

Friends of Harington Newsletter



September 2025

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News from the Friends' Committee



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News from the Friends

This is the last time I'll be writing to you as Chair of the Friends, as after 15 years I'm finally retiring from this position, effective from Christmas 2025.

I'm happy to say that all our events in these years have made a profit for Harington, so many thanks to all of you for your continuing support, and of course to the wonderful Friends' Committee without whom these events couldn't happen.

New blood is now needed, however, and I urge any of you with a little occasional time to spare to consider helping at some of our events, or even to join our committee.

**New Chair of the
Friends of Harington required.**

**We're friendly and welcoming, and
we'd love to hear from you at:
[friendsofharington@gmail.com!](mailto:friendsofharington@gmail.com)**



Friends' Past Events

The Spring Sale in early May was its usual success for the Friends, providing both enjoyment and profit. The sun shone down as the brass band played and customers chose their plants and preserves and then relaxed with our homemade refreshments; support of our raffle was also most generous, and with the two-day duration of the Sale, we were able to raise a massive **£3,061.57**. Many thanks to all who attended.



Harington plants displayed in perfect condition, and ready for sale before the opening of the Spring Sale.



Photo above: The beautiful Harington Greenhouse



Photo collage above: Site preparation for the Spring Sale 2025, showing vibrant student artwork displayed in the under cover area.



The Spring Sale vegetable and herb plants stall



A growing audience for the live music of the London Metropolitan Brass and more refreshments and plants sales during the interval.

Friends' Past Events

A month later, Harington took part in the London Open Gardens Weekend, with the Friends providing the refreshments. Unfortunately the damp weather and the simultaneous Fair in the Square meant that visitors were fewer than expected, but we still raised over £250 from our coffee and cake, and those who did come showed a pleasing interest in Harington's contribution to the community.

Friends' Past Events

At the end of June we held our second Afternoon Tea Quiz, entertainingly hosted as always by the brilliant John and Katie Plews. Both quiz and delicious tea were very well received, and the venue of St Michael's School hall was central and pleasant. After expenses we raised £1,566.83, with guests eagerly anticipating next year's quiz!



Afternoon Tea Quiz participants with Mark Cooke, Harington Trustee speaking on the microphone on left, and host Katie Plew standing on the right hand side.



The Quiz Group with host John Plew on the right-hand side.

Friends' Future Events

Wine Tasting at the Theatre of Wine, on Wednesday 19th November at 124 Junction Road, N19 5LB, 7.30pm, £37.50. This is an informative and entertaining event, offering eight interestingly varied wines with complementary cheeses and charcuterie.

There are just 16 places; to book yours please contact Rosalind Laurie on 07810 287670 or at rosalindlaurie@talktalk.net

Harington Christmas Sale Saturday 6th December

Our jam and chutney makers are already harvesting fruit for the homemade preserves they will sell you at Harington's annual Christmas Fair - and don't miss out on their excellent marmalade!

Enjoy all of them yourself or use them as very welcome presents.

We'll also be selling delicious homemade refreshments, and tickets for our raffle, which always has great prizes.

With the Christmas decorations, cards and presents to be sold by the students, this event will provide Harington with much-needed funds and you with a lovely start to the festive season.

Friends of Harington – August 2024 Impact Report

By Yasmin Davey Corrigan, Senior Fundraising and Marketing Officer



Your Support in Action

In 2024, the generosity of Friends of Harington played an important part in enriching our students' time at Harington. We are so grateful that by having your gift as unrestricted funding, this meant we could be flexible, stepping in where the need was greatest and seizing opportunities that made a difference to daily life. This kind of support helps in ways that are sometimes hard to measure, but always deeply felt. While we can't share every detail, we hope you'll enjoy some highlights below of how your kindness helped our students to learn, grow, and thrive over the past year.

Student's PGL residential trip

Each year, our students have the chance to join a residential trip with PGL on the Isle of Wight. This experience is offered to them free of charge so that everyone can take part, no matter their circumstances.

For some, it's the first time spending several nights away from home with friends, trying new activities like kayaking and abseiling, or simply navigating the independence of being away.



This adventure can be transformative, building confidence, resilience and lasting memories. It is a valuable experience which we are able to offer at Harington, and we thank the Friends for the portion of their gift which goes towards making this residential trip possible.

Student Equipment

Providing high-quality training for our students means having the right tools and equipment to support their learning. In horticulture, this can include everything from spades and secateurs to gloves, boots, and waterproofs – all of which see daily use and

need to be kept in good condition.

