



CEREMONY: Andrea Borwell-Fox President of Hereford and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce with Claire Bridges, Chair of Trustees St Paul's hostel at the opening.

Therapy garden opened at hostel

By James Connell



A THERAPEUTIC garden has been opened at a hostel for Worcester's homeless, providing an oasis of calm to help tackle past traumas. The new Stepping Stones garden has opened at St Paul's Hostel in Tallow Hill, Worcester to provide a calm environment for homeless people who have often suffered 'adverse childhood experiences' (ACE) which have left them traumatised. St Paul's Hostel chief executive Nathan Sutton said: "The garden provides a calm environment that allows reflection and promoting well-being." Designed by RHS award win-

ning garden designer Christian Dowle, who lives in Malvern, the garden complements the care approach adopted by the homeless charity towards those who have suffered trauma. Chair of trustees, Claire Bridges, in her welcoming address, underlined how St Paul's is embedding the 'trauma informed approach' as fundamental to delivery of their mission. She said: "We now have a fusion job coach, an on-site counsellor, a creative group, a kitchen assistant training programme and all staff have undergone trauma informed education with the University of Worcester. "St Paul's has been at the forefront of the relief of homelessness and we have adapted to remain as relevant today as 40 years

ago". Andrea Borwell-Fox, president of the Hereford and Worcester Chamber of Commerce, was the guest of honour. She cut the ribbon to open the garden, completed with help from residents at the end of July during her first visit. In her speech to the residents and guests she commented on the important work St Paul's undertakes, referring to the prevalence of trauma in the lives of many people, including in the workplace. She urged business to recognise the impact of trauma and offer opportunities for employment for people at St Paul's. Guests were shown around and were briefed on the ambition to rejuvenate a small parcel of land

overlooking Midland Road / Newtown Road junction to create a Kitchen Garden. They were also treated to a selection of poetry written by people who have used St Paul's including the Poet with Passion, who will perform at the Worcester Music Festival between September 15 and 17. Homemade cakes made by Filip, one of the kitchen assistants at St Paul's were served along with tea and coffee.

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