

# HELLEDON HORTICULTURAL ASSOCIATION

## A COMMUNITY GARDEN FOR HELLEDON

During the course of last year the HHA Committee has been thinking about ways of increasing membership of the Association particularly attracting younger people. These early discussions led to thinking about how we can help in providing the benefits of 'growing' to the whole community. As a result we have decided to explore the development of a Community Garden in Hellesdon, in line with the guidance offered by the RHS, offering an opportunity to grow vegetables in small raised beds.

### **Community Gardens - what are the benefits for our community?**

- For local people that use them they allow a sense of ownership and shared learning in growing – for lasting benefit
- Encourages groups that have difficulty in managing larger growing areas - including young people, families, older and disabled residents.
- They create a healthy environment for the community members that use them
- Community gardens can regenerate neglected areas
- Greener environments have been linked to lower crime rates and reduced anti-social behaviour
- Local food growing can help people make better eating choices, while green exercise is linked to better mental and physical health

### **What are the benefits for community members?**

- Less stress: 'green exercise' like gardening can help reduce anxiety levels and improve mental wellbeing
- Get moving: gardening is a great form of aerobic exercise and could help boost your strength, stamina and flexibility
- Better connections: by growing with others you could meet new people and form stronger local networks
- New skills: gain new knowledge, such as how to grow fresh tasty food, how to support wildlife, how to improve the local environment and more
- Discover: take the chance to explore new areas of your community and improve them while you're at it

### **Self-Help and Support?**

The HHA clearly has a variety of skills available within it to support this project including garden management, insurance and safeguarding policy development. The HHA has already approached Hellesdon Parish Council who, although they currently have alternative plans intend to invite us to the next meeting of the Playing Fields, Allotments and Amenities Committee to discuss the idea.

JEWSON (Norwich) have already agreed to support us.

### **First things first**

Clearly we need to identify a location for the garden. So we have contacted the local council, and will search the UK Government website to find out who the local landowners are to then seek permission for our project.

- We will ensure that our public liability insurance protects everyone against the risk of public injuries and unforeseen issues. As an RHS affiliated Society, we already have access to affordable insurance for this project.

- We need to engage with as many people as we can to find out what sort of vegetable garden people would like and how they would wish to use it.
- We are in contact with other local groups, schools and businesses to get people involved and talk about the potential benefits of a community garden project or space.
- A timescale for the garden to be completed is important we already have an outline plan
- We need to set ourselves a budget and develop further ways to fundraise.
- We will set up a volunteer led community organising group to manage the project.
- Find out if any local gardeners, landscapers or builders would be interested in lending a hand.
- Work-out the orientation of our site (N, S, E or W) – this will influence what can be grown.
- Survey the site – are there paths or sheds we would like to keep? Are there any plants that could still be used? What trees do we have? Check to see if any are protected by preservation orders or are in a conservation area, and look to keep habitats that already support wildlife, if we can.
- Complete risk assessments before any work is started.
- Visit other community groups or sites that have done similar projects to gain ideas.

**Points of contact:**

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