Thanks to the generosity of Friends of Harington, we've been able to ensure that students have access to the resources they need to work safely, comfortably, and with confidence. Well-maintained equipment helps make each training session a positive, practical, and rewarding experience.



Along the way, they've developed practical skills like cooking for themselves, understanding ingredients, using kitchen equipment safely, and budgeting for meals.

The sessions improve their confidence and give them the chance to work positively with their peers. It also provides the students with a home cooked lunch on the day which they take such pride and accomplishment in.

Weekly Cookery Lessons

Within our Life Skills training, students on the Employability programme take part in weekly cookery lessons – a much-valued part of their time at Harington.

This year, they have learnt about food from around the world, trying their hand at making meals such as fragrant Indian curries and Greek vegetable skewers with fresh flatbreads.



These sessions are run on a modest budget, but a portion of the Friends of Harington donation helps us to provide ingredients and resources that make them such a highlight to our students.

Special visits and transport costs

Many Harington students experience travel anxiety, so trips, visits, and work experience can be a real challenge.



Our travel training helps build confidence, with staff accompanying students as they learn to navigate London's public transport.

Throughout the academic year, there are many opportunities for students to practice these skills – whether travelling to work experience placements or enjoying recreational visits.

This year, trips have included exploring the gardens and palm houses at Kew Gardens and visiting Walthamstow Wetlands for a change of scenery and inspiration in another natural setting.

These activities come with costs, from providing Oyster cards for students to covering staff time, but they are a vital part of our training, helping students grow in independence, confidence, and pride in their achievements.

A portion of the Friends of Harington's support helped make these experiences possible for our students this year.



Thank you for everything you do.

With the ongoing support from the Friends of Harington, we can continue to build on the impact we've shared this year.



News from Jacqui Steel, Harington CEO/ Principal



A Fantastic End to the Term at Harington

As the academic year drew to a close, we celebrated the hard work, dedication, and creativity of our staff and students. The Summer 2025 term had been full of achievements, community connections, and exciting developments.

Our students and staff worked tirelessly to complete all of their qualifications — a true testament to their commitment and resilience. Alongside their studies, the weekly stall at Pond Square continued to be a vibrant hub for our plants and produce, building connections with local residents and visitors.

One of the year's standout successes has been the **Lathyrus Project**, which has flourished thanks to the passion and skill of everyone involved. The project has brought colour and joy to the community and provided an inspiring learning experience for our students.

In July, we hosted our hugely successful **Celebration of Achievement** event, attended by our Patron, Joe Swift. It was a wonderful occasion to recognise the incredible progress our learners have made over the year.

This summer also marked a very special milestone — **The Harington Scheme's 45th year**. We celebrated this achievement with a beautiful exhibition at **Lauderdale House**, in Waterlow Park, Highgate which ran from the 10th July to the 15th August 2025, showcasing the history, creativity, and community spirit that have defined our work over the decades.



End-of-term activities included enriching trips such as a visit to **Walthamstow Wetlands**, giving students the chance to explore nature and enjoy a well-deserved break from the classroom.

We are deeply grateful for the generous support we've received from the community this term. **The Highgate Hit List** chose us as their charity of the year, making a valued donation, while the **Take Twenty Choir** raised funds for us in June during their beautiful concert at the Chapel on Pond Square.

Finally, we are excited to welcome our newly appointed staff: our **Head of Finance and Operations**, our **Fundraising and Marketing Officer**, and our **Retail Operations Manager**, who will all help us build on our successes and create new opportunities for Harington.

Kind regards,

Jacqui Steel



Left to Right: Lucy Tauber and Helen Rapley, production Team on the Highgate Broadsheet, presenting their donation cheque to Johanna Day, Harington Head of Finance & Operations with Jacqui Steel, Harington CEO/ Principal and Joe Swift, Harington Patron.

Notice in loving memory



In loving memory of

Mandy Hill

It is with heart felt sadness that we have to inform you of the passing of our dear friend and colleague, Mandy Hill, who worked at Harington for many years. Mandy gave a huge amount of her energy, commitment and support to Harington students and families, in her leading role with the Recruitment and Progression team.

Mandy had been continuing to work at Harington through serious illness in recent years, with much strength, compassion and determination, and with fun and laughter in fair measure too. Thank you, Mandy, for your love and friendship to us all.

