



## **Norfolk allotment and orchard community project, ESCAPE, to help create a unique garden for families at RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2019**

The Swaffham based ESCAPE allotment and orchard community project, run by the charity Family Action, is delighted to announce they will be part of the team creating a thought-provoking garden for families at RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2019. ESCAPE's participants will be growing plants and creating a willow sculpture for the 'idverde Family Action Anniversary Garden', which has been designed to mark the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Family Action and the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of green service provider idverde.

The garden, which will be in the artisan section of the show, is designed to get people talking about the everyday pressures all families face, but can find difficult to talk about, as part of a new national conversation about family life today that Family Action will be launching to mark its Anniversary. After the show, the garden will be relocated to a Family Action service ensuring it continues to benefit families and their local community in the long term.

A path through the garden will take people past boulders of varying shapes and sizes, representing both the pressures families face and the isolation people can feel when facing these alone. It culminates in a central area with a bench large enough to bring the family together and a clear water pool offering people the opportunity to reflect. The native and non-native plants chosen for the garden will be predominantly green with flushes of colour, and represent the diversity of families. Birch and hazel coppice represent younger generations, while a large, mature pine tree is symbolic of older generations.

The gardening and craft activities on offer at the ESCAPE project aim to increase self-esteem, independence and wellbeing of local people and families experiencing isolation, or those who have disabilities or are experiencing mental health issues.

Clare Peak, Manager at Family Action's ESCAPE project said:

*"Everyone at ESCAPE is thrilled to be involved with creating the garden at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show. We are so proud to have been asked to work with idverde and be part of such a prestigious occasion. It is a fantastic opportunity for our participants to use the skills and knowledge they have gained at ESCAPE - from plant propagation to making sculptures from willow grown at our allotment and orchard."*

As well as designing the garden, idverde will be involving its own apprentices in the build, giving young horticulturalists a wonderful opportunity to develop the skill and passion needed to create and maintain green spaces for decades to come.

idverde Operations Director and designer of the garden, Alistair Bayford, said:

*"For our 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary we want to celebrate how our parks, green spaces, biodiversity and gardens are beneficial for the wellbeing of families and communities. We are delighted to work in partnership with Family Action to create this very special garden and are looking forward to working with the participants of the ESCAPE project. Their contribution brings a unique element to the garden - a true reflection of how gardening can bring people together as a community, improving their wellbeing in the most positive of ways."*

Family Action Chief Executive, David Holmes CBE said:



*"Family Action has been helping families face up to and deal with their pressures for 150 years. This wonderful garden celebrates both our own and idverde's heritage and our shared commitment to helping families and communities come together in positive ways. We hope this unique garden will encourage families to reflect upon and talk about the pressures they are facing. The more we can talk about our pressures, the better we can manage them."*

idverde CEO, Doug Graham, said:

*"The green spaces that we create, improve and maintain are essential to positive family and community life across the UK. Our mutual anniversaries are a perfect opportunity for Family Action and idverde to come together and demonstrate our shared commitment to stronger families and communities and the green spaces they rely upon. Our engaging, thoughtful and beautiful garden will put families and everyday family life at the heart of the world's greatest celebration of gardens."*

### **For more information or to set up an interview, please contact**

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An image of the idverde Family Action Anniversary Garden is available on request

### **Notes to editor**

#### **Planting details**

Birch and Hazel coppice, creating partial enclosure, shelter and refuge bound the garden offering filter views in and out. These represent the younger generation and pioneers at the start of their lives. A large gnarly pine (*Pinus nigra*) tree bearing the history of an individual in a family, showing scars of life, represents symbolically the older generation within a family unit. Shrubs provide structure and obscure views into the garden.

Planting underlying the coppice is predominantly green with flushes of colour and diversity, using native and non-native species to represent the diversity of our families. The planting provides a variety of opportunities for shelter, food and nesting for wildlife. It is a mix of native and non-native species supporting biodiversity.

Plants used include *Molinia*, *Acanthus*, *Digitalis*, *Polygonatum*, *Ammi*, *Gallium*, *Myrrhis* and *Nectaroscordum*. The five main plants are:

- ❖ *Pinus nigra*
- ❖ *Betula nigra*
- ❖ *Hydrangea quercifolia*
- ❖ *Iris siberica* 'White Swirl'
- ❖ *Nectaroscordum siculum*

**Family Action** is a national charity marking its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2019. It is committed to building stronger families and brighter lives by delivering innovative and effective services and support that



reaches out to many of the UK's most vulnerable people. We seek to empower people and communities to address their issues and challenges through practical, financial and emotional help. Our work is wide-ranging and includes help for parents-to-be, the provision of many Children's Centres in local communities, intensive family support, emotional health and wellbeing services, counselling, mediation and therapies, support in schools and financial grants programmes. Family Action is also recognised as a leading provider of training and consultancy.

**Family Action's ESCAPE project** was set up to help individuals and families in the Swaffham area of Norfolk, with the aim of supporting and improving the life opportunities of local people. It is an eco-therapy project based around a community allotment and orchard, which is open to all members of the local community and is run by trained volunteers. Between 60 to 80 people participate each week, many of whom have been referred to Family Action by local services, such as GPs, schools and mental health services. Activities are designed to help people develop skills and have experiences that increase their independence, self-esteem, confidence, mental health and wellbeing - as well as feeling better connected to their community.

**Registered Charity Number: 264 713**

**Website: [www.family-action.org.uk](http://www.family-action.org.uk)**

**Twitter: @family\_action**

**Facebook: familyaction**

**Instagram: family\_action**

**LinkedIn: [company/family-action](https://www.linkedin.com/company/family-action)**

**idverde** is the leading green service provider in the UK and is celebrating its centenary in 2019. It offers services in amenity horticulture, focusing on parks and open space management, grounds maintenance, tree surgery, street cleansing and landscape design and build, plus civil engineering and winter services. In 2017 idverde brought the Mind Trap garden designed by Ian Price to Chelsea 2017 winning a gold medal.

**Alistair Bayford** is a Chartered Landscape Architect with diverse and wide-ranging experience in the design, build and management of landscapes and public realm. Having studied at Writtle College and the University of Greenwich becoming a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute in 2008, Alistair leads professional services and landscape construction throughout London and the South East for idverde, winning nine BALI Awards in the past six years. He has previous experience designing and building at RHS Shows in 2004, 2006 and 2007.

**Website: [www.idverde.co.uk](http://www.idverde.co.uk)**

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