Friends of Harington Newsletter

HARINGTON
learning to grow, growing to learn

March 2026

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Many of you will be aware that we launched the Root for Harington fundraising campaign in December. We are experiencing increasing financial pressures due to rising costs and limited public funding. To continue providing the high-quality, individualised support that Harington is known for, we have set an ambitious but essential target to raise **£250,000 over the next year**.

We want to reassure you that this campaign is about *sustaining* Harington for many years to come because we want to protect the future of our work and ensure we can continue offering life-changing opportunities to young people with learning differences.

You can follow us on **Instagram @haringtoncharity** to keep up to date, and we would be so grateful if you could share our posts with your own networks to help spread the word. You can also find full details about the campaign and ways to get involved here:
Root for Harington | harington

We'd be so grateful for your support in helping us spread the word. You can:

- **Share our campaign** with friends, family, and colleagues.
- **Get involved in fundraising events** we'll be running throughout the year.
- **Or even organise your own fundraiser** in support of Harington.

The launching of our own campaign coincided with the NATSPEC power of specialist FE campaign. The aim of this campaign was to elevate perceptions of the sector, highlight its role in unlocking opportunities for young people with SEND, and build a stronger, united voice among providers.

As part of this campaign we were encouraged to engage with our local MPs to highlight the challenge's faced by the sector.

We were very pleased to host a visit by Catherine West, the Labour MP for Hornsey, at our charity shop and Hub in Hornsey. She has been a longtime supporter of Harington and gave us some very useful information and advice.

Bright light outside and natural views for our students in the class room overlooking the trees and horticulture site.

Harington staff office with the students' planting terrace and square for breaks and a place to gather.

At the Winter Sale in December, we gave our thanks to the longstanding chair of the Friends of Harington, Rosalind Laurie, as she stood down from her role.

The Friends of Harington have supported our work for many years. You will have seen the wonderful stall and refreshments that the Friends provide at all of our sales. They also support the students residential PGL trips.

They are very much open to increasing their membership. If you are interested in extending your support for Harington by becoming a member of the Friends, please contact: info@Harington.org.uk

Kind regards,

Jacqui Steel

Spring view showing off the magnificent glass structure of the Harington Greenhouse

New Accessible fencing installed for students on the path to the Horticulture plots, in preparation for the start of the 2025/2026 Academic year.

Harington Winter Plant Sale
Saturday 6th December 2025

Luckily, the rain held back for us all on the day of the Winter Sale on Saturday 6th December 2025.

Many visitors were able to enjoy looking around the horticulture site, socialise and buy their plants on the upper terrace while listening to the London Metropolitan Brass, who regularly support Harington at the plant sales.

We were joined by the Deputy Mayor of Haringey, Counsellor Michelle Simmons-Safo at midday, who was welcomed by us all. The Deputy Mayor, Michelle made a very interesting speech describing how much the earth and horticulture plays such a big part in her own Caribbean culture and heritage, which she also remembers vividly from her childhood.

The Deputy Mayor's speech was a valuable reminder of 'how close we all are to the earth and our natural environment through horticulture, and how much it means to us all. ' Michelle also said she was inspired by the invitation to the Winter Sale at Harington, and on arriving at the site, she said she was stunned and

London Metropolitan Brass, and Alison Kelly, Chair of the Harington Trustees greeting Counsellor Michelle Simmons-Safo, the Deputy Mayor of Haringey.

taken aback by this beautiful hidden horticultural gem, which is Harington. This was beautifully highlighted at our Winter Sale, which forms such an important part of Harington students' studies, work practices and

contributes to the start of their commercial working experience. **Together we all raised over £5000 from the Winter Sale.**

On the next page, there is a little 'behind the scenes look 'at just how much, our staff,

students, their families and friends contribute to the organisation of the wonderful Harington plant sales twice a year, not to mention the valuable work undertaken by our Harington Volunteers and the Friends of Harington throughout the year.

