For more information about the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust visit: www.ruh.nhs.uk