

WEARDALE CSA Co-operative CIC

Membership Application Pack Information Sheet

The Aims of Weardale CSA (WCSA) are to sustainably produce and sell healthy, naturally grown food to the local community; to enable local people to re-connect with growing food by creating inclusive opportunities to take part in and learn about all aspects of food production, and to promote the involvement of people who could benefit therapeutically.

WCSA is a co-operative set up as a Community Interest Company (CIC) Limited by Guarantee. To become a Member requires a one-off payment of £1. The company is owned by the membership and every member has one vote at general meetings. A Board of Directors is elected by the membership at the Annual General Meeting. Other members can also contribute to the running of the activities by joining a sub-group or helping at events.

CSA is a model that builds on co-operation and mutual support so that the risks and rewards of producing food are shared between consumers and producers. The consumers (Members) commit themselves to supporting the farm or garden and to providing a fair income for the producers. All produce is shared amongst the Members (a 'share of the harvest') with any surpluses sold locally.

As the project develops it is anticipated that there will be many more benefits to members in addition to a supply of fresh food locally grown without artificial chemicals. Social events and celebrations will become part of the life of the co-operative as a way of connecting food and community.

WCSA leases 2 plots of land. The larger is situated on the outskirts of Frosterley village adjacent to Harehope Quarry and is approximately 3 acres. The second plot is a ½ acre garden attached to the vicarage in Stanhope. It is hoped to employ a part-time grower in 2009 to bring these plots into production for a first harvest in late summer/autumn 2009.

More information is available in the Business Plan (please ask for a copy) and will also be available on our website when this is established.

Membership Explained

In addition to your one-off joining fee (£1) that secures you legal membership status, we also ask for an annual Membership Fee of £2/month or £24/year as a contribution towards administration costs. This covers such items as communications, room hire for events, printing, photocopying, website etc. Rather than add these costs to the price of the food it has been decided to cover these costs with this annual/monthly membership fee. This

means that if you want to be a member and support WCSA but do not want to purchase a regular share in the harvest you can do so. **For households with more than one Co-operative member only 1 person is expected to pay this membership fee.**

The cost of a share of the harvest ('Food Share') in the first year of production (2009/10) is anticipated to be £25/month for a standard 'working' share and £31.25 for a 'non-working' share. Working shares include an average of 1 day/month helping on the land, usually on organised Volunteer days. As production increases the cost of the shares will also increase.

The number of Food Shares has to be limited according to the anticipated production. In the first year of production (2009/10) there will be 25 Food Shares available. Once this number of shares is committed a waiting list will be set up for the following season (when more Food Shares will be available). If there are no Food Shares available when you apply to join you have the option of becoming a Member and being added to the waiting list, to simply have your name on the waiting list. In the event of over subscription existing Members will be given priority for Food Shares.

Because of the principal ethos of sharing risk and reward, if you have a Food Share you are expected to commit to purchasing a share of the harvest for a minimum of one season. Payment will be by standing order quarterly (in advance). If for some reason (e.g. moving house) you have to leave before the end of the season you will be required to give 12 weeks notice.

Our Values and Principles

When the Steering Group started to meeting in October 2007 a set of Principles and Values was agreed as a basis for all future action and planning:

- We will attempt to make the experience fun, fostering community spirit and reconnecting local people with food production.
- We aim to be accessible to all irrespective of their circumstances.
- Decision making will be transparent, with any member able to express an opinion. Wherever possible we will seek to achieve consensus.
- We will work within a spirit of cooperation, in a mutually supportive no-blame culture.
- To support Weardale's local economy while creating a pleasurable and co-operative working environment with a fair return to all involved.
- We will aim to produce a diverse harvest of fresh, high quality food.
- We will agree the value of shares [or any other agreed measure] in advance, accepting that value when the food is produced.
- We will maintain an appropriate membership to fit the anticipated level of food production.

- We will minimise our negative environmental impact, ensuring that the scale of growing is sustainable.
- The food we produce will complement existing provision, ensuring that the local economy benefits.
- If we need to supplement our own produce with out-sourced food from similarly-minded growers, the following order of preference should be applied:
 1. From the UK (as local as possible).
 2. From within Europe.
- We intend to develop 'best practice' and will share our expertise, experiences and information with anyone who wishes to find out more.

Contact Details

Please send completed application forms to:

Lance Davenport, Membership Secretary, Cromer House, 48 Front Street, Frosterley, DL13 2QS Tel: 01388 526632

Other contacts:

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