

Sefton Park Allotment Society

Over the last five years our Society has taken advantage of various funding opportunities to develop our site and make it more accessible to our local community. Our first project was to provide a suitable plot for people with special needs. This involved introducing a paved layout with raised beds and a large polytunnel as well as major (and expensive) work to introduce plumbing and cesspit toilets. We have since welcomed a local charity involved with the rehabilitation of refugee women who are able to relax in a calm environment and receive professional counselling.

We are in the final stages of our latest venture which is to provide a plot for schoolchildren to learn about everything connected with the allotment experience. This is totally new ground for a lot of our city's children and we hope it will give them a taster of what it is like to work with the soil and a basic understanding of the natural world. We are working with the Lawrence Community Primary school to provide the kind of plot that will be low maintenance but at the same time, give all the children the chance to have a go with the tools provided and enough space to grow a variety of crops. They have only had two classes to date but there is no lack of enthusiasm from the children who become totally engrossed as soon as they enter the plot – this is very heartening!

We are not sure how it will work out yet, particularly as the school can only work within a limited timetable. Part of the project, which has been initiated by the school's Community Liaison Officer, is to gain the confidence and involvement of the parents. We are hoping that eventually some knowledgeable gardeners will emerge from this group and then it will really take off. In the meantime the Society has enough funding to plant various fruit trees and bushes to get things growing.

