

## Buddy Scheme for New Plot Holders, Shepherd's Hill Allotments

### Introduction

When I told my father (an avid gardener) that I was interested in growing, he told me that I had a lifetime ahead of me of joy and disappointment in equal measure. The wonders of growing are often tempered by the failures that we all endure. How many of us have spent months waiting for just the right time to pick those carrots only to find that a carrot fly infestation has beaten us to them? What about that time we thought we would prune those fruit bushes only to find that we had cut off the wrong year's growth and ruined the next crop? Google, YouTube, Books. All great resources if you know the questions to ask, but as we have all found out, trial and error often seems to be the only teacher. What if there was someone that you could actually ask? Someone who had experienced your problem previously and knew just the right approach to solve it.....

### Objectives

The Shepherd's Hill Allotment Association is looking to implement a buddy scheme whereby those new to growing on an allotment are paired with an old hand who can advise, guide and help them as they get acclimatised and welcomed into the allotment site.

The scheme will be initially run as a pilot, and if successful it will be opened out to all. Eventually, we hope it will form part of a new series of planned advice sessions, once we are able to open up the Barn, encouraging plot holders to meet each other and generate a real sense of a community.

### Expectations / Responsibilities of Buddy

- Being an effective communicator and advisor.
- Be a supportive, but candid coach.
- To be able to provide both practical and theoretical advice.
- No financial input required, only time and expertise.

### Expectations / Responsibilities of Recipient

- Be an avid learner, receptive to new ideas.
- Be genuinely interested in receiving help.
- Wanting to improve by discussing failures and successes.
- Be committed to meet regularly at mutually agreed times.
- To be respectful that the buddies give up their time for free.

### Logistics

- The expectation is to start this scheme prior to the Spring.
- In the pilot phase, we do not wish to exclude anyone who would like to be assigned a buddy, but if we are over-subscribed, we will prioritise based on the duration of experience on site, with probationers getting priority.
- The volunteer buddies will be asked to complete a short form to register their interest.
- The buddy and new plot holder will be paired, with schedule for meeting driven by the new plot holder, COVID permitting. It is suggested that meetings are held at least once a month.
- The scheme will run for 12 months, allowing the buddy to help another plot holder should they wish.
- At the end of the scheme, feedback will be sought so that we can understand how to improve the scheme for the future.
- The committee will maintain a current list of buddies and will allocate as appropriate.
- If on either part there is incompatibility, the buddy can step down at any time whilst the new allotment gardener may request further input.

So, if you are interesting in acting as a buddy, or would like to be allocated a buddy, please reply back to : [info@shepherdshillallotments.co.uk](mailto:info@shepherdshillallotments.co.uk).