



ABOUT SUSTAINABLE LIVING INITIATIVE

The Sustainable Living Initiative (SLI) is a Norwich based charity. It offers all the benefits of a healthy lifestyle: being outside in fresh air and a 'green' environment, benefitting from exercise, and meeting like minds through gardening and environmental projects. Members come together to grow fruit and veg **organically**, share resources, food and recipes, learn about and support the natural environment and to enjoy each other's company. SLI relies on the cooperation of its members and is run by them.

A pilot scheme called Grow-Our-Own was started by Mahesh Pant at Bluebell South Allotments in 2004. The umbrella organisation (SLI) was registered as a not-for-profit company in 2005 and became a charity in 2013. Currently, SLI office is at Marlpit Community Centre on Hellesdon Road.

SLI Membership

SLI is membership-based and is also open to non-gardening people who support its objectives and wish to be involved.

The membership fee is £5 a year for individuals and £20 for groups and organisations. The membership fee is included in the rent for those who take a plot in one of the community garden projects (GO² Bluebell South Allotments, Marlpit Community Garden and Grow-at-Home scheme).

Concessions are available to people and groups who cannot afford to pay the rent in full. We can also arrange for payment to be made in instalments. When you join, you will be asked to agree to the terms by signing a member's agreement form.

Members receive the monthly newsletter which has the details of all our training, events and gardening advice. Other benefits include free admission to our training and social events, Suma Cooperative Group (where you can buy Suma products at the wholesale price) and a supply of organic seeds at a discounted price. There is a wealth of gardening advice and information on our website.

Grow-our-own (GO²), Bluebell South Allotments

GO² Bluebell is on Bluebell South allotments off The Avenues (please follow this link for directions: <http://grow-our-own.co.uk/bluebell/>). We currently rent 11 plots from Norwich City Council. There are about 80 members of all ages and diverse backgrounds.

The emphasis is on manageable-sized plots. GO² Bluebell plots measure 1.30 metres wide x 6 m long approximately. Annual plot rent (October 2019 - September 2020) is £22 for the first plot and £20 for each additional plot. We also have raised boxes (measuring 1.2 x 1.2 m) at £9 a year with level, paved access for people with mobility difficulties. Plot rent is non-refundable unless the payment was made in error. In addition to the plot rent, there is a £10 refundable deposit for the gate key.

You can apply on line and make payments by BACS. You will be allocated a plot once you have joined and paid and you'll receive a welcome letter with more detailed information. If you want to sign up in person, please come and see us on the first Sunday of the month between 10 am and 1 pm.

When joining, you are committing to give at least three days' worth of help a year towards running and maintaining GO² Bluebell communal facilities. There is a communal work morning on the first Sunday of the month at 10 am followed by a food-sharing lunch at 1 pm.

In accordance with Council allotment rules you are responsible for looking after your plot and keeping the paths around your plot tidy. Failure to do this may mean you lose your plot and there is no refund.

The use of tools, a choice of seeds, manure, compost, netting and locally coppiced bean poles and pea sticks are all included in the rent. If you are a complete beginner, we can arrange for someone to help get you started. Practical advice and information is always on hand. You are welcome to join the regular practical gardening and cooking sessions held at Marlpit which are free to all our members.

The GO² Bluebell main shed is open on Sundays and Wednesdays from 10 am - 1 pm except between early December and the end of February. Members are on hand at these times to provide advice, plants and seeds. We have an on site composting toilet large enough for a mobility scooter.

Members are advised to walk, cycle or use public transport when coming to the site. There are plenty of cycle stands but only a few car parking places reserved for blue-badge holders and for delivery of goods to GO² Bluebell South Allotments.

Marlpit Community Garden

The Marlpit Community Garden (MCG) started in June 2013. It is a seven-acre field in Marlpit Lane, near the Marriott's Cycle Way and close to the river Wensum. The site is divided into plots for individuals and families, plots for schools and community groups, forest garden, apiary, orchard, herb garden, wild-flower areas and meadows.

Marlpit offers small plots each measuring 1.20 x 10 metres approximately. The plot rent is £30 per year (October 2019-September 2020, non-refundable) and key deposit (refundable) is £20.

You can apply on line (please visit our website). If you would like to sign up in person, please come to the Marlpit Community Garden on the first Tuesday of the month **between 10 am and 1 pm** when you will be shown around and can choose a vacant plot. Marlpit Community Garden is open on Tuesdays from 10 pm to 2 pm and on Thursday from 10 am to 1 pm when volunteers will be around to provide advice, plants and seeds.

When joining, you are committing to give at least three days' worth of help a year towards running and maintaining Marlpit Community Garden. There are communal work mornings every Tuesday, Thursday and the second Saturday of the month.

The use of tools, a choice of seeds and plants, and manure and compost are all included in the rent. Practical advice and information is always on hand.

As a plot-holder, you are responsible for looking after your plot and keeping the paths around your plot in order. Failure to do this may mean you lose your plot and there is no refund.

MCG is a car-free zone; there are plenty of cycle stands but only a few car parking facilities reserved for blue-badge holders. For directions to MCG, follow this link: <http://grow-our-own.co.uk/marlpit> and for more information, visit our website: <http://grow-our-own.co.uk/about/marlpit>.

Grow-at-Home

The Grow-at-Home scheme provides practical help and advice for people who want to grow fruit and vegetables organically in their own gardens. Members of the Grow-at-Home scheme also have the opportunity to come and meet other growers on the allotment and share experiences. The fee, currently £16 per year (non-refundable), includes seeds and seedlings, access to gardening information and training at Marlpit Community Garden.

If you live in Norwich and wish to join as a grow-at-home member, please contact us at the address at the bottom of the page.

School/Community Groups

Marlpit Community Garden at Marlpit Lane, Norwich, provides opportunities for schools and community groups to learn about growing fruit, vegetables and herbs, wildlife and nature conservation.

You can have a raised bed measuring 3 metres by 1 metre for as little as £20 a year. The rent includes all seeds, plants and practical advice from our experienced volunteers.

Alternatively, you can come and visit the garden for a gentle refreshing walk, learn about bees, wildlife, and food growing organically and pick your own fruit in season.

Volunteering

The volunteering scheme provides an opportunity to learn gardening skills, meet like-minded people, work collectively, help maintain the local environment and get fresh fruit, vegetables and herbs free of charge in return for help.

Volunteering mornings run on Tuesdays and Thursdays and on the second Saturday of the month at Marlpit Community Garden from 10am to 2 pm.

We provide tea and coffee to our volunteers; on Tuesdays and the second Saturday of the month volunteers get a free home-cooked lunch. Volunteers also get surplus seasonal produce to take home in return for their help.

Anyone is welcome to join without any long-term commitment or any particular skills. If you want to learn basic skills in gardening and conservation, make new friends or you already have skills that you'd like to offer, please get in touch.

Our Marlpit Community Garden has been hosting corporate volunteers for last four years and so far we have received volunteers from AVIVA, MARSH, Jones Lang LaSalle (JLL), GoodGym, Voluntary Norfolk, among others. If your organisation is interested in volunteering with us, please contact us at the address below.

Sustainable Living Initiative, Marlpit Community Centre, Hellesdon Road, Norwich NR6 5EG, tel. 01603 920570; email: sustainable@grow-our-own.co.uk, web: www.grow-our-own.co.uk

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