Whitehills wish is granted

09/08/2011

Heritage Allotment's is a year long project focussing on the heritage of allotments and their importance within the North East.

In partnership with Groundwork North East and Gateshead Council, Whitehills Allotment Association will inspire, engage and encourage local people to learn about allotments, their history and their place in today's modern world.

With the support from Groundwork North East, the project will run heritage workshops, giving people the chance to learn about and explore allotment history, whilst learning how to improve their allotment plots. The workshops will run sessions on 'Digging for Victory' and 'Grow Your Own', alongside talks on bee keeping and the importance of bees to allotments.

Volunteers involved in the project will then feed their findings into an educational pack to be used in local schools and the wider community.

Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund in the North East, Ivor Crowther, said: "We are pleased to be supporting an area of heritage that is rarely explored. Allotments are very popular in the North East and play an important part of many people's everyday lives. This is a really strong project that will offer opportunities for volunteers from across the community to get involved."

Allotments began over 200 hundred years ago when country folk moved into cities to find work. In the 19th century, allotments' became a focus and providing an alternative to drink and other activities deemed to be unruly or rebellious.

Later the spread of urban allotments was intensified by the growth of high density housing without gardens, following WWII they became a way of providing home grown fruit and vegetables in times of hardship and rationing.

Following the workshop sessions, volunteers will have the chance to restore two allotment plots. They will be encouraged to carry out site work at the allotment including learning how to design a successful allotment, laying pathways, erecting fences, installing a greenhouse and setting raised beds.

Gateshead Council has agreed to support the volunteers into the future with long-term team management and maintenance of the allotments.

Sarah Knox, Groundwork North East, says: "Groundwork are so pleased that the group have been successful at securing funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund for this project, it is the result of a lot of hard work.

"This allotment project will provide a fantastic resource for the local community and we look forward to giving people to opportunity to get involved. For the group the most important thing is the education and skills sharing and they are very keen to get young people from the local schools involved in helping to form the project. I would urge people to come along to the fun day being held at the allotment on 3rd September to find out more about the project."

As the project closes the volunteers will take full responsibility of the allotments and encourage others to help maintain

and manage them in the future. A short film, made during the project, will be available throughout the community and shown in schools to show what has been achieved and how bringing an allotment to life can be fulfilling and worthwhile.

Further information

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To speak with Whitehills Allotment Association please contact Steve Richardson, Secretary of Whitehills Allotment Association, on 07541 284 605.