

Our aims

Out of all our aims, we have three that we consider important... we hope that you do too

- The first is to encourage everyone to become a guardian of wildlife habitats, bio diversity and urban green spaces.
- The second is to pass on the skills to grow food and the knowledge to produce the fresh home grown fruit, vegetables & flowers, that we enjoy.
- The third; we would like to record and share the social history and the cultural and industrial heritage of Allotments.

Allotments are treasures that are fast disappearing. The relentless pressure on land in cities, the need to build at high densities and, in some cases, neglect and disuse, mean that allotments are slowly but surely being eroded. Fading quietly, starved of attention, labelled an eyesore, abandoned by gardeners who know closure is only a matter of time.

And yet, while sites close across the county, demand has never been higher. The unprecedented interest in organic food has led to a renaissance in allotment gardening, particularly among women and young families. Apply in some Local Authority areas and you will find a ten-year waiting list with 100 people ahead of you. Many popular sites have closed their waiting lists altogether.

The Network hope allotments will be a part of the regeneration of the area, that they will become vibrant, urban community spaces which meet the needs of the people of Stoke on Trent and North Staffordshire in the 21st Century. However, we also recognise the importance of making sure the culture of allotments, which is an integral part of the social history and industrial heritage of the area is not forgotten. The 'cloth cap and whippet' image of working class men growing leeks as big as fence posts is still the stereotype many people think of, but the industries – the pits, pot banks and the steel works - and the communities that allotments were such a crucial part of are disappearing too.

Sadly its not just the culture and green space that's being lost, the skills are being lost too. Many young people have little understanding of where food comes from, let alone the knowledge to be able to grow it. Yet their grandparents can remember the critical roll allotments played in feeding the nation during times of war and poverty. Think of it as saving skills, if you like, in case we ever have need of them again.

The Network works with the Local Authority, persuading people and making sure that as few sites as possible are lost. Even where sites are no longer needed for food production, they could be used as community gardens and urban wildlife areas. We feel that it is important to keep green spaces as green spaces to be held for future use.

PS...

If you have stories and photographs to help us build a unique record of the history of Allotments in North Staffordshire. Would you like to share them with us... your recollections, memories & stories that you might have been told. Tell us where the sites that are long gone were and importantly about the people who gardened them. so we can save them and make sure they are not forgotten.

