

GROUND BREAKING!

Spring
2016

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



WORKING PARTY



This is what the hedge on the southern edge of the site looked like at 10am on March 5th. Undaunted by the muddy underfoot conditions and the odd shower, our little group set to work cheerfully and with determination. It wasn't such a bad job: it's a hawthorn hedge that was cut back pretty well last year, so it was easy to see what you were aiming to do. Brambles and other vegetation growing through in some

places made the job a little more difficult, but in general progress was gratifyingly speedy and by midday we were satisfied by what we'd achieved.

It was a very enjoyable morning: time passed quickly as we chatted and worked away and the noticeable improvement to the hedge was a tangible reward for our efforts. A second group met up the following week to finish the task: thanks to all who gave up their time to help.



Now we'd like to schedule some similar events and we need suggestions for jobs to tackle. Self-contained tasks with a definite start and end point that will improve the site, benefit a number of tenants and that wouldn't necessarily be part of the council's responsibilities are the sort of thing we are after.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Sunday June 12th 2016
At 1pm outside the shop

Agenda includes:

- ◆ Site Secretaries' Report
- ◆ Shop Report 2015
- ◆ Finance Report 2015
- ◆ Nominations for officers & committee
- ◆ News from the council & local police
- ◆ Site Volunteer Working Groups
- ◆ Your ideas for site improvements/events!

In these difficult economic times there have been cuts to many areas of council provision and the allotments are no exception. How are we being affected now and what might happen in the future?

Come and hear the facts and discuss with Committee how we might respond as an association!

CRIME SCENE

York Allotments
YAAC
Against Crime

According to police figures, crime has been at an all-time low on the site over the winter, with nothing reported by plot holders. This may well be a true reflection of what's going on: after all, it's been so muddy you've had to work really hard to get around. Or maybe we aren't reporting incidents to the police?

Hannah Gaskell, one of the Police Community Support Officers whose duties include Low Moor, came to our last committee meeting to stress once again how important it is to report incidents, no matter how trivial you think they are. People seem to feel that it's enough to put it in the Incident book in the shop and don't want to bother the police with minor incidents, especially if nothing has been stolen and there's no damage done. We can't say often enough that the police want to know about anything at all untoward and will increase patrols in response if need be (Hannah seemed to be relishing the chance of patrolling by torchlight!), so don't hesitate to ring 101 and let them know of any incidents.

One of last year's great successes was the property marking day we held in conjunction with the police. Their 'dot peen' machine indents items with tiny unique codes and links them to the Police Immobilise Database. On this, the item can be linked to information such as the site's postcode or your email address, which increases the chances of things being returned to you if stolen. If you've got more property you'd like to protect, you missed the day or are new to the site, there will be another this year, on Sunday 5th June between 10am and 2pm. Feel free to bring along anything you value, from gardening tools to phones, laptops and bikes, they can all be security marked. As well as the police and the council, the Fire Brigade will also be there to offer advice on reducing arson and managing plots from a fire perspective.

COMMITTEE CHANGES

Jeanne Murphy, one of our longest serving committee members, has decided to step down this year. I really appreciated Jeanne's friendliness, humour and guidance when I first joined the committee: I know we'll miss her and would like to thank her for all she has done over the years.

We are always on the lookout for new committee members: we don't want to get stale and an injection of fresh ideas is always welcome. We meet every 2-3 months for an hour or so (in the pub in winter, al fresco in the warmer months) and while we follow an agenda, the sessions are quite informal and informative. If you're interested, please contact the Association Chair, Angela Johnson.

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND!



**The Low Moor Plot Crawl
Saturday July 23rd 2016**

**Welcome tenants to your plot
and visit others!**

We ran this event for the first time last year and it was a resounding success. Expect to spend 10-15 minutes on each plot to see what others are growing, share experiences (good and bad) and discuss tactics! It's not competitive, so there's no need to spruce your plot up to inspection standard beforehand. It's a good way to meet fellow tenants and to visit parts of the site you don't usually venture to. We finish up by sharing tea, cake and ideas. Contact Lucy Wild to register your plot and to get involved! lucyawild@gmail.com

GARDENERS' STORE

Chris and Kerry have achieved the impossible – the Gardeners' Store this year looks even better than it did last. It's the result of many hours of hard work over the winter to get the store stocked and spick and span in time for opening. Feedback from many customers has been very positive and appreciative and it's a great compliment that the store draws its custom not only from Low Moor plot holders, but also from local gardeners, plot holders on other sites and organisations such as yourcafe and Greenfields Garden in Haxby.

This early in the season seed potatoes, onion sets, shallots and garlic are all selling fast, but there's still plenty of choice, with some new varieties to try this year. The seed racks are full up, there's plenty of timber, netting, compost, tools and just about anything else you might need, with the added bonus of being on the doorstep.

CALLING ALL CHILDREN!



In 2016 we are running our first Kids' Competition and we want to see what you can do on the allotment!

All you need is part of a plot to call your own, say around a square metre, or bigger if you like. And then it's up to you to decide what to grow to showcase your skills. You might fancy beautiful flowers (perhaps a sunflower as tall as you), a selection of vegetables and fruit (radishes and carrots grow quickly, squash and pumpkins turn into monsters as soon as your back is turned and there's nothing to beat the fun of digging up potatoes) or even a wildlife area (anyone who can house a hedgehog gets my vote!).

Judgement day will be Saturday August 20th at 1pm: email [Lucy Wild](mailto:lucyawild@gmail.com) to enter! lucyawild@gmail.com

CONTACTS

Angela Johnson: Chair, Treasurer & Kids' Allotment
☎ 07982431687 ✉ angela3147@hotmail.com

Lucy Wild & Christine Robertson: Site Secretaries
☎ 07876 393522 ✉ lowmoorallotments@gmail.com

Council Allotments Team
☎ 01904 553433 ✉ allotments@york.gov.uk

WASTE NOT

One of the people I met during my first shift in the shop this year was Margaret Hattam, director of the volunteer-run and non-profit making yourcafe, who dropped in to join the Gardeners' Store on behalf of the organisation. It struck me that the ethos of the cafe has much in common with that of many a plot holder, especially its emphasis on avoiding food waste.

 yourcafe



The cafe opens every Wednesday lunchtime (apart from the first of the month) in Tang Hall Community Centre on Fifth Avenue. The organisation intercepts surplus food that would otherwise go to landfill and turns it into meals for which you 'pay as you feel' – as little or as much as you want and can afford. On a Wednesday in February for example they turned 183 kg (from corporate donors such as Morrisons and Waitrose, as well as people who are clearing out their fridges or going on holiday and from allotments) into meals for 47 customers. They've now got some raised beds at Bootham allotments, and have just started a 'plot to plate' scheme (seed potatoes from Low Moor store!) to supplement the donations.

Margaret extends an invitation to a special event to celebrate the cafe's first birthday. She says: "It's on Friday 15th April from 7–9pm at St Nicks Environment Centre. There will be superb food cooked from surplus food and a chance to find out more about yourcafe and the many exciting developments since its launch last year".

For more information, to volunteer or to donate, contact Margaret on 07874 129514 or info@yourcafe.co.uk.



Need some motivation to get you to your plot? According to scientists from Essex and Westminster universities, spending half an hour a week on an allotment results in an instant reduction in stress and fatigue, as well as boosting self-esteem, vigour and a general feeling of good health. They also found that allotment holders are less likely to be overweight, have more energy and are not so prone to anger, depression and anxiety.

In a study published in the *Journal Of Public Health* the authors say: "We found that fewer than 30 minutes of allotment gardening produces a measurable and beneficial health effect."



Lovely way to label your veg!