

# COME INTO THE GARDEN!

*Summer living at Middleton Hall Retirement Village means getting outside into the lovely grounds to tend allotments or simply to wander*

Summer is on its way, which means heading outside to enjoy the promise of warmer weather and sunnier skies. For those fortunate enough to live at Middleton Hall Retirement Village, the beautiful surroundings make this an even more enticing prospect.

The retirement village in Middleton St George, near Darlington, is set in a stunning 45-acre estate, which really comes into its own in the summer months. Featuring mature woodland, formal gardens, a wildlife and wetlands area, and a pond and lake, the estate provides a delightful mix of outdoor environments for people living there.

Bryan Moore, Middleton Hall Retirement Village's Estates Manager, says the outdoor spaces mean a lot to the residents in the village's independent retirement houses and apartments and its care services. "It's a throwback to their own gardens, triggering many happy memories," he says. "Our team speaks to residents every day who are very knowledgeable about horticulture and passionate about gardening. It makes our job so rewarding, helping to enhance their lives."

Bryan and his team of six, who along with the village's Housekeeping team have recently been announced as finalists in the prestigious 2024 Care Home Awards, can be found out and about across the estate in all weathers, often using the estates team bikes to cover the distances between jobs.

"We're focusing heavily on sustainability this year," he says. "The vegetables we are growing will be used by the kitchen team in the meals they create for the care service restaurants and our Orangery café, and the flowers will be used in arrangements throughout the Hall. We'll be also drying flowers for use later in the year."

The team has been adding the finishing



Bryan and Louise

touches to a project in the village's Japanese garden, adding features to enhance the serene space enjoyed by swimmers in the village's Health and Wellbeing Centre pool. "We used traditional techniques to create lampposts

and sourced a disused trough to create an authentic water feature," explains Bryan. "Now we're working on extending the design and planting to the courtyard of the nearby Orangery café."

Gardener Louise Murphy, who, like Bryan, joined Middleton Hall Retirement Village after working in the gardening team at Auckland Castle, echoes the sentiments about job satisfaction. "I love the freedom we have to express creativity in what we are doing in the grounds," she says. This is regularly documented in the content Louise shares in her garden-focused Instagram posts (@loumurphygardener and @mhretirement).

Beyond the beautiful views, burgeoning community allotments and spotless outdoor sports fields, it is some of the other residents of the Middleton Hall Retirement Village estate that often attract the most attention.

"Our chickens and ducks are a big draw for walks around the grounds," Bryan adds. "Like the rest of the village, they live in lovely surroundings and are always treated with lots of love and respect."

The Middleton Hall Retirement Village estate is open to visitors as part of the National Garden Scheme on Saturday, August 17, 11am-4pm.



Visitors can see the estate as part of this year's National Garden Scheme

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