



Easy rider

Taxi driver David Dansky, left, with George Capon

A UNIQUE cycle taxi service will help older people and those with mobility issues to make short trips by bike around Hackney for free.

Ride Side by Side, which launches this month, will help residents who use Dial-a-Ride services to attend appointments, go shopping or visit friends.

The four-wheeled taxi bikes are custom-made and allow the trainer and passenger to sit side-by-side. Passengers can choose whether they want to join in and pedal, or sit back and enjoy the ride.

George Capon, 78, of Chatham Place, who trialled a shopping run to Tesco on Morning Lane, said: "I think it's an excellent idea. I hope it'll catch on for lots of older people. It'll give people that little bit of exercise and would be lovely to do in the summer months."

The service is run by Cycle Training UK, with funding from

the Council, TfL and Department for Transport.

Cllr Feryal Demirci, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, Transport and Parks, said: "We are pleased to launch the Ride Side by Side cycle taxi service in Hackney this spring.

"It will give the chance for those in the borough with mobility issues to get a free lift, whether that's to

the hospital, to meet with friends, or visit the local area. It's also a great way to experience cycling, whatever your age, and to get out and get some exercise."

The service starts on 18 April and will run every Tuesday through spring and summer, with two hour slots available from:

- 9am-11am
- 11.15am-1.15pm
- 1.45pm-3.45pm
- 4pm-6pm.

Bookings can be made online at: ridesidebyside.eventbrite.com; or by calling: 020 7232 4384.

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News in brief



Community to grow a rainbow

FROM yellow carrots, striped tomatoes and purple beans to red sprouts and rainbow chard, a new community gardening group, where diversity thrives, will be growing a rainbow throughout the summer.

The LGBTQI+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex plus) gardening club 'Rainbow Grow' is sprouting up this April in Hackney.

The club plans to produce a whole rainbow of edible plants at Cordwainers Grow near London Fields station, and will meet every Tuesday for a gardening session.

Clair Battaglino, a Dalston resident who helped set up Rainbow Grow and runs her own community gardening enterprise KeentoGreen, said: "Growing is a lot more than planting some seeds; growing helps build a community where you can make friends and have fun. Come along and give it a try and you'll reap a lot more than fresh veggies."

The group is supported by the Council and Royal Horticultural Society. To find out more, search Rainbow Grow on Facebook; e-mail: rainbowgrowk2g@gmail.com; or come along to the first gardening session on 25 April, 5pm to 7pm, at Cordwainers Grow, 8 Well Street, E9.



Council backs London Mayor's tree-planting programme for green spaces



HACKNEY'S green spaces will receive a welcome boost when 120 new trees are planted.

The saplings in Haggerston Park, Shoreditch Park, London Fields, Mabley Green and Millfields Park will add to the 9,500 trees already in the borough's parks, and 10,500 on its streets.

Fifty trees are being funded by a grant from the Mayor of London, with the Council paying for the others.

Cllr Feryal Demirci, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, Transport and Parks, said: "I'm delighted to be able to add to the borough's 20,000 trees. Trees absorb

pollutants, which helps to improve air quality, crucial for people's health in urban areas. They also provide an important habitat for wildlife and add to the beauty and tranquillity of our parks."

Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, said: "I want London to be one of the world's greenest

cities, which is why I've prioritised this funding to kick-start the delivery of thousands of new trees and to protect and enhance our much-loved green spaces.

"This is the first step in my plans for a major tree-planting programme across London in partnership with businesses and boroughs."