

GROWING THE COMMUNITY



Shoulder to Soldier, Warrington

Started in October 2017, the Shoulder to Solider allotment is a passion project. A group of around 30 ex-forces veterans were donated a neglected area of land by Bents Garden Centre in Warrington and, in just a few days work, started to transform the space into a plot that could be enjoyed by everybody, including wheelchair users and amputees.

Shoulder to Solider are worthy regional winners in Cultivation Street's 2019 competition, sponsored by Calliope®. The judges were moved by the key themes of their allotment, which was adapted for accessibility and inclusion. Embellished with wheelchair-friendly pathways snaking throughout the green growth and an on-site orchard, this Eden has a lot to offer. At the heart of the allotment they have added a patio area complete with a remembrance memorial bed, vertical planters, a Valhalla boat and a handmade bench that is used for relaxation and open communication.

This intimately designed space has been especially adapted with people in mind, and has been such a sensational success for those who spend time in it, that it's now a place for others to use to better their mental health: with therapies and holistic treatments transforming lives every day. The project has worked to bring different generations together, with a local school's Army Cadets lending a hand with gardening activities.

Linda Fisher, one of Shoulder to Soldier's organisers, explains what makes their garden so special: "Our garden is one of a kind - unique and special. Created by a formidable force of people who served Queen and Country."