One of our Harington parents, Sue Connelly, volunteered to help us by decorating the fresh wreaths, and she very kindly led a creative wreath decorating workshop which was attended by Harington staff after work.

Harington student Anthony worked well with Lucy Reavey, Harington Internship Tutor on the Festive Arts and Crafts stall on the day. Anthony sold nearly all his hand marbled ceramic baubles and marbled gift wrap paper, which he created with our tutor Lucy for the Winter Sale.

Hand marbled baubles and gift wrap paper by student Anthony and Tutor Lucy Reavey selling festive Arts and Crafts

Student Anthony and Tutor Lucy Reavey selling festive Arts and Crafts

Harington students in class putting the final touches on the festive cards for sale.

In fact, this is just one of many creative projects which are regularly organised by all the Harington Learning Support Assistants and tutors – who are a knowledgeable and creative team in support of the Harington students.

Another very welcome and unexpected donation to Harington came in the form of a collection of beautiful etchings, hand drawn seascapes and still life drawings created by Lucy Reavey, the Harington Internship Tutor.

Lucy generously sold four of her original etching prints, raising a large donation for Harington for which we are most grateful – a big thank you to Lucy from the Harington Team.

We also sold mulled wine for the first time at our Winter Sale, and there was also a new Harington Charity shop stall, selling very good quality vintage and pre-loved items in near perfect condition. The vintage items were especially curated by the shops team, from the wide range of donations they regularly receive at the Harington shops in Hornsey High Road, and in Archway Road, Highgate.

Jacqui Steel, Harington Principal/CEO at the Winter Sale with Deputy Mayor of Haringey, Counsellor Michelle Simmons-Safo.

New fencing and hand rails installed in Summer 2025 giving greater accessibility to the horticulture plots.

We were pleased to recognise Rosalind Laurie for her 15 years of dedicated service as Chair of the Friends of Harington as she steps down from the role. Rosalind will stay on with Harington as an active member of the Friends of Harington Committee, staying involved in their fundraising events throughout the year.

We are now on the lookout for a new Chair of the Friends of Harington, to lead the team in the future – if you would be interested in this role, please contact the friends of Harington at friendsofharington@gmail.com.

Alison Kelly, Chair of the Harington Trustees presenting a gift to Rosalind Laurie, on the departure from her role as Chair of the Friends of Harington.

Urgently Needed - A New Chair of the Friends of Harington .

We're friendly and welcoming, and we'd love to hear from you. Please contact us at: friendsofharington@gmail.com

AN URGENT MESSAGE FROM THE FRIENDS OF HARINGTON COMMITTEE

By Rosalind Laurie, former Chair of the Friends of Harington

The Friends' committee has become somewhat depleted recently, owing to members moving away or suffering ill-health, and we urgently need three or four replacements, including a new Chair.

You're reading this because you already support Harington in different ways, for which we're most grateful, and we're hoping that you might like to extend this support in a more active role?

You've probably seen us serving refreshments or selling jams and chutneys at the Spring and Winter Fairs - we're a friendly bunch who have fun together while trying to help others, and who would make you very welcome. And please note that although most of us are female, we do have one man on the committee who'd be happy to have a companion!

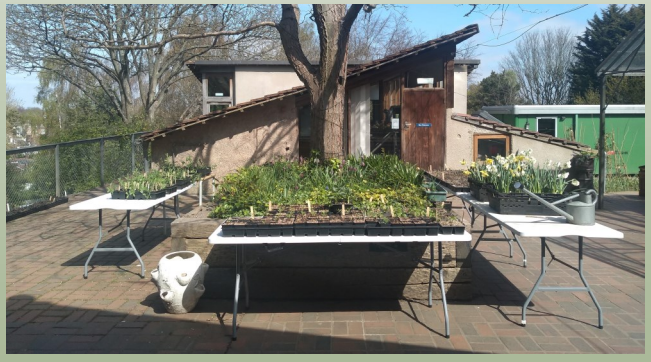
As a committee member, you would attend one informal afternoon meeting every two months, in which we discuss and organise the events we put on, and you'd be required to help with most of these events for some of the time on the day.

