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Epsom Therapy Garden in the Running for BBC Green Award

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A tranquil corner of Epsom that has quietly blossomed into a hub of therapy and conservation has earned recognition in the BBC Radio Surrey Make a Difference Awards.

St Ebba's Therapy Garden, located on the former cricket ground of the old hospital site, has been shortlisted for the *Green Award*, which honours individuals or organisations that have made a significant impact on their local environment.

Developed through a partnership between Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, Surrey County Council, Natural England and Surrey Wildlife Trust, the garden offers a sanctuary for people with complex mental health and neurodevelopmental needs. Many of those who benefit from the garden have found it difficult to engage with more traditional clinical settings.

Now a finalist for the BBC accolade, the garden's blend of therapeutic purpose and ecological design has struck a chord with both its users and supporters. Local businesses and volunteers—including those from a vocational programme for adults with learning disabilities—have also played a key role in shaping the space.

Therapists trained in nature-based interventions use the garden to support individuals coping with anxiety, depression, trauma and other conditions. Designed to nurture both human wellbeing and local biodiversity, the garden includes native hedgerows for birds and hedgehogs, pollinator-friendly plants for bees and butterflies, and sensory features such as grasses and scented geraniums.

A young person who receives therapy at the garden described it as "a nice, relaxed environment," adding, "The garden is a good place for me to calm down. I feel comfortable being there."

One parent shared how the outdoor space had transformed her daughter's ability to engage with therapy. "She loves the outdoors but is often too anxious to leave the house. This is a safe place for her to enjoy and it has hugely improved her wellbeing."

Another parent praised the impact on their autistic son, who volunteered to help build the garden. "He was nervous at first, but came back so proud of what he'd achieved. He's gained confidence—and we're so grateful he had the opportunity."

With the BBC Radio Surrey awards set to highlight community champions across the region, supporters of St Ebba's will be hoping the garden's unique combination of therapy and conservation will earn it the Green Award title.

For more information about the services offered by Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, visit: www.sabp.nhs.uk
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