

Eco café to open at folk HQ

CECIL Sharp House is to open a green and healthy café supplied by its own organic kitchen garden, fruit trees and bee hives.

The national headquarters of the English Folk Dance and Song Society in Primrose Hill has asked local food campaigner Helen Tindale to run the venture from September 1.

The mum-of-two will also base her mobile healthy-eating business Nice Green Van at the Regent's Park Road HQ, as well as running food literacy sessions in the classrooms.

"I'm really excited about this new project," says Tindale.

"Cecil Sharp House is a real hidden gem and we're opening it up to a wider audience, inviting people in with our lentil beetroot brownies – which taste a lot better than they sound!

"I've now got a hub for Nice Green activities, serving healthy, sustainable food at an affordable price, seven days a week. We'll have daily specials of fresh, seasonal and locally sourced food and will have our own sustainable and organic kitchen garden that will complement the architecture of the building, with its own fruit trees, herbs, bees and wormery."

Tindale started her social enterprise project Kids' Food Matters in 2004 after taking part in a mothers' raid on St Paul's primary school in Primrose Hill.

Concerned over the quality of school lunches, they found processed food in the freezers and chicken that was past its sell-by-date.

As part of Tindale's campaign for better school dinners, Kids' Food Matters raises awareness of healthy eating and sustainable food growth through a programme of cookery clubs and healthy eating sessions in schools and community centres.

After winning a social entrepreneur award, she

converted a former ice cream van into the Nice Green Van, taking chocolate lentil bars, courgette cakes and organic ice cream to events, parties and festivals.

She said: "The Nice Green Van has always been a real labour of love, run by passionate volunteers, and I'm thrilled to be able to expand the project. Everyone loves the van. These foods are familiar to young people – they get the much-loved package, without the added rubbish. We bring good foods to all."

Tindale's food literacy course is a programme of intensive high-calibre skills training in cooking, food growing and sustainability aimed at young people.

Katy Spicer, chief executive of the EFDSS, said: "We are delighted to welcome Nice Green Café to Cecil Sharp House and we hope it will be an enticing option for not only our regular visitors but also for local residents and workers who may not yet have visited Cecil Sharp House."

LAUREN DAVIDSON