

St Luke's care home in Runcorn raised over £1,000 towards their sensory garden at their recent open day. They are so impressed by the kindness shown by their community, that they are inviting everyone back at the end of September, for a giant coffee morning, to say thank you.

It will also be a great opportunity to introduce St Luke's new Service Manager Martin Dake.

St Luke's provides care and support for 60 older people, who have physical health problems and dementia. Previously, Martin, was Service Manager of CIC's St Stephens, Sandbach Cheshire. He made the move to St Luke's at the beginning of September.

"St Stephens is a care home for 40 older persons. It is very successful and I am proud of what I have achieved there, but St Luke's is a larger home and offers a set of new, exciting challenges."

Martin has ambitions for St Luke's to become a "beacon of care in the Northwest". He says: "I want us to work closely with centres of excellence, like the Iris Murdoch Centre (Stirling University) which is a research centre for dementia care."

"A person who develops dementia or becomes physically frail can feel frightened and isolated. It is our job to provide safety, comfort and reassurance to each individual. We pro-actively look for new developments in this field."

With a background in partnership working, Martin is already involved in discussions with local authorities, primary care trusts and neighbourhood groups to identify how St Luke's can respond to the changing needs of the community.

A new look at ... St Luke's



"St Luke's is a needs-led service and there are many possibilities for providing further specialist services, such as intermediate care and respite to local people."

St Luke's has responded to local need, by providing care and support for people with the degenerative condition, Huntingtons Disease.

Readers of **you first** magazine may recall in the last issue (no 2), an article about May Cumow and her family. May's two son's Ian and Mark live at St Luke's after they both developed Huntingtons Disease in their early 30's.

A quote from May in the article said: "Ian was given a place at St Luke's in Runcorn. I was so pleased with the care that Ian was getting, that when the time came, I wanted Mark to go there too. I was ecstatic when they phoned and said that they would take him permanently."

May also added that she always feels welcome when she visits her sons every day. She commended the staff for their support and for always being there to discuss any concerns.

Relatives of service users at St Luke's are full of praise for the home and staff. Martin is impressed by the amount of cards and thank you's that colleagues there receive. He told us:

"One family sent in a bucket filled with chocolate and other goodies with a note attached that read "A bucketful of thanks to all of you.!"

"The support from the families of our service users is heart-warming. We understand how distressing it is to have a relative that develops dementia or becomes frail. It is our policy to be open and approachable." Says Martin. "We are currently, developing a "relatives room" which will provide overnight facilities, complete with en-suite, to enable people to be with their relatives when they need to." He added.

The relatives room is being developed as part of CIC's drive to refurbish and update all care homes. St Luke's was built in 1993 and will undergo "an extensive faceliff" starting next month. Martin and his colleagues are intensely involved in the planning of St Luke's new look.

St Stephens, the home Martin previously managed, was the very first CIC home to undergo the refurbishment programme, so Martin has experience of how to manage this with the least disruption to service users, visitors and colleagues.

"St Luke's will really benefit from having an update. CIC have used the expertise of a top interior designer who has created designs that are attractive and welcoming." Says Martin.

And alongside the refurbishment programme are plans to develop a sensory garden for the service users. The ambition for a sensory garden arose from Activities Co-ordinator Jackie Flaherty.

Jackie and her colleague Terri Kennedy arrange all the activities for the 60 service users. From cooking sessions, bingo, games, beauty, manicure and hairdressing to alternative therapy sessions in their snoozelem room, involving SONAS, (sensory stimulation tapes).

Jackie also takes residents out into the community, especially trips to the town park. It was through service users enjoyment of being outdoors that Jackie came up with the idea for a sensory garden.

"I have read about how a garden which incorporates different textures, smells, sounds etc can stimulate the senses and be very therapeutic for people who have learning difficulties, dementia or feel distressed."

Jackie began fund-raising and soon attracted support for her idea. The Princes Trust will be soon landscaping the garden at St Luke', for free.

Martin adds: "There are so many positive changes happening at St Luke's and so much goodwill around. I know I have a good team here who want to succeed and we have a community who support us, I feel confident that St Luke's will achieve it's full potential."