Our dear colleague died peacefully in the evening of Friday 15th August 2025, surrounded by her family, loved ones and close friends, with so much love and comfort given to her by the nurses at St. John's Hospice a truly special and beautiful hospice.

Mandy's funeral and beautiful celebration of her life took place on Wednesday 3rd September at Golders Green Crematorium, attended by her family, friends and her colleagues from Harington.



Planting of the Memorial Tree

**On Tuesday 6th May 2025 in the Harington Walled Garden
By Sam Zabihzadeh-Shahabi, Operations Manager, Harington Gardeners**

In November 2024, we sadly lost our much-loved colleague and friend, David Byrne and while the sadness remains, the Harington Team came together in May this year to celebrate his life, his legacy, and the positive impact he had on all of us.

Dave was passionate about horticulture and the power of plants to bring people together, to heal, and to inspire change. In that spirit, the whole team held a Spring Memorial to honour his memory, the lives he touched, and the new beginnings he would have cherished.

The afternoon included food shared, joining together to share memories, and a special tree-planting ceremony — a living tribute to David and his love of all things green and growing, celebrating a life that truly made a difference.

Everyone was warmly welcomed with warm memories, thoughts and poems shared at the gathering.



**Our wonderful team of Harington Gardeners
- Assistant Gardeners and Gardening Internship Students planting the
Memorial Olive Tree dedicated to David Byrne.**

Magnificent views of
Harington Horticulture
Training site in Highgate



Welcome to:
Johanna Day
Harington Head of
Finance and
Operations



Hello! I'm Johanna, Head of Finance and Operations. I joined Harington earlier this year, excited by both its mission and its potential.

My role spans finance, operations, and oversight of our two social enterprise - our retail Shops and Harington Gardeners. Day to day, I'm focused on making sure the organisation runs smoothly behind the scenes and has the capacity to grow and adapt in the years ahead.

I come with a background in both the corporate and charity sectors, and it's that combination - of strategic thinking, practical delivery, and purpose - that I hope to bring to Harington.

It's been a fast-paced and rewarding start, and I'm looking forward to working with colleagues, partners and supporters as we shape the next chapter of Harington's story.

As the charity and education sectors continue to evolve, we'll be drawing inspiration from outside as well as within - making sure Harington stays relevant, resilient, and ambitious about the future. It's an exciting time to be at Harington!

Welcome to:
Elena Alberti,
Harington Retail
Operations Manager



Hello! I'm Elena, and I've recently joined Harington as the new Retail Operations Manager.

I'm excited to be part of such a meaningful organisation. With a background in retail management—including several years working with Cancer Research UK—I bring a strong passion for social impact and community-driven retail.

From my very first visit to the shop, I could feel the sense of purpose and community that makes Harington special. It's a joy to work with such dedicated staff and volunteers, and to see how the shops provide not just great pre-loved items, but also invaluable training and work experience for our students.

I'm particularly excited about finding new ways to grow our retail spaces and enhance our customers' experience while supporting Harington's wider goals. It's been a fantastic start, and I look forward to building on the great work already being done in the shops.

If you're clearing out your wardrobe, moving house, or simply looking to support a local charity, please think of us! Donations of good-quality clothing, books, homeware and more are always welcome—and they go a long way in helping us continue our vital work.

Thank you for your support, and I hope to see you in one of our shops soon!

And Welcome
to: **Yasmin Davey Corrigan,**
Harington
Senior Fundraising
& Marketing Officer



Hello!

Since starting as Senior Fundraising and Marketing Officer in June, I've loved getting to know Harington, its rich history, the beautiful Highgate site, and most importantly, the students and the impact the charity has on their lives. It's wonderful to be part of an organisation so rooted in the community. I've lived locally for six years (and have been a regular at Harington charity shops!) so it feels very special to be working here now.

My background spans charity, fundraising and the arts, most recently at Art Fund, and before that at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA) and Nordoff Robbins, the UK's leading music therapy charity.

At both RADA and Nordoff and Robbins, I particularly enjoyed getting to know students and clients and seeing first hand the power of creativity.

Outside of work, I'm a keen musician. I play guitar, sing and song write. I also love the outdoors and am a bit of an amateur birdwatcher, so working at the peaceful and green Highgate site is a real treat.

There are so many exciting opportunities for fundraising and marketing at Harington, and I'm currently focused on identifying key priorities and developing a realistic plan.

