



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NOVEMBER 2018

**National charity Horatio's Garden to begin building work on a healing garden at the Midland Centre for Spinal Injuries after reaching their fundraising target of £675,000**

Work is beginning on the build of Horatio's Garden Oswestry after a successful fundraising campaign raised over £675,000 to provide a beautiful healing garden for patients at the Midlands Centre for Spinal Injuries at The Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital (RJAH).

Horatio's Garden is a national charity that creates and lovingly cares for beautiful, accessible gardens in NHS spinal injury centres. In September 2017 the charity started a fundraising campaign to build a garden in Oswestry and now, less than 18 months on, Horatio's Garden is delighted to announce the fundraising target has been reached and work will begin. The fundraising campaign was given an incredible boost thanks to a £60,000 grant from the Shropshire Freemasons and a £50,000 donation from the National Garden Scheme. These large sums helped to speed Horatio's Garden toward the build phase of the project and added to the fundraising work carried out by local groups, such as the League of Friends at The Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.

The start of the build will be marked by a breaking ground ceremony at the Midland Centre for Spinal Injuries on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of November which will be attended by invited guests including Gardeners' Question time panellist Bunny Guinness, who has designed the Oswestry Horatio's Garden, the Right Hon. Owen Paterson MP, garden room architect Andrew Wells, National Gardens Scheme CEO George Plumptre and figures from the hospital community.

The Oswestry Horatio's Garden has been carefully designed to reflect the needs of the patients and their families, wrapping around the spinal unit on two sides and enhancing the existing courtyard areas to ensure that all patient's windows will have a view of nature. Features of Bunny Guinness' design include plentiful social and private spaces, free flowing water in a rill, a garden therapy area and greenhouse, and a level surface throughout with smooth pathways for wheelchair and bed access. There will be a garden room designed by Andrew Wells of 3W Architects with automated doors, an accessible kitchen, screen for cinema evenings and a

wood burning store for cooler months, ensuring the garden will be used and admired all year round. Work on the garden will start immediately and is due to be completed in late spring 2019.

Dr Olivia Chapple, Founder and Executive Trustee of Horatio's Garden, said:

*"We are so excited to start the building work for Horatio's Garden at The Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital (RJAH). Without the incredible support and fundraising achievements from the local community, League of Friends, and many, many more, we could not be bringing this transformational garden to the patients, families, friends and staff. We are looking forward to sharing with everyone the progress of the garden and welcoming new volunteers and supporters. We are now looking to undertake more fundraising efforts and raise a further £35,000 to support the garden in its first year.*

Mark Brandreth, Chief Executive of The Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital, said:

*"The garden is going to make a huge difference to our patients with spinal cord injury. It will completely transform their experiences. They're going to have somewhere they can go outside of their room where they will feel the wind on their face and hear the birds sing, something most of us take for granted.*

*"It will also provide a space for families of our patients, a place where they can spend some quality time with their loved ones, rather than in the clinical environment of a ward.*

*"I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the wonderful Horatio's Garden team, our amazing League of Friends for their fundraising efforts, as well as members of the public for their support."*

The League of Friends have confirmed on the day of the ground break, that they will be presenting their cheque for £260,000 towards the garden. This amount is more than double their original commitment of £125,000.

The Lady Trevor, Vice Chairman of the League of Friends, said:

*"It is our pleasure to be donating this sum of money towards what will be an extremely special garden for patients and their relatives.*

*"The fact that RJAH is the fourth in the country to be selected for one of these beautiful gardens speaks volumes about the calibre of the hospital, staff and surgeons.*

*"It's important that I highlight the wonderful support we've had from the community, as well as a number of organisations who have offered financial backing through*

*grants to the garden. I must also thank Shropshire's outgoing Lord-Lieutenant, Sir Algernon Heber-Percy KCVO, for his ongoing support."*

Ends

## **Notes to Editors**

For more information about Horatio's Garden, or for images and press requests please contact Victoria Malcolm.

Email [vicky@thenelsonconsultancy.co.uk](mailto:vicky@thenelsonconsultancy.co.uk) or call 07702 811067.

## **Horatio's Garden Oswestry Breaking Ground Ceremony (press only, not a public event)**

Location: Horatio's Garden Oswestry, the Midland Centre for Spinal Injuries, RJAH.

Date & Time: Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 3:30pm

## **ABOUT HORATIO'S GARDEN**

Horatio's Garden is a charity that creates and cares for beautiful gardens in NHS spinal injury centres. Leading garden designers develop the stunning sanctuaries for patients and their family and friends, creating an environment that becomes an integral part of their lives and care whilst spending many months in hospital.

Once the gardens have been built the charity organises activities in the garden for patients including garden therapy, art therapy, artists in residence, tea and cakes, food events and music concerts.

The charity's volunteer team, led by a head gardener, keep the garden looking beautiful, help run activities for patients and contribute to the happy, uplifting atmosphere which permeates Horatio's Garden. Some volunteers have spinal injuries and young people can join as a 'Volunteer'.

The charity is named after Horatio Chapple - a schoolboy who wanted to be a doctor and volunteered at the spinal centre in Salisbury. It was Horatio's idea to create a garden and his research has shaped the garden designs and the charity's aims.

Horatio's life was cut short at 17 when his camp was attacked by a polar bear while on expedition in Svalbard in 2011 but his legacy continues to help patients and their families with the long process of learning to live with a spinal cord injury.

Spinal cord injuries are catastrophic, life-changing events. Patients often have little or no access to the outside world during their hospital stay yet research shows that at times of stress, being outside with nature contributes to a feeling of wellbeing.

The first Horatio's Garden opened in 2012 at the Duke of Cornwall Spinal Treatment at Salisbury Hospital and was designed by award-winner, Cleve West.

The second Horatio's Garden at the Queen Elizabeth National Spinal Injuries Unit, Glasgow was completed in August 2016. Designed by James Alexander-Sinclair, it opened in summer 2016 and cares for patients from across Scotland.

Stoke Mandeville is the third garden, designed by Joe Swift and opened by Mary Berry in September 2018. Work is set to begin at Horatio's Garden Oswestry at The Midlands Spinal Injury Centre at Oswestry, which has been designed by Bunny Guinness, after the fundraising target of £700,000 was met.

The charity is currently fundraising to build a garden The London Spinal Cord Injury Centre at Stanmore which has been designed by Tom Stuart-Smith.

[www.horatiogarden.org.uk](http://www.horatiogarden.org.uk)