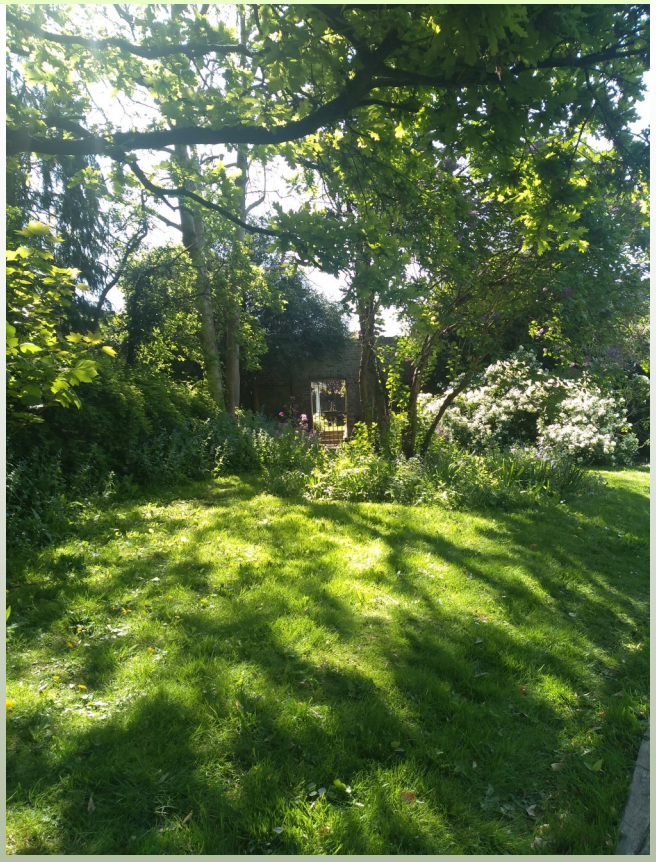
They often involve refreshments, so if you can make sandwiches or a cake that would be great, but it isn't compulsory!

Do please consider joining us if you have a little time to spare and would like to use it for something really worthwhile: you already know what a valuable charity Harington is. Just contact us at friendsofharington@gmail.com .

We'd love to hear from you. Thank you.

Delicate Spring bulb feature planting by Harington Students





The Walled Garden gate and Spring bulb planting by Harington Students in the plant bed by the tree.

Welcome to Louise Workman-Dent, Harington Education and Training Manager

I'm delighted to introduce myself as Harington's Education and Training Manager, with responsibility for teaching, learning and curriculum.

I've worked in education for 20 years, and I'm thrilled to bring my experience and my passion for supporting young people with SEND.

I originally trained as a Religious Education teacher. Over time, I found myself drawn to working with learners outside of mainstream settings, which led me to move into alternative education provisions including a Youth Offender Institution, special schools, training providers, secondary schools and colleges.

Much of my recent experience has been in Further Education, where I led SEND provision across a merged college.

Managing SEND at that scale taught me the importance of robust systems, high aspirations, good communication and having a vision for what could be.

Outside of work, I enjoy trying new things — sometimes unexpected ones. Three years ago I took up Powerlifting, and it has been one of the most surprising and rewarding learning journeys I've had.

It's taught me that we're nearly always capable of more than we think; that having friends alongside you makes challenges (but not weights) lighter (and gives you someone to talk protein, creatine and sore muscles with); and that consistency is the key to progress.

I bring that same mindset into my professional life — steady improvement, high expectations and curiosity.

Since joining Harington, I've loved getting to know the staff and students, and I'm really enjoying the beauty of the green site; I'm learning about horticulture and all things plants.

I'm excited for the journey ahead and look forward to contributing to Harington's legacy.

