

Why Become a Co-operative?

Becoming a Co-operative

The committee of Camberwell and District Allotment Society (CDAS) is proposing to change the society's constitution to become a co-operative society. We need to do this to remove a serious risk for members that exists with the current constitution.

Presently CDAS is an unincorporated association without a formal structure. This means that all members are personally responsible for any debts and contractual obligations. Trustees who hold the lease, committee members and all plot holders carry a liability if any claims against the society went beyond our reserves or were not covered by our insurance. Whilst this has never happened in our 70 years of existence, it is a potential risk we do not think we or you should carry. It is also one of the key reasons for the recent concerns around health and safety at the sites and the need to comply with our insurance policy.

We have been talking through the issue with the three allotment committees (Grange Lane, Gunsite and Grove), the National Society for Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG) and other organisations. We believe that becoming a registered co-operative society is the best way forward. NSALG recommends societies like CDAS become a co-operative and we believe it is in the best interests of all members.

As a co-operative, all plot holders will be a member of the co-operative with a share of £1. This limits the liability of all members to no more than £1 each in the event of a claim against the co-operative.

CDAS is using the 'Model Rules' issued by NSALG as the basis for our new structure as a co-operative, with amendments to retain our current structure as three separate sections (Grange Lane, Gunsite and Grove) under CDAS. Each section will continue to make decisions for its own site. We will transfer our current set of rules (as given on the CDAS Membership Card and Rules) to the new model rules. NSALG has been closely involved with the amendments to the Model Rules and supports the proposal to become a co-operative.

We hope you will support this initiative which requires a vote in favour at the CDAS AGM on 14 May 2023. All plot holders are eligible to vote at the AGM. If the motion is passed, NSALG will then present our request to the Financial Conduct Authority for registration as a co-operative.