

Dobbies partners with the Retail Trust to enrich the lives of supported living residents and local community

Dobbies, the UK's leading garden centre retailer, is partnering with retail industry charity, the Retail Trust, to enhance the experience of the residents of the Hugh Fraser Retirement Estate in Glasgow.

It is one of five supported living estates run by the Retail Trust for people retired from the retail industry, and the partnership with Dobbies forms part of the Retail Trust's £1million renovation of the estate to create a new community hub.

The first activity from the new partnership will see the creation of a garden space outside the community café, which Dobbies will also consult and support on. This will feature a pond to encourage wildlife into the garden, as well as a grow your own space to enable residents to grow their own fruit and vegetables. They will also help create a warm welcome to the café, with houseplants and furniture for the reception area.

The Senior Leadership Team, colleagues from the Central Support Office, as well as the Milngavie store, will all be involved in the project which starts during National Gardening Week (29 April to 5 May) and will last through 2024.

The area will provide residents with a vibrant community hub where they can connect with each other and enjoy the outdoors, positively contributing to their physical and mental health^[1], and helping to tackle the problem of isolation often felt by older or vulnerable people. The addition of the grow-your-own area is designed to foster creativity among the group, enhance wellbeing and provide a new outlet for the residents to enjoy garden living.

New research from Dobbies by Censuswide found that almost a quarter (24%) of Brits enjoyed gardening because it supported their sense of wellbeing, 41% of respondents who use their garden for activities said being in the garden brightens their mood, and 31% said it improves their mental health.

David Robinson, CEO at Dobbies Garden Centre, said: "As a nation of gardeners, we know that being able to enjoy gardens and outdoor spaces can improve our overall health and wellbeing. We're proud to be partnering with the Retail Trust to provide and help create the garden living spaces for the community at the Hugh Fraser Retirement Estate to enjoy. We're super excited about this project and can't wait to get started."

Lawrence Coen, Managing Director Property and Supporting Living, the Retail Trust, added: "Our Newton Mearns estate sits amidst ten acres of beautiful grounds and has a vibrant community, so the added garden and grow-your-own area will fit right into our surroundings and feel of the site."

"The donation of garden living products and volunteer hours from the Dobbies team will result in our residents and other local people being able to connect with nature, learn new skills, and build a sense of community. We're excited to nurture our partnership with Dobbies, and see what's in store for the future."

The Hugh Fraser Retirement Estate is a safe place where over 55s can live an independent life, but still have access to support when needed. The homes are equipped with the latest smart home technology so residents can fully enjoy the highest quality of life.

Three disused spaces, a community café and the Retail Trust's reception area are all being refurbished to build the new facilities, which will cater for more than 1,000 local people a year and provide more support for those most at risk of isolation and with long-term health needs.

The Retail Trust also works with more than 200 retailers to protect their staff's wellbeing, with support for Dobbies colleagues including access to a virtual GP, counselling for themselves and younger people in their care, and a range of discounts and rewards.

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Notes to editor

About Dobbies

Dobbies was founded in 1865 by James Dobbie and is headquartered near Edinburgh. It is the UK's leading garden centre retailer, with 3,800 colleagues and 77 stores, including six little dobbies.

Dobbies shares its passion for gardens and plants through own brand and branded products, concession partners and services. Many stores also feature a restaurant or coffee shop, where customers can enjoy refreshments or meals in a relaxed and welcoming environment.

Dobbies champions garden living all-year-round and offers a calendar of events and experiences that bring people and communities together.

^[1] SCOTT, T.L., MASSER, B.M. and PACHANA, N.A. (2015) 'Exploring the health and wellbeing benefits of gardening for older adults', *Ageing and Society*, 35(10), pp. 16.