To help me understand the heart of Harington, I'd love to hear your stories—whether about a student's journey, a favourite event, or how you have seen Harington shape and grow. Feel free to get in touch at yasmin.daveycorrigan@harington.org.uk.

And finally, we've launched a new Instagram page! Follow us at [@haringtoncharity](https://www.instagram.com/haringtoncharity) to stay updated with news and stories.

A whole page for Harington!

in The Camden New Journal, Islington Tribune and Westminster Extra

Harington's Horticulture Vocational Trainer, Lee Haley captured the imagination this year, of both Harington's Horticulture Students and their fantastic Learning Support Teams.

Lee also captured the heart of the journalist who visited the Harington site in April to write an article, which appeared in the Camden New Journal on Thursday 17th April 2025, under the title: **London Blooms** 'There are 2 kinds of people in the world: those who like sweet peas – and those who don't yet know about them.'



Interesting environmental journalism is so much better than the bad news we have to read these days. Also, we think we have made a good friend in the enthusiastic journalist from the Camden New Journal,

who said to us on site that, "Harington is a little piece of paradise."

Lee Haley's Project for the Harington students is titled, **The Lathyrus Project**, and we are proud of the whole team. The Lathyrus Project worked excellently on site this year, and was professionally well thought out by our staff and students.

The students and team worked together on carefully building the bamboo structures, digging the fertile soil on site, planting the Sweet Pea seeds, nurturing them in the greenhouse and planting them out in all weathers! – luckily it was mostly sunshine and warm, breezy days in April 2025.

Our heart felt thanks to Lee and the Harington Learning Support Teams, who work across a wide range of horticultural subjects with an all-encompassing timetable with so much experience, intelligence and creativity.



Hort News

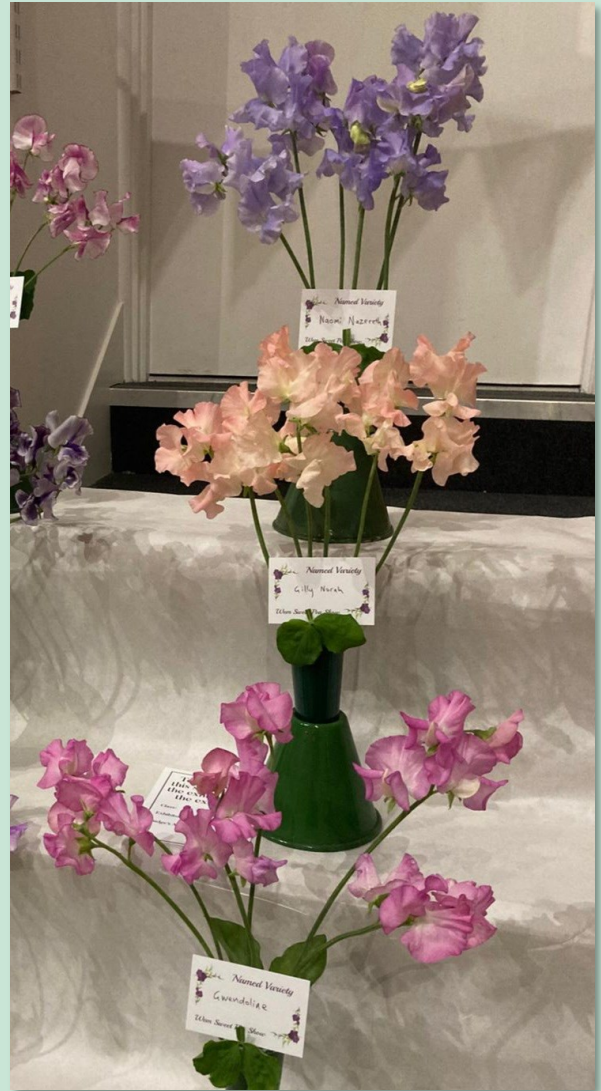
Harington Horticulture news—September 2025

By Lee Haley, Horticulture Vocational Trainer

The gardens at Harington are now showing signs of the end of Summer. It has been a dry year and many plants have struggled through lack of water, however there is still a lot of colour to greet us on our return after the holidays. Annual **Phlox**, giant sunflowers, Rudbeckias, Tagetes, and Verbena are all still flowering, and helping us all back into horticulture.

At Harington we grow vegetables, fruit and herbs as well as ornamentals. We sell our produce at Pond square on Thursdays and enter in local shows. Our friend and mentor Gary Sycamore has been helping us to grow prize winning flowers, he also sells our flowers and veg at Ally Pally at weekends, and donates generously to our charity.

