

## **HACKNEY ALLOTMENT SOCIETY**

### **NOTES FOR THOSE CONSIDERING APPLYING FOR AN ALLOTMENT**

#### **What is Hackney Allotment Society?**

Hackney Allotment Society (HAS) is a voluntary organisation which leases 8 sites from Hackney Council and one further site from a housing association to provide 133 plots in different parts of Hackney Borough. These sites are:

Aden Terrace - 26 plots off Clissold Crescent, N16

Church Walk - 8 plots on Church Walk, N16

Leaside - 17 plots on Leaside Road, E5

Overbury Street - 11 plots on Overbury Street, E5

Queensbridge Road - 2 1/2 plots off Queensbridge Road, E8

St Kilda's - 4 plots on St. Kilda's Road, N16

Spring Hill - 43 plots as part of Springfield Sports Ground, E5

Spring Lane - 18 plots alongside the River Lea at the bottom of Springfield Park, E5

Springdale Road - 4 plots in Springdale Road, N16

Two of these sites practise organic growing so you must agree to this if offered a plot on those sites.

We are a membership organisation, run by members through a Committee. The Committee consists of a representative from each allotment site and four officers elected at an Annual General meeting. There are three newsletters published during the year. More information is available on the website: [\*\*www.hackneyallotments.org.uk\*\*](http://www.hackneyallotments.org.uk)

#### **What is an allotment?**

An allotment is a place to grow vegetables, fruit and some flowers. This was once important for feeding families during World Wars One and Two, but has now become a valued leisure activity. Each member is allocated their own plot, and everyone is free to choose what they want to grow and to plan the layout of their plot. You do not need to have prior experience of growing anything - there are lots of people on each site who are willing to provide advice.

In return, there is an annual plot rental fee, currently £31 a year for a full plot, with lower fees for half plots. Some people qualify for concession rates. Every member pays a £4 membership fee, payable whether or not you have a plot.

Once you are allocated a plot there is no time limit on how long you can hold it, but you must work it yourself. The plot cannot be sub-let or given to someone else to work. The produce may not be sold for profit. The site representatives and the Committee inspect the sites regularly to make certain that each plot is being fully used in a manner appropriate for the season. If anyone is experiencing problems with maintaining their plot this will be noted and a solution sought. But if a plot is consistently not maintained, it will be taken from you and allocated to someone from the waiting list.

Tools and seeds are some of the things you will have to provide for yourself. You may inherit a shed from the previous plot-holder, or you can buy one yourself. Some sites have a communal shed in which you may keep tools, but it is not really necessary to have one, most people don't. If you wish to have a shed or to plant fruit trees, you need to check this with the site representative first to ensure it does not disadvantage others.

### **How much work is involved ?**

During the main growing season, April to September, you should expect to go to your allotment at least 3-4 times a week, spending up to 6-10 hours a week looking after it. During the winter, there is still work to do, pruning, digging over and looking after crops being over-wintered. You would go to the allotment probably once a week for 1-3 hours per visit. In addition to looking after your own plot, there are communal tasks in which everyone is expected to take part, such as maintaining paths free of weeds, and making any necessary repairs to other features of the site. You may also be asked to help with open days, and we hope you will attend the AGM where everyone contributes to making decisions.

### **Who is eligible?**

In order to apply to join the allotment society, you need to be over the age of 18 years, be a resident of Hackney Borough (you may be asked to provide proof of address at the time you are offered a plot), and no-one in your household already have another allotment in the borough.

### **How long will I wait for a plot?**

Plots are allocated in accordance with the order of the waiting list. There are currently two vacant plots, so most of those applying will be joining a waiting list. Once on the waiting list, it is possible that you will wait anything from 2 to 10 years. It is hard to predict how long the wait may be because it is dependent on when existing plot-holders decide to surrender their plots. If you wish to get a plot on a particular site, that may lengthen the time you wait. You are free to reject any plot offered to you and still retain your place on the waiting list.

### **How do you apply?**

Applications are available in libraries in Hackney and may also be downloaded from our website. They must be posted to **Hackney Allotment Society, c/o 21 Northchurch Terrace, London N1 4EB between 1 and 15 March.**

We will accept up to 100 new members for the waiting list. If fewer than 100 apply, all will go on the waiting list but there will be a random selection to determine the order of the waiting list. If more than 100 people apply, 100 applications will be drawn randomly from the total number of applications received and they will join the waiting list in the order in which their application was selected. Only those who are successful in having their names placed on the waiting list will be notified and asked to pay their membership fee of £4. If an applicant wishes to know regardless of outcome, a stamped addressed envelope must be included with the application.

### **Other opportunities for participating in growing food in Hackney:**

[www.growingcommunities.org](http://www.growingcommunities.org)

[www.dalstongarden.org](http://www.dalstongarden.org)

[www.madeinhackney.org](http://www.madeinhackney.org)