

# The Safe Space Garden

RHS  
Flower Show  
Tatton Park



**VS** VICTIM  
SUPPORT

# A Garden for Victims of Crime & Trauma - Press Release

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**The Safe Space Garden provides a nourishing, healing and inclusive space to support victims of crime and trauma on their healing journey and to encourage them to take their first tentative steps back into the wider world. The garden is supported by Victim Support, the UK's largest charity supporting people impacted by crime.**

The garden is based around three steel arches that provide refuge and a space to reflect and heal, or a space to sit and talk through feelings with others, enveloping the user to promote feelings of safety and to tackle the sense of isolation felt by many victims. The perimeter of the garden is made up of wooden 'privacy pillars' that allow the user to feel safe and enclosed whilst also offering glimpses of the wider world beyond, a place they may still need support and confidence to fully engage with again. The planting and use of water is designed to be textural, rhythmic, soothing and immersive, encouraging the user to stop and engage with their senses and feel hope at the cycle of nature and the wonder of new growth and beginnings.

Recognising the strong links between healing, emotional regeneration and the natural world, the garden encourages victims to engage with service providers and support outdoors rather than in the confines of an office space. **With this Garden Chris hopes to kick start a movement in the UK** to encourage outdoor spaces to be opened up for charities such as Victim Support to provide counselling and support.

**The garden is also designed around principles of sustainability** - there has been no concrete used in the build and carbon-free cement used to set all the stonework. Many of the plants are deliberately low maintenance and drought tolerant as the garden will be relocated to a site after the Show to allow it to be used for its purpose and we expect it will need to be maintained easily by volunteers.

The garden is designed by Chris Reynolds, who spent the majority of his former career working with the police, charities and local government, supporting victims of crime and trauma particularly in the fields of domestic violence, homelessness, anti-social behaviour and human trafficking. Having experienced first hand the healing benefits of nature after a trauma, he designed this garden to give the visitor to the space a sense of optimism, hope and empowerment.



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**Chris Reynolds**  
**Director & Principal Designer**  
**Bridgeman Kent Ltd**

With an initial career in public service, Chris has spent over a decade of his life supporting victims of crime. As well as being a front-line Police Officer he spent many years working in local government managing specialist services for victims of crime, antisocial behaviour and domestic abuse. He obtained national recognition for his work in the homelessness sector, establishing robust pathways for rough sleepers into housing and employment and worked tirelessly with the charity sector to improve pathways for victims of domestic abuse through the criminal justice system.

Chris' transition from public service into garden design and horticulture stemmed from his own personal experiences of trauma and mental health challenges. As part of his journey, he realised that the garden had a significant impact on his recovery and resilience and he began to find more and more solace in creating nourishing outdoor spaces both for himself, his family and friends.

After deciding to take the plunge to change career, Chris pursued diplomas and post-grad diplomas in garden design from Westminster University, completed various RHS accreditations and is a London College of Garden Design (LCGD) graduate.

Chris is now fully immersed in his role as a garden designer at Bridgeman Kent, crafting purposeful, practical and aesthetically captivating spaces. With an unwavering commitment to both beauty and functionality, Chris is creating stunning landscapes that reflect his dedication to the healing and invigorating power of the natural world. His work makes use of repurposed and recycled materials and he feels passionately about creating gardens that empower and involve the user and invests time in helping his clients understand how to best maintain their new space and nurture the plants within it. As someone who was initially intimidated by the world of horticulture, Chris strives to be as approachable and down to earth as possible rather than confusing people with technical construction terms and Latin plant names!

Tatton 2024 will be his first Show Garden, having only graduated from LCGD in 2022. He hopes that his story and his garden encourage not only victims of crime to heal and look beyond their trauma, but for anyone who wants to change their career to look beyond what seems impossible and believe in themselves to take the first steps to make a change.

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Please do not hesitate to contact us to speak about the Garden:

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