

Moorside Allotments

Potted History

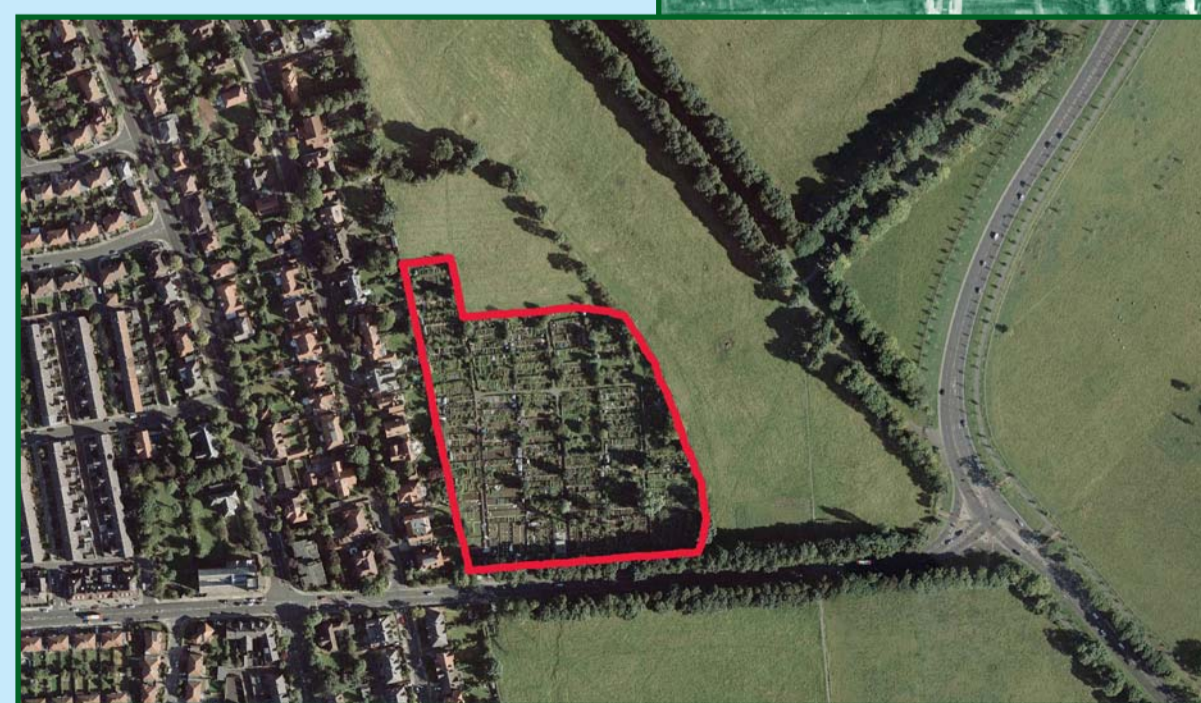
There have been allotments on the Town Moor since 1770. The City Council own the Moor but the Freemen of the City of Newcastle have a traditional right to the herbage (the right of pasturing cattle). The Freemen grant the right to erect allotments to the City Council, who are the leaseholders for Moorside Allotments. This site was established as part of the World War II "Dig for Victory" campaign and was known as "The Nuns Moor Wartime Allotments". This campaign encouraged people to grow their own vegetables and aimed to make Britain self-sufficient.

Between 1939 and 1945, 1.4 million people owned allotments and food imports were halved. At that time, our site extended further to the North and had 150 allotments. Annual rent for each plot was 5 shillings and allotment holders were promised a year at the end of hostilities to harvest all their produce. Unlike other nearby allotment sites, our site continued after the war and changed its name to Moorside Allotments in 1956.

Frank Lightfoot has had a plot at Moorside since the 1960s. He remembers the Prisoners of War who had stayed after their release and a Polish refugee who planted many of the trees here. It was a mostly male community with just a few wives like Mrs Laws involved. She managed her late husband's plot until she was well into her nineties.



ABOVE: Moorside allotments c1945-52



LEFT: Moorside allotments c2005

A Growing Concern

Moorside Allotments is a place where gardeners can plant and grow and be in harmony with the earth and with fellow gardeners. The Association is run by a committee of up to twelve members which is elected every year at the AGM in January and has its own constitution and rules.

The objects of the Association are:

- A) To promote the interests of all members in their gardening activities and to take joint action for the benefit and protection of members.
- B) To maintain harmonious and productive relationships with our landowners (The Freemen of the City), our leaseholders (the City of Newcastle) and the local community.
- C) To promote a sense of vibrant community; to be socially inclusive; to value sustainability; to have regard for environmental protection; to value biodiversity; to promote open communication.
- D) To promote the sharing of knowledge about gardening and allotment management in order to promote success in our core task of growing vegetables, flowers and fruits.



Wartime vegetable planting plan

Moorside has 109 allotments of varying sizes, over a hundred plot-holders and a waiting list of prospective tenants. The 2.5 hectare (6 acre) site has a metered water supply paid for within the annual rent, which in 2009 was £40 per plot. There is a community hut, a plumbed toilet block and a trading hut which sells compost, manure, paraffin, bamboo canes and other garden supplies.



Rooted In The Community

The need to "Dig for Victory" has passed, but there is an emotional satisfaction as well as financial reward in planting and harvesting your own produce. The appearance of the site has changed as we have grown into a more diverse community of gardeners who use a variety of techniques to grow flowers as well as vegetables and to encourage wildlife.

Our regular newsletters help to keep you in touch and our website is full of interesting news and useful advice: www.moorsideallotments.co.uk



As well as individual gardeners, school groups, scout troops and other community partners like refugee support groups also have plots here. We encourage them to learn about gardening and nurture a sense of local involvement.



Our plot-holders are passionate about gardening and share their enthusiasm with visitors during our annual open day. We all keenly contest the prizes in both our site show and the Newcastle Allotment Show.