

NEWS

Gardener and volunteer 'thrilled' to receive surprise bloom award

Catherine Gannon

A gardener and volunteer who spent decades growing plants for local parks has been celebrated at a regional awards ceremony.

Paul Marshall, chair of the Friends of Brighthouse Station group, was surprised with a 2026 Yorkshire Rose Discretionary Award for Outstanding Achievement at the annual Yorkshire in Bloom awards ceremony.

Mr Marshall was "thrilled" to receive the surprise award after being invited to the ceremony without having entered any categories.

"I was thrilled because I didn't know what, if anything, I was there for," he said.

Mr Marshall has spent the

last 10 years volunteering with the Friends group at Brighthouse Station, maintaining the plants there and helping to achieve multiple awards over the years, including winning the 2026 Community Rail Award's photography competition for best image capturing the essence of community rail.

His horticultural career began aged 17 at Brighthouse's Kershaw's Garden Centre, where he claims he was the first apprentice at a garden centre in West Yorkshire.

Mr Marshall spent 25 years at Kershaw's, gaining his qualifications at horticultural college in Surrey during that time.

He then took on a role with Calderdale Council at

Halifax's Manor Heath Park and Jungle Experience, a move he described as the "best thing I ever did".

He was quickly promoted to estate manager there, before taking on a nursery manager role in Kirklees, working across the two boroughs.

During his time as nursery manager, Mr Marshall helped grow thousands of geraniums and hanging baskets every year, which were distributed to local parks.

He was also involved in preparing plants and baskets for important events, such as royal visits, mayor making ceremonies, and the Tour de France.

In total, Mr Marshall spent 17 years working for



Paul and his wife Margaret attended the awards in Tadcaster in September.

Calderdale Council, finishing in 2016.

Reflecting on his horticultural career, Mr Marshall said: "It's been a very enjoyable and varied career.

"The career has been an eye opener right from the days when I first started work when there were no garden centres, up to now where they're all over the

place."

"People say if you enjoy what you do, you don't work a day in your life; that's true for me, even though I have worked extremely hard."