

## **Humber Avenue Community Allotments**

Work has begun on four new accessible allotment plots at Humber Avenue Allotments in West Durrington, after the community interest group that runs the site successfully bid for £15,000 from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Neighbourhood Fund.

Humber Avenue Community Allotments (HACA) is transforming one five-rod (125 square metre) plot into a space that will allow four people with disabilities or mobility issues to enjoy the benefits of growing their own fruit and vegetables.

The space will feature four solid oak raised beds to help gardeners avoid bending and stretching, new level paths to aid with accessibility, space for ground level gardening and a seating area. The work is being carried out by volunteers and paid tradespeople and will also see existing disability-friendly plots improved and a sensory garden created.

HACA has used the experiences of its current accessible plot holders to inform the design of the new space and is also consulting with local disability groups and charities.

Since taking over the running of the allotments from the council in 2021, HACA has been keen to encourage diversity and inclusion as well as developing a sense of community between allotment holders -something that existing accessible plot holder Keith Sivyer has felt the benefit of.

He said: "This allotment to focus on has given me a sense of worth since having to give up work because of my health. It's allowed me to have independence and time for me, but the social side of things has really helped too."

Terry Smith, HACA company secretary, said: "The CIL funding will allow us to expand our specialist facilities to engage gardeners with additional needs and health issues. It will help to reduce social isolation, improve mental health, help maintain active lifestyles and enhance social interaction.

"This project is a team effort supported not only by our committee but also other allotmenters. It is the driving force behind changing our culture to one that is inclusive and community based."

