

North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee showcases how to Unpave the Way at Tatton Flower Show

- Multi-Award-Winning Garden designer, Leon Davis, has produced a garden for the North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee to encourage climate resilient gardening
- The North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee is one of 12 Committees across England which were set up under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. These Committees bring together the principal authorities responsible for managing flood and coastal erosion risk, they are Environment Agency, water and sewerage companies, and Local Authorities.
- The garden design displays sustainable drainage, rainwater harvesting and permeable paving

The North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee is proud to announce that they are showcasing a sustainable, climate resilient garden called 'Unpave the Way' at the iconic RHS Tatton Park Flower Show this July.

Multi-Award-Winning Garden designer, Leon Davis, has designed the garden on behalf of the North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee for the RHS Tatton Park Flower Show in Cheshire which is running from 17 – 21 July 2024. The North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee includes the Environment Agency, United Utilities and Lancashire County Council who are supporting and leading this project on behalf of the wider Committee.

The garden takes a holistic and sustainable approach to front garden design which aims to show people how easily you can future-proof your front garden, manage rainfall and make it climate resilient.

There is currently a growing national trend of paved front gardens which increases the speed of rainwater runoff into drains and increases flood risk to communities, however, there are different ways of designing gardens to combat this and the North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee have developed the Unpave the Way project to educate people how easily this can be done and inspire householders to change their thinking.

Crystal Orton, Environment Agency Flood Risk Officer and Unpave the Way Project Manager, said:

“There has been great progress on implementing sustainable drainage (SuDS) into large developments and the public realm. Our aim is to share this with homeowners and inspire and empower them to better manage rainfall and improve the climate resiliency of their homes.

“Unpave the Way aims to inform and inspire householders to embrace permeable driveways and sustainable drainage components, collect and store rainwater for reuse, and choose climate resilient plants for their front gardens. SuDS are our ally in adapting to climate change as they improve surface water drainage, cool urban areas and provide refuge for wildlife.

“We’re on a mission to make SuDS a mainstream concept for householders and one which they feel confident incorporating into their gardens. It’s time for us all to enjoy the multiple benefits of SuDS!”

Multi-Award-Winning Garden designer, Leon Davis, has created the garden, having previously designed and constructed Gold Medal and Best in Show gardens at RHS Tatton.

He recently designed a 'rainwater capture cube' for the North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee which was hosted at the RHS Urban Show in Manchester in April.

Garden designer, Leon Davis, said:

"The garden encapsulates two differing approaches to front garden design. The first garden focuses on DIY retrofitting of sustainable drainage and rainwater harvesting into an existing front garden. The second garden utilises readymade solutions for drainage and permeable paving products for use in a new garden design.

"The gardens present options for rainwater drainage for householders whose gardens may have either sandy well drained soil, or poorly drained clay soils. Both garden designs make space for water, planting, and nature – to maximise opportunities for rainwater reuse, biodiversity, urban cooling, and householder wellbeing."

Katy Bevan, Operations Manager (Rainwater Management) at United Utilities, said:

"United Utilities is excited to be part of the 'Unpave The Way' project which showcases how managing rainwater on a small scale at home can support communities by helping them to become more flood resilient. These approaches - that slow and reduce the impact of rainwater on sewer systems - will ultimately improve the water quality in our rivers.

"We are keen to promote the benefits of sustainable drainage and highlight that whilst some of these solutions are individually small, when delivered at scale, they have the potential to provide a significant benefit to the wider community and the natural environment."

There is a legal requirement for homeowners to gain planning permission from their Local Authority for paved areas within their front garden which exceed 5 metres squared, unless the paving material is porous or drains to a porous area within your front garden. Many householders and contractors/suppliers are currently unaware of this planning requirement.

County Councillor Shaun Turner, Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change, Lancashire County Council, said:

"We are proud to be supporting this innovative project, working with the Environment Agency and United Utilities, to educate people on the flood risks caused by the growing national trend of creating front gardens and driveways that do not allow water to safely pass through them.

"This in turn can lead to flooding on the highway and puts additional strain on sewer drainage systems. The Unpave the Way feature garden at the RHS Tatton Show is designed to maximise opportunities for rainwater reuse to mitigate these impacts.

"Following the show, the garden will have a permanent home at Whitaker Park in Rawtenstall, Lancashire, where it will be cared for by the Civic Pride group and Friends of Whitaker Park, and by our colleagues at Rossendale Borough Council, to allow us to continue to educate local residents about this important issue."

For further information on the Unpave the Way Project, visit: [Unpave the Way | The Flood Hub](#).

Follow us on social media: @unpavetheway (X and Instagram) / Unpave the Way (Facebook and LinkedIn)

Notes to Editors:

- People can keep up to date with the latest safety advice by calling Floodline on 0345 988 1188, by following @EnvAgency on Twitter, or by checking GOV.UK for the latest flood updates.
- It's important to remember people can never be fully protected against flooding, which is why people are being urged to go online and [check their flood](#) risk by entering their postcode, and find out what they can do to protect themselves and their property when flooding hits.
- We urge members of the public to check their flood risk and sign up to the Environment Agency's free flood warning service either online at [Sign up for flood warnings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) or by calling Floodline on 0345 988 1188".

- Leon Davis Designer Biography

Leon draws on broad range of creative influences in his approach to garden and landscaped design. Having initially studied Fine Art, he returned to university to study Landscape Architecture. This decision was partly driven by his interest in site specific installation and land art and felt like a natural progression in his working practice, exploring spatial relationships.

On leaving university Leon worked for a large multidisciplinary practice on a broad range of projects including schools, hospitals and public realm.

In 2012 Leon set his own garden design consultancy and has achieved recognition with five RHS Gold Medal and Best in Show awards.

Leon's 2021 RHS Tatton Show Garden 'Garden of Resilience' for United Utilities explored how gardens can be more climate resilient. The garden was awarded Gold, Best Construction and Best in Category awards and relocated to RHS Bridgewater.



'Unpave the Way' Show Feature Garden Design



Leon Davis – ‘Unpave the Way’ Garden Designer

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