Last year we made a name for ourselves with our **sweet peas**, winning prizes at both local and national flower shows. We won every possible prize for sweet peas at Highgate and Muswell Hill summer **flower shows** (two firsts at Highgate and both first and second prize at Muswell Hill), as well as two first prizes at the Wem Sweet Pea show in Shropshire. We also entered for Chorley flower show but as it was the end of the season we only got two third prizes, still not bad for a national sweet pea show.



Prizes at the National Sweet Pea Show in Wem, Shropshire

Seeds have been harvested from some sweet peas and other **Lathyrus species**, and have been drying out. The students will be sorting the seeds, saving only the best ones, before cleaning and cold storage. Some will be sown this month. If we can get good at growing seeds (that is if the plants we grow from them are any good), then we can start selling them next year.



In addition to sweet peas, we also worked hard last year to grow some showy perennials. Our early spray **Chrysanthemums** will soon be ready and will be trying their luck in the Autumn flower shows in September, along with our **Dahlias** and seasonal veg. The Chrysanths grow quite happily down on the plots under the shade of a mature oak tree. Plant stools will be lifted after flowering and we will hopefully have some cuttings to sell at the Spring sale next year.

A few **Delphiniums** are flowering as part of our trials, which involved growing a few from seed and planting them out on a plot. Some have turned out splendid and will soon be transplanted to a permanent location at the front of scheme. Encouraged by the success, we plan to repeat trials on a larger scale this year. Once plants are established we will be hopefully able to build a stock by propagating them from root cuttings.

Students have enjoyed learning about **plant nutrition**. We fed most plants high nitrogen products such as Maxicrop at the beginning of the season to help with growth. Later on, to encourage fruits and flowers, we gave our plants Tomorite or a solution of sulphate of potash, which are both high in potassium. We added bonemeal planting to our Dahlias, to encourage root development.

Many different types of **sunflowers** were grown last year including dwarf varieties, giants, mid-range and some unusual colours. Students enjoyed applying their maths skills by measuring the growth of the sunflowers each week after planting out. They also observed the difference between those that had and those that had not been fed chicken manure. Step ladders were needed eventually for measuring the giants.



Daffodils will be a focus for us this year. There are over 20,000 registered cultivars of daffodil, and over 12 divisions which we use to categorise them. Many of these divisions have been forgotten about by modern growers, and we aim to bring them all back to our neighbourhood. We plan to grow around 2/3 cultivars from each division. Some are early flowering, some late. As friends of the Daffodil society our job is to help to spread awareness of this wonderful flower in our community. We will have plenty to sell at our Christmas sale, ready for Spring, and to enter in local shows.

We are sorry to announce the departure of Rachel Pilkington from the role of vocational manager. Rachel has been a key player at Harington for many years now and it will be strange for many of us to carry out our annual events in her absence. Our next big one will be the **Christmas sale on Saturday 6th December**, where we will be selling our usual popular selection of bulbs, winter bedding and Christmas decorations. See you there.

Harington scheme success story

By Sally Huggins, Social Worker (CSW) for Deaf Umbrella

"Sally, who currently is the British Sign Language (BSL) support for Godspower Obode, Harington Assistant Gardener, has asked me to share this with Harington.

Sally has worked with Godspower for many years on and off and would very much like us to share some of her memories and celebrate his incredible progress he has made."

Martin Butler, Harington Gardening Team Supervisor.

In June 2022 a student came for an assessment day with Harington Gardeners for a pre-Internship. He was profoundly Deaf with additional needs.

On the Day of assessment Godspower Obode had been accompanied by his brother on the bus and during the day he was supported by a Communication Support Worker (CSW) from the agency Deaf Umbrella.

Under the instruction of Martin Butler, Harington Gardening Team Supervisor, the student, Godspower Obode used a lawnmower and Martin was impressed. However, we were unsure whether Godspower would be able to travel independently and also access the English and Maths required for the full Supported Internship starting in September.

As a child, he had attended Heathlands Primary school for the Deaf, the largest Deaf school within the UK, and learnt how to use Sign Language there which, crucially, opened up his communication to the world.

Godspower went on to be a student at Oaklands college, St Albans, where he arrived by taxi and was accompanied back to his taxi escort at the end of the day. He started in the Supported Learning department, with a one-to-one Social Worker (CSW) to support him throughout lessons and also the college was advised that he needed supervision through lunchtimes.