We are delighted to invite all our Parents and Carers to the Harington Spring Sale on Saturday 2nd May 2026

Spring Sale flyer design by Thomas Cannon, Harington Learning Support Assistant

HARINGTON

learning to grow, growing to learn

ROOT FOR HARINGTON

Support Harington this Spring and help new opportunities bloom

We've made a strong start to our **Root for Harington** campaign, and we're so grateful for the support shown by our community. Thank you to everyone who has supported by donating, sharing the campaign or helping spread the word.

For 45 years, Harington has supported young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to build confidence, develop practical skills, and move towards greater independence through specialist learning and hands-on horticulture training. Like many organisations in the SEND sector, we are now facing rising costs and limited public funding, which is why our **Root for Harington** campaign aims to raise **£250,000** to help sustain our training and protect the small classes, specialist teaching, and personalised support our students benefit from every day.

There's still a way to go, and the continued encouragement of our parent community means a great deal to us. Sharing our story, talking about Harington, and helping raise awareness all make a real difference in helping the young people we support continue to thrive.

How to support Root for Harington

There are lots of ways you can support Root for Harington – big or small!

- **Spread the word:** Share our campaign with family, friends and colleagues
- **Follow us** on Instagram @haringtoncharity, and like, share, or comment on our posts.
- **Get involved:** Join in fundraising activities throughout the year, or even organise your own event.
- **Share your story:** We'd love to hear about your young person's experience at Harington – real stories help others understand our impact.

Every action helps young people with SEND access the education and opportunities they deserve. To find out more or donate, scan the QR code or visit www.harington.org.uk/root-harington

If you have any questions, or you'd like to share a story or get involved, please contact Senior Fundraising and Marketing Officer, Yasmin on yasmin.daveycorrigan@harington.org.uk

Hort News

By Lee Haley, Harington Horticulture Vocational Trainer

Like most of you, we have just endured an extended period of very wet and gloomy weather, and we are now looking forward to the growing season that lies ahead of us.

New compost bins are under construction, to replace the old ones, and all the paths have been given their annual application of woodchip. These jobs help to keep us meaningfully employed during the most difficult season in the garden.

Snowdrops are more present than ever at the Harington scheme, as we divide groups of them every year. Spring crocus is next to follow, and we are already, at the time of writing in February, seeing some early daffodils, which are a big favourite of ours.

Swathes of Snowdrops growing naturally in the Downside Woodland on site.

Harington favourites—Early Tête-à-Tête Daffodils

This year we have learned a lot about daffodils. Firstly, that there is more than one type. In fact, there are over 30,000 cultivars, and these are grouped into 13 divisions, to make it more fun for us.

There are entry classes for both of our local shows and the Highgate Horticultural society still have classes for the different divisions **highgatehorticulturalsociety.org.uk**.

The Muswell Hill and District Hort society class daffodils mainly by colour **bloomingn10.co.uk**.

It turns out that there are garden daffodils and there are show daffodils, and the latter can work out quite expensive when priced per bulb. Therefore, we are thinking of ways to effectively divide and store our daffodils at Harington, so we can increase our stock.

Daffodil farming is a fascinating aspect of horticulture in its own right, and we are grateful for the advice and support that we are receiving from the Daffodil Society around our endeavours **thedaffodilsociety.com**

Most of our daffs have been planted in pots and then covered with soil, downside in a place we call the plunge bed. This is meant to insulate them over winter and to prevent them from growing too early.

In the second week of Feb we took them out, then shook off the soil and hosed them down, before bringing them into the polytunnel to grow them on.

Hopefully a few will be flowering in time for the shows in April, although many growers are experiencing early flowers, after a wet but generally very mild Winter.

A number of sweet peas have already been planted in the polytunnel for early cut flowers, and soon more will be planted outdoors for cordon growing.

These will be sold on our stalls and will hopefully be entered in Annual Summer shows, with some help from the National sweet pea society members, the NSPS early show at RHS Wisley in Surrey.

