

## Gillian McCarthy



On November 15, Gillian McCarthy "celebrated" ten years of living in a south Somerset field. For nine of those years, Gillian, who has multiple chemical sensitivity (MCS), has been trying to persuade South Somerset District Council to build her a chemical-free home. But she has become tangled in a bureaucratic nightmare.

In September, DN reported how Gillian was facing the threat of eviction. That threat is still hanging over her head as she prepares for another grim Christmas.

Gillian also has a number of other health conditions, including a tumour and a mobility impairment, but lives in an unheated wooden hut.

A week or so before speaking to DN, a third of her bedroom floor had been an inch and a half underwater. She no longer has running water and the temperature in the hut has dipped to three below freezing. She also has frostbite in her right foot.

Despite all this, she is currently receiving no medical treatment, due to a long-running dispute with South Somerset Primary Care Trust. When DN spoke to her, she had exhausted her supply of spring water - the only water she can drink - and hadn't eaten in two weeks.

Gillian used to love Christmas, but now it is just another hellish day like any other. "I can't have visitors because I have no air filters and no treatment," she says. "I can't even send people Christmas cards because I can't write them anymore. I can't even let my friends know what is happening.

"I used to sit and enjoy some good films but I can't do that now because I have no electricity. I used to be a Christmas nut, but it's too cold here for visitors."

Gillian, a biochemist, author and a world expert on horse nutrition, wants to reap something positive from her nightmare, and is hoping to find an organisation to take over her hypoallergenic garden and associated research\*. "Even if I cannot achieve my own survival, I am endeavouring to ensure that that research and that garden survives," she says.

"Apart from anything else, I don't want those bastards to bulldoze it all away or nick it all."

\*To help, email: [audrey@adcock.me.uk](mailto:audrey@adcock.me.uk) or [founder@mcs-international.org](mailto:founder@mcs-international.org)

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