

Kingston Federation of Allotment Gardeners

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kfag.org.uk

Working together for Kingston's allotments

NEW KFAG PROJECT AT KINGSTON ROAD ALLOTMENT SITE

An exciting new KFAG project is now underway at Kingston Road allotment site. The Federation has rented four full plots from Quadron Services and taken over the management of them, sub-letting them to people from the site's waiting list.

KFAG has been concerned for some time that there are vacant plots at most direct managed sites in the Borough despite long waiting lists, plots which are considered 'difficult' in some cases or 'unlettable' in others. We have long felt that many of these plots could be brought back into productive use although they may require considerable work by determined plot holders. They also require 'hands-on' management to regularly monitor progress and offer support and advice where it might be needed to ensure the plot holders are successful.

The Federation agreed that managing these plots on voluntary management principles would ensure the best chance of success and hopefully break the cycle of letting/failure/re-letting which inevitably leads to further deterioration and eventual loss of plots to cultivation. Following discussions with Kingston Road plot holders we decided to consider

renting plots from Quadron Services and managing them ourselves

We approached the Council and Quadron and put forward our proposal – KFAG to rent the plots, sublet them as half plots to people on the waiting list and manage them, independently of Quadron Services, according to voluntary managed principles.

We would arrange the viewings making it quite clear that these plots were challenging and required a high level of commitment for success. This deterred some people which was to be expected

We would issue our own tenancy agreement (based on the current direct management agreement) specifying the level of plot cultivation expected within the first and second years.

We would have the authority to ensure compliance with the terms of this agreement, collect the rents and continue to manage the project for at least 2 years. The rest of the site would remain under Quadron management.

The Council and Quadron agreed to the KFAG proposal and encouraged us to go ahead and on the 19th October we became the 'landlord' of 8 half plots at Kingston Road. We were ready to go!

By 10 December the plots had been let.



31 Oct 2011 plot 2b

By the 21st January all KFAG plots were being worked, three were virtually ready for the spring and a large amount of rubble, hard core and general debris had been removed. Quadron Services kindly agreed to take the rubbish away in their trailer.



22 Jan 2012 plot 2b

'Our' plot holders have worked hard and it is so encouraging to see the land beginning to look like 'proper' allotment plots and not abandoned wasteland. We can't wait for spring to come and planting to begin!

John's Plot

"When we first had an opportunity to view the choice of allotments, I have to admit to being overwhelmed by the sheer amount of undergrowth and weeds. Cannily, though, I thought we should opt for a plot without trees (I have little knowledge of weeding let alone tree felling). Little did we know that our chosen plot had been hiding a builder's landfill. Having dug out numerous wheelbarrows full of rubble, toilet seats, bricks and paving slabs – and a golden jubilee mug (in perfect condition), I am pretty certain that the previous tenant had been attempting to convert the allotment into an out-of-town car park.

I have to admit, though, it has been fun and I'm thoroughly enjoying the experience. We've also been fortunate in being able to call on (or exploit) family and friends. One Saturday I was joined by 8 family members who helped pitch in and clear a good third of the site (amazing what a few Christmas drinks can persuade people to do). Also, I wasn't ready for how friendly the allotment would be – thank you to Ben and Dickie who have shared some of their strawberry and rhubarb plants with us – much appreciated. We're now very much looking forward to kicking off some growing.

Bizarrely, I'm also itching to start digging the last third of the plot – hopefully with the help of a few family members."

John Gaylor, KFAG project plot holder



26 Nov 2011



22 Jan 2012



Plot 34 a, b and c. 31 Oct 2011



Plot 34 a, b and c. 2 Jan 2012

We would like to thank the new plot holders for the work they have put into their new plots so far. The ultimate success of the project depends upon their efforts. We would also like to thank the SLV (site liaison volunteer) at Kingston Road, Lucy Launder, for her enthusiasm and commitment to the project, which has been vital to its success so far. The support and encouragement from other plot holders at the site has been much appreciated and we hope that in the long term the whole site will benefit from the KFAG project.

See the Kingston Road project page on our website.
kfag.org.uk

The Federation aims to:

- Promote and encourage allotment gardening in the Borough of Kingston upon Thames.
- Provide information, support and advice to sites considering voluntary management of their Allotments.
- Build relationships within and between the allotment sites so that ideas and experience can be shared.

For general allotment enquiries and information sheets about setting up a Plot holders' Association and Voluntary Management of allotment sites please contact the Secretary:

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Tel: 020 8942 9686