

# Case Study: Kindling Trust

## ABOUT KINDLING TRUST (KT)

Since 2007, KT has been working for a just and ecologically sustainable society. Working with communities, farmers, activists and policy makers, they use food as a catalyst for environmental and social change. In addition to their Farmstart, they run a veg box, a wholesale veg operation, a community food hub, volunteer programme and a commercial growers course. The veg box scheme and wholesale are established as two independent co-ops but work closely together.

## MODEL 1 - ABBEY LEYS

The Abbey Leys site is 2 acres of organic land, and participants are given  $\frac{1}{8}$  or  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an acre for their operation. Participants reapply every year, but can stay on the land for up to 5 years, increasing their area each year if they can demonstrate they are ready. KT provide tools and infrastructure such as water, and the site is certified organic through the Soil Association. Certification is under the KT FarmStart name, so each FarmStarter has to use this name for their labelling (if labelled organic), however they can also put their own name, and each participant has to keep their own documentation to feed in to the Soil Association inspection as part of their training. People buy their own seeds, fleece and other materials, but keep all money made from selling crops.

## MODEL 2 - WOODBANK

This model is ideal for people with very little experience, focusing on scaling up your growing and getting more efficient. People spend two days a week growing alongside a grower who provides all the in-field training and takes all responsibility for the planning and selling of the produce. There is no additional cost to the participants (costs of seeds, compost, materials are covered), but KT keep all the money from selling the produce to cover these costs.

People can stay on the programme for up to 3 years, getting more involved in the crop planning etc., then move onto the Abbey Leys site (or find their own land), and can continue to receive mentoring from the FarmStart co-ordinator or from another experienced local grower.

## MARKETS

For Abbey Leys, participants are supported to sell through Manchester Veg People, Veg Box People and Unicorn Grocers, and trained in how to run a Farmer's Market stall. For Woodbank the produce is sold through the same channels but the grower handles the sales (although participants have some involvement in the admin/record keeping and from the 2nd year are involved in the ordering and sales process).



## TRAINING

In addition to the in-field training there are an additional 5 classroom sessions across the year (varying between 2 hours and ½ a day). These cover topics such as soil and fertility building, record keeping and tool maintenance in the first year, moving on to cover finances, pricing, working with volunteers and business planning in the second and third years. The programme also includes a day with the buyers to get an understanding of their needs and visits to two other growers (of different scales).

## COST

Participants pay £500 + VAT per year, plus pay a returnable £100 deposit

There is an application form and process, including an opportunity to attend a ‘Do you really want to be a farmer’ evening. For the Abbey Leys programme participants have to submit an annual crop plan and soil fertility plan (which is also part of the Soil Association record keeping)