He then progressed to a course in Horticulture L1 where he enjoyed being outdoors and gradually started to become more independent at break times.

Godspower was supported through Covid "stay at home" by his regular Social Worker (CSW). His brothers helped him access Teams to join in with the lessons, this was obviously a very difficult time for all the students and was not always a success.

Then Godspower returned to college early as one of the vulnerable students. Following his assessment day, during the summer of 2022, Godspower was lucky enough to have Travel training with Martin Butler at Harington, opening up a whole new world to him, where he could arrive and leave Harington at Highgate with no one accompanying him.

Deaf Umbrella was asked to support Godspower in his journey to become a fully paid Assistant Gardener with the Harington Team.

Thanks to his Head Gardeners, mentors, fellow gardeners and support staff, Godspower has gone on to become one of the hardest working, strongest, most helpful, polite and proactive members of the Team, also winning **Harington's Assistant Gardener of the Year 2024 Award.**



Godspower Obode, Harington Assistant Gardener working in a local residential front garden.

To see him at lunchtimes now, shopping in the town and using his bank card is something we weren't sure was possible during his school and college years.

Everyone has found their unique way to reach Godspower and each person uses their own visual way to communicate with their Deaf friend. I have seen his colleagues gain in confidence themselves by using visual clues such as pointing and using their hands in shapes, sizes and directions to describe tasks and tools on the job.

Godspower's success story shows us that, in Harington's nurturing environment, and with the right guidance and support, a student with many additional needs can indeed flourish and become an invaluable member of the workforce.

We will definitely miss Godspower's presence and companionship in the classroom, searching out biscuits and showing us funny videos.

Also, in the Gardeners' van pointing out old, rich cars and new buildings along the way. Godspower also enjoyed joining his colleagues at the Thursday Community Lunch in Highgate where he connected well with other Deaf people.

Harington staff, Max, Sam, Jane, signing support staff and ALL his Gardening colleagues have helped Godspower to mature into a good worker we enjoy having around. His friends here have certainly helped to set up the strong foundations needed for this young man to continue in his career.

Godspower's contract with the Harington Gardeners ended in August 2025. I know that everyone at Harington and Deaf Umbrella will want to wish Godspower every success with his future.



Sally Huggins, Social Worker (CSW) for Deaf Umbrella, Sam Zabizadeh-Shahabi, Harington Gardeners Operations Manager, Godspower Obode and Vincent.

Volunteering at Harington

By Carol Loizou, Harington Volunteer



Harington Volunteer, Carol working with Student, William outside the Walled Garden Classroom.

Having some time on my hands after completing a gardening course at Capel Manor College, I was keen to continue being part of a horticultural and learning environment.

So, in Autumn 2022, I approached the Harington Scheme to explore potential volunteering opportunities. I soon became part of the Harington team, joining the wonderful Day Care students. I found myself immersed in a variety of activities, from Christmas card-making, local leaflet posting, to hands-on gardening tasks, with guidance from Lee and later, Nechat. These experiences brought a sense of fulfilment and pleasure, and I'd like to think I help the students enjoy their time as well.

Tucked away behind Highgate High Street, the Harington Scheme is a hidden gem set in a beautiful 1.5-acre landscaped site. I didn't fully appreciate its uniqueness until I saw first hand how it provides an inclusive environment, supporting students with learning differences as they develop life skills.

Since then, I have had the privilege of becoming a Volunteer working directly with the Harington Learning Support Assistants (LSAs), primarily assisting students in English and Maths.

Having previously worked in international roles across both the private and non-profit sectors, stepping into this role was a new challenge. With the support of my colleagues, I found it very rewarding to work in such a nurturing environment and to see the students' progress over the year.

The students are an absolute joy. They are well-behaved, polite, and each with their own unique personality. It's heartwarming to be recognized and greeted with a cheerful "Hello, Carol!" as I walk through the grounds.

We now have a Volunteer group led by George, which meets regularly to share ideas, gather feedback, and help improve our experience. It's also enables the volunteers to raise suggestions and hopefully contribute to Harington's development.

During break times, the staff are really helpful, welcoming, and genuinely appreciative of the volunteers' contributions. It's a community where everyone's efforts are valued.

If you're considering volunteering, I'd encourage you to give it a try — you might find, like I did, that you like it. I'm three years into my volunteering and hope to continue for many years to come.