

# IEPAD CHAIR

## ORGANISATION OBJECTIVES:

IEPAD is a public education community group which aims to encourage, support, publicise and celebrate the growing, cooking, eating and marketing of locally produced food. Its intended beneficiaries included community volunteers and members of the public who pass our sites and pick our food, school pupils and people in other institutions who learn about growing and cooking through our activities and local businesses supported in their efforts to promote their use of local ingredients

We prepare and plant up unused sites in public and accessible places with vegetables, fruit, herbs and complementary flowers and allow passersby to pick ripe fruit and veg. We prepare planters for groups working with local people, sheltered residences and schools and also organise a 'Growing Schools' mutual support network for schools already committed to growing. We hold public events to celebrate food production and support other outdoor activities and local businesses and a few public meetings about food-related issues.

We believe the current global food system is unsustainable in the long term. One first step to changing this is to reconnect people in urban and suburban areas with food production and begin the development of a more local food market.

## ORGANISATION ACTIVITIES:

We currently maintain 9 sites for fruit, herbs and vegetables around Prestwich and Whitefield. In addition we have built planters outside a number of shops and on other locations on the main shopping street in Prestwich in an old people's residence and in a number of nursery, primary and secondary schools. We have vegetables or fruit bushes outside Heaton Park and Prestwich Metrolink stations. We have a good relationship with the Creative Living Centre, a local Charity supporting people with emotional difficulties and they are assisting in the maintenance of some of these planters and smaller sites. We run a 'Growing Schools' network which meets once a term and we have assisted local schools to link with organisations like Groundwork and Manchester Environment Education Network.

We have an Apple Day to celebrate the Apple Harvest each October and have organised two successful food-related Spring events, one entitled 'Future of Food' fair and one called an 'Eco-Fair'. We have contributed to major local events like Prestwich Clough Day, Prestwich Carnival, the Prestwich Food Fests and are often invited to school events and those of other organisations, for example Fire Station open days (we have a plot outside the station) and pub events in the Ostrich pub (we have a plot in their large pub garden).

We have been able to maintain a diverse range of gardens promoting different approaches to gardening by use of a 'project manager' system through which different members take responsibility for different gardens. Thus we have a small 'tutorial garden', two gardens promoting permaculture (including a forest garden) and a large fruit garden intended to develop as a 'show garden'. We currently have the opportunity to further develop 'nursery stations' in the north and south of the township to ensure a good supply of plants for projects and events and this has occupied a lot of time in recent months.

Our initial growth coincided with that of a 'Local in Prestwich' business group (LIP) and we worked with them on planters and events like the Carnival (we provided planters for their float). Unfortunately that organisation did not last. However a new co-operative shop 'Village Greens' is on the point of opening and they have invited us to provide them with a couple of planters. Their ethical values coincide with ours and offer an opportunity for us to renew our business links and take them further.

We have no exclusive membership ('if you eat, you're in'). We aim to serve the whole community. Networking with the Council, other agencies, charities and voluntary groups is essential for us to fulfil our educational role and is at the heart of the way we work. Council co-operation in making land

available and their gifts in kind have been essential to our launch and growth and small grants from them have been a major source of funding.

We have good relations with other Incredible Edible groups across Bury borough and beyond and with similar organisations throughout Greater Manchester: we hosted a meeting of the Greater Manchester 'Feeding Manchester' Network in November 2012 and our Secretary is involved in their work to create a 'Strategy for Sustainable Food' for Greater Manchester and parallel activities led by the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities. We have links with food poverty groups based in Bury borough and the Manchester Fare Share organisation.

### **VOLUNTEER IMPACT**

Although it is a very active group for its size and it is well-regarded by individuals and organisations across the community the group could obviously do far more than it does. There is no shortage of land or institutions to link to, organisations are keen to participate in our events and businesses would love to work with us if we had sufficient capacity.

You will ensure that burn out of key workers does not lead to a slow decline in the organisation and its impact and help it to work in new ways so that it can exploit opportunities and meet demands from its friends.

### **BENEFIT TO VOLUNTEER:**

You will have an opportunity to work with a congenial group of people on a positive and popular project that is well-regarded locally, regionally (through other similar groups) and nationally.

You will develop a fuller understanding of the role of local food production in the development of a sustainable, low carbon economy, of the groups that are promoting this, the forces supporting them and the obstacles they face.

You will further develop your skills as a chair/leader of a voluntary organisation and the specific skills you contribute to helping us meet our next set of strategic goals.

## **CHAIR**

### **CHAIR SUMMARY:**

You will chair monthly meetings of the organising committee of an 'Incredible Edible' group in Prestwich, consolidate its current achievements and help it to diversify into a wider range of activities.

### **CHAIR ROLE:**

You will chair monthly meetings of IEPAD Core Group and work with the Secretary, Treasurer and Minutes Secretary to order its priorities and prepare its agendas. You will help the group to progress with the key strategic challenges set out below. The exact nature of your contribution is negotiable.

The benefits of the 'project manager' system were explained under 'Organisation Activities' above. The potential disadvantage is the fracturing of the organisation into different groups. It is the role of the central officers to ensure this does not happen by maintaining a programme of events and activities that keep the group together and focussed on its shared objectives. These activities have diminished during the current growing season.

The group made an initial choice to go for a simple constitution as a community group (not a charity) and to rely almost exclusively on self-supporting community volunteers. We have done a great deal on this basis. To develop further we may need to create more structured volunteering opportunities tailored to younger people and perhaps employ paid workers to supervise them and develop our learning and/or business strands. We have long wanted to follow Incredible Edible Todmorden and

create a small scale market garden to consolidate our business links. To pursue these objectives successfully we may have to reconsider our constitution.

The Core Group is open to all volunteers. Beyond the roles of Chair, Secretary and Treasurer members are unelected. Meeting attendance varies between 8 and 15 people. There is currently a volunteer sub-group active. Other sub-groups (for example for events or publicity) are formed and lapse as the need arises.

The Chair's position is elected and changes of both constitution and strategy would have to be approved by the Core Group. The group also forms a mutually supportive community where all members 'muck in' to help out with our events or other activities whenever they are available. You would be encouraged to participate.

#### **PERSON DESCRIPTION:**

Enthusiasm for our objectives and an understanding of our ethos are essential. Previous experience of chairing a similar third sector organisation would be an advantage, the confidence and skills to lead a meeting are essential.

Specific skills to contribute to meeting the strategic challenges we face are essential. You may have an interest in or experience of organising events and a social programme OR you may have expertise relating to working with Colleges or Job Centres OR to obtaining charitable status or relating organisational objectives to the form an organisation takes.

Good knowledge of the third sector and local knowledge of Bury Council and community groups in the area would both be very helpful. It would better suit our ethos if the Chair were a resident of Prestwich or Whitefield. Gardening skills are not necessary.