

GROUND BREAKING!

SPRING
2017

NEWSLETTER
of THE LOW MOOR ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION
www.lowmooralotments.co.uk
@LowMoorAllots



We'd like to welcome all new tenants to Low Moor and hope that your plots are productive. From what I've seen, there's a phenomenal amount of hard work going on between you. Do drop into the shop, not only for your supplies, but also to have a chat, get some advice and meet fellow tenants.

**LOW MOOR
ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Saturday June 17th 2017
At 2pm outside the shop**

Agenda includes:

- ◆ Site Secretaries' Report
- ◆ Shop & Finance reports for 2016
- ◆ Nominations for officers & committee
- ◆ News from the council & local police
- ◆ Ideas for site improvements/events!

GARDENERS' STORE

I'm sure everyone who has shopped in the Association-run store or worked behind the counter this year has been mighty impressed, by its cleanliness and tidiness as well as the choice of products on sale. This is down to the hard graft Chris and Kerry put in during the few weeks when it's closed in the winter. They ventured into untouched areas within the shop, even dating back to Ernie's time! They cleared out the raised areas at the back of the shop (previously used for small pieces of wood, these now hold compost and auction wood), the area under the fabric selection (home to unsaleable wood and metal) and shelves under the counter to create a space for incoming stock to be priced up. The thorough clean up involved an awful lot of floor mopping – a logistical nightmare when the only source of hot water is the kettle!

On the stock front there was a big seed order to price and display, as well as the potatoes, shallots, onions and garlic to

get ready for the new season. Other stock comes from all sorts of suppliers, so they are always busy taking in deliveries and getting goods ready for sale. Pricing was also scrutinised to ensure best value for customers; this is much more than simply applying a standard mark across the board, as some things are comparatively more expensive to buy in than others and Chris keeps a watchful eye on local competition. Some savings have been negotiated with suppliers, pushing our not for profit status, with the result that a reasonable amount of stock in the shop has been reduced for 2017. For example, potatoes, onions and shallots are notably cheaper than last year, while the tubs of chicken pellets seem to cost less every time I buy one!

Trade has been brisk in the first few weeks of the season, a mix of established plottolders, an encouraging number of new tenants and local gardeners.

HEDGE LAYING

A small team of keen Low Moor plottolders assembled in early February for a course in hedgelaying, kindly paid for by the Association. Hedgelaying is a country craft which has been practiced for hundreds of years and there is still no machine which can replicate the work of the hedgelayer. It's a seasonal job, carried out between October and March when trees and shrubs are dormant, and birds have finished nesting in the hedges. The finished hedge provides a barrier against livestock and offers weather protection for crops and wildlife. The work also rejuvenates hedgerows by encouraging them to put on new growth, helping to improve their overall structure and strength. Oh, and it looks good too!



Don Davies (above) was our teacher for the day, and armed with his billhooks, saws and loppers we set to work on the hedge that borders the stray on the south side of the allotments. You may remember that last year we carried out some work trimming this hedge, but now we are aiming for a better, more durable approach.

The weather was kind to us, and we were soon astounded by our progress – we worked in teams of two on our own sections, so once we stood back and saw how much we had done it was quite a shock! Enthusiasm was such that the

Association has now purchased some billhooks for future sessions, and indeed another one took place later in the month, when we did the same length of hedge again.



This second session was well attended too, despite less favourable weather, both by those who had taken the course and those who were new to the skill – we muddled through with a bit of a health and safety warning and a lot of group memory collaboration for the newbies! Special commendations go to Simon and Hilde for being stalwarts and putting in full sessions on each day to the bitter end.

Hopefully those who regularly walk through the plots to the stray will have noticed the difference. We managed a third session in early March, but now we will wait until the autumn before working on the remaining hedgeline – we plan to regroup as soon as we can from October onwards

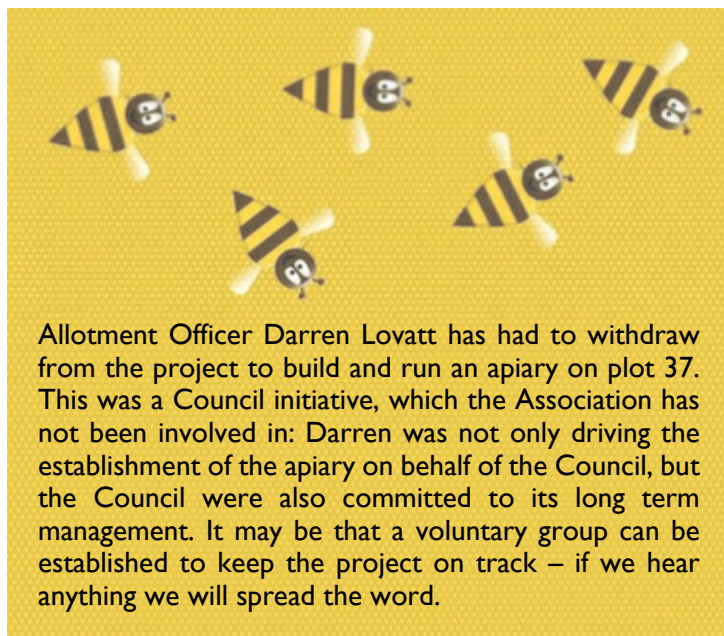
Many thanks to Don Davies and the Association for their help, to Angela for the delicious cheese scones, and to everyone who has attended so far! We'd welcome more volunteers to continue the work, please get in touch if you'd like to learn a new skill and contribute to the improvement of the site at the same time.



The Low Moor Plot Crawl Saturday July 15th 2017

❖ Welcome tenants to your plot
and stroll around the site to
visit others!

- ❖ Spend 10-15 mins on each plot to see what others are growing/share experiences (good and bad)/discuss tactics!
 - ❖ It's not competitive – no need to spruce your plot up to inspection standard!
 - ❖ Followed by tea and cake – bring to share and get to know other tenants.
- Contact Lucy Wild to register your plot and to get involved! lucyawild@gmail.com



Allotment Officer Darren Lovatt has had to withdraw from the project to build and run an apiary on plot 37. This was a Council initiative, which the Association has not been involved in: Darren was not only driving the establishment of the apiary on behalf of the Council, but the Council were also committed to its long term management. It may be that a voluntary group can be established to keep the project on track – if we hear anything we will spread the word.


**KEEP
CALM
&
FOLLOW
THE RULES**

A message from the Site Secretaries:

Spring inspections have been carried out and fewer than 20 ploholders are being sent letters to encourage them to tidy up or risk eviction. This is a vast improvement on last year and very encouraging.

Look out for us escorting groups of prospective tenants around the site to look at vacant allotments, with new plot holders signing up all the time.

A reminder that if you want to put up a structure such as a shed or greenhouse, you do need permission from the Council: email us at the address below to get things moving.

LOW MOOR COMMUNITY KIDS' ALLOTMENT

Unusually, we have 2/3 places available for this year on the plot. Children are 6 – 12 years old and the group meet for "Allotment Club" on Saturday mornings between 10 and 12 noon until the end of October.

If you are interested, or want to learn more, why not contact Angela or call in and see her or Robina during a session.



Don't forget to make use of the shelf under the notice board to get rid of things you don't want, such as seedlings, pots and surplus produce – anything you think might help another plot holder (but no junk please!). And don't be shy about helping yourself to what's there – the bit of comfrey root I picked up last year is coming along nicely, although I'm keeping an eye on it as it can spread quickly and take over your plot!

CONTACTS

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