In the level one group each student has chosen and is growing a different cultivar of sweet pea and have each done an excellent job of raising the seedlings so far **sweetpeas.org.uk**

Above: Irrigation system installed for watering the Sweet peas. Below: Young Sweet pea planted in the polytunnel for early cut flowers.

Chrysanthemums are still a big part of our program, and we are receiving generous donations from Keith Gaylor and Ron Jones in the form of rooted cuttings of early spray types (Usually "Talbot" family), which we pot on and then plant out, so we can sell them as cut flowers.

Last year we won top prizes for Chrysanths at both of our local shows. **chrysanthemum-ncs.org**

Once again, the National Chrysanthemum society have been exemplary in their support towards us as new growers, we have been lucky enough to have had expert advice on tap.

Chrysanth growing, it turns out, can be a full-time job (or hobby in most cases), so we do our best with the facilities that we've got, and around the holidays and other seasonal requirements of our jobs at Harington.

We also grow Dahlias which, this year, we are going to try to propagate by taking cuttings from pot tubers, bought from a Dahlia specialist. If that doesn't work for any reason, then we can still plant out the tubers.

Last year we lifted the ones we had, cleaned them as best we could and stored them in the greenhouse over winter. No one was injured in the process, and the tubers seem to be OK. Some are starting to develop "eyes", which are the points from which cuttings material are taken.

Examples of stunning dahlias grown in previous years
By the Harington Students and the Hort Team.

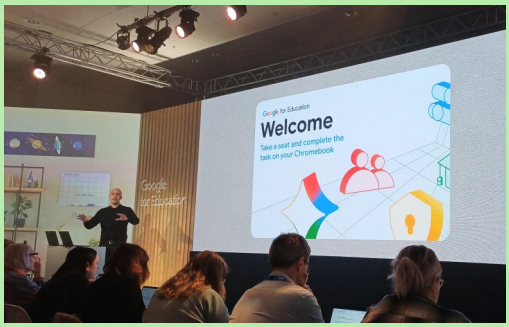
Our next big focus is the Harington Spring sale where we be selling our usual array of bedding ornamentals as well as herbs, flowers and veg plants as well as produce grown from seed in the gardens at Harington.

The Harington Spring sale is an amazing event and we encourage everyone to come and see our diverse selection of plants, which are always great quality and are obtainable at reasonable prices.

An Update from our Digital Skills Champion

By Yemisi Turner-Blake, Harington Digital Skills Champion/ Learning Support Assistant

It has been a busy and exciting start to the year for our Digital Skills programme. I have been attending events to explore new ways to support our students. I recently attended the **TechAbility** Conference on Assistive Technology (AT), a **Google Discovery Day**, and the **BETT EdTech Conference**.



These events gave me the opportunity to try out impressive tools such as the **Kahoot** quiz/game platform and **Google Education's** suite of applications.

I was particularly struck by how these platforms are embedding accessibility tools—like speech-to-text and alt-text. There is great potential for how Harington can use such tools to help students learn in a way that suits them best.

My three key takeaways for Harington are:

1. **Student Choice:** Our students must have a say in the digital tools they use. They need opportunities to test, reflect, and identify what helps them learn most effectively—and we must listen.
2. **Human-Led AI:** Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) must always involve a *human in the loop*. Harington staff will be actively engaged to ensure safety, accuracy, and ethical use.
3. **Shared Responsibility:** Everyone—students, staff, volunteers, and parents/carers—need clear guidance on using technology responsibly and knowing how to report any concerns, both in college and at home.

What's Happening Now?

Since my last update, we have:

- Trained teachers and Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) on iPad accessibility features.
- Delivered 1:1 digital skills sessions for students who require extra support/engagement.
- Started building our own "Digital Assistants." For example, our *Disgruntled Customer* chatbot helps students practise speaking and conflict resolution skills in a safe environment.
- Developed a draft AI Usage at Harington policy which we aim to refine and launch in the coming months.

If you have any questions about our digital skills programme, please get in touch: Yemisi.Turner-Blake@harington .org.uk