

## Gardening

[Gillian is one of our volunteers - Here is her story](#)

It's now 10 years since I became a garden volunteer at Martin House. Much has changed over the past decade, the staff within the House, the addition of Whitby Lodge, the volunteers and of course the garden.



The six acre garden site has moved on over the years, trying to meet the growing needs of the children and their families. The old willow walk which meandered through the parkland has gone, it was beyond refurbishment and had become impossible for wheelchair access and in the summer had become the home of wasps, it has now been replaced with a trellis structure with plants growing along its complete length and of course you can manoeuvre your way securely throughout its entire length.

I designed and we installed a new sensory garden in 2004, the garden is often used by our children and families alike, the animal bricks form a good hide and seek project for the care team to do with the children and the plants are at the right height to smell, feel and touch.

The Whitby Lodge garden has now acquired maturity and provides a stunning background to the young peoples own private space.

Last year the garden volunteers were invited to take part in the 'Time 4 Us' programme by the care team, this involved three meetings during the year. Our part was to include a gardening activity for the siblings to be included on their special visits to Martin House. By this time I am an avid allotment holder, so it seemed the perfect project to do with the children to plant and grow vegetables with them. We are now on our second year and the children seem to love it, to plant, harvest and eat the vegetables. So all is going well.

We are constantly given help and support by outside organisations in our endeavours to provide a pleasant and peaceful environment for our children and families, but I must mention my two other garden volunteers Janet Coleman and Mona Benson who have been coming week in week out, they tackle any job presented to them, they love coming and they love making a difference to the lives of the people who come to Martin House.