

GROUND BREAKING!



2017

NEWSLETTER

of THE LOW MOOR ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION

www.lowmoorallotments.co.uk

@LowMoorAllots



SUCCESS AT FULFORD SHOW

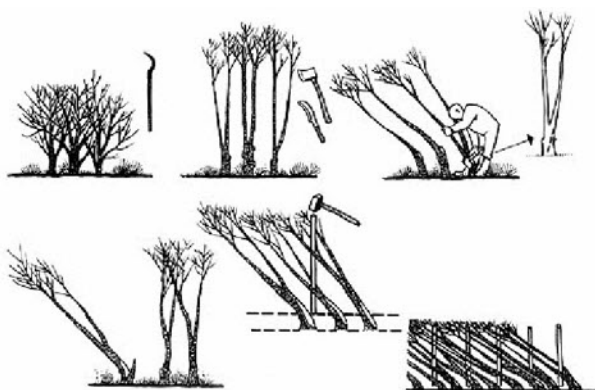
Top honours at this year's Fulford Show went to Low Moor plot holder Nick (148A). Nick was awarded the Ernest Britton cup for four varieties of organically grown vegetables. The impressive trophy is the only silverware awarded at the show for fruit and vegetables. Judges were obviously impressed with his submitted entry of celery, pepper, peas and borlotti beans.



Sweeping the board with their French beans, Carol and Jane (plot 139) took first, second and third awards, along with sweet success of a first for their sweet peas. Well done!

Fulford Show takes place every year on August Bank Holiday Monday, with loads of categories for flowers, fruit, vegetables and preserves, as well as baking, crafts and brewing. Perhaps we could have more plot holders taking part and impressing the judges next year?

HEDGELAYING



Following the success of the two courses we ran earlier this year, there's another chance for tenants to learn the traditional skill of hedge laying. Those who have already done the course are more than welcome to have a refresher and help new starters. We are using hedge laying to reduce maintenance on our boundary hedge, to encourage birds and small mammals and as an opportunity to learn new skills.

The course will run from 10am–4pm (or as long as people can stay) on Saturday November 25th. The Association has purchased bill hooks and will provide materials and finance the cost of the tutor, Don Davies. Meet in the car park: bring your own gloves, as well as loppers or saws if you have them.

In taking a place on the course we hope you will then practise your newly acquired skills by volunteering to take part in the hedge laying sessions which will run over the winter. It's a big hedge!

Please book in advance with Angela so that we can prepare tools etc. angela3147@hotmail.com.

PUMPKIN COMPETITION

Low Moor is no stranger to pumpkin growing competitions, but there hadn't been one for a year or two ahead of this season's event on October 14th. For added intrigue, there were a number of prizes up for grabs, including roundest pumpkin and most attractive squash, in addition to heaviest pumpkin and heaviest squash.

Roundest pumpkin was hotly contested, with Megan Harrison the eventual winner, but heaviest pumpkin was indisputably won by a 16kg entry from Nick, rounding off a successful season for him. Heaviest squash was also won by some margin with the butternut squash winner weighing in at nearly 6kg and the most attractive squash was a beautiful Fiesta squash (the shy little fella in the Viking hat had something to do with that one!). Winners were awarded Halloween themed prizes and entrants and spectators were treated to tea/coffee and, of course, pumpkin pie, which was generously provided (and home-baked) by Angela. We hope to make the event an annual one and look forward to next year – remember to allocate some space on the plot for your entry!



NEW TENANTS – 1

Lisa-Marie Newman kindly sent in this article on behalf of one of this season's more unusual new tenants.

York Nurturing Community (YNC) was born from a suggestion on social media for a family-friendly meeting place to share a cuppa and a chat whilst the kids played. After much

research and preparation, we launched our interactive pop-up cafe in June 2016 devoted to supporting and promoting community cohesion. This weekly Pay-As-You-Feel (PAYF) event has provided wholesome, allergy-friendly food and beverages in a welcoming environment. With a safe play area, offering carers a stimulating space to bring their children as well as various groups and workshops run by specialists and catering for all demographics, (for example Singing for Joy, Mindfulness, Toddler time, Nature club, Waste Awareness and Crafternoons), during our first year we have evolved rapidly into a thriving Community Hub and Cafe.

In September 2016, we began to receive intercepted surplus food from Tesco via the FareShare scheme. These donations consist of bread, pastries, fruit and vegetables and YNC offers these to patrons free of charge on a weekly basis. Whatever is not claimed at our venues or utilised in our cafe menu is donated to local organisations such as Food Not Bombs, who use the produce to prepare meals for those that are homeless or in financial hardship.



In March 2017, YNC secured own own plot at Low Moor Allotments. We have already held a few get togethers here inviting volunteers to help us take down the wonky shed and tackle the brambles. We have big plans to grow produce to supplement the cafe and this is currently being developed as a Community Food Garden with a living Nature classroom for children. We hope to hold small events and workshops here in 2018 inviting different groups to contribute and also to benefit from the site.

YNC is currently running pop up events once a month whilst we are busy fundraising to finance a permanent venue at the new Spark:York destination in Piccadilly, York. We have secured a 40 ft container and our goal is to create a PAYF Community Hub & Cafe using intercepted supermarket surplus and allotment grown food. Our workshops and events will also be on offer at the venue and we hope to extend our Volunteer Programme which is currently in development.



This will be open to all who wish to devote time to our project, but specifically aims to provide a supportive educational environment for those who may need practical experience for vocational qualifications, or a supportive and friendly environment for those who may be experiencing social isolation. As an organisation which is passionate about York and its community, we strive to continue to develop and expand, bringing much needed services to residents and creating awareness around serious environmental issues.

If you are interested in joining us at a workshop, to sample our legendary cake or to offer your time as a volunteer, please get in touch.

www.ync.org.uk
hello@ync.org.uk

www.facebook.com/ync.org.uk

SUCCESS FOR THE KIDS

At the Awards Ceremony for Yorkshire in Bloom 2017, Low Moor Community Kids' Allotment were awarded 'Outstanding' (their fifth 'Outstanding' in a row) for their entry in the It's Your Neighbourhood Category 10 section. There were almost 50 diverse entrants, from all corners of the county, so that's some achievement.

The judge's citation talked of the enthusiasm of the kids, even on a rainy day, to work on the plot and their obvious pride in what they had grown.

We are keen to draft in any potential helpers for next year. Sessions run from 10–12 on Saturdays between mid-March and October, and you'd be working with a group of children aged between seven and 12. Please get in touch with Angela Johnson if you are interested.



NEW TENANTS – 2

Impressions of the first few months of having an allotment, from Sarah Walker, who took on a plot this year with her husband Arthur.

I've always wanted to have an allotment, but the waiting lists where we previously lived were too long. However, when we moved to a flat in York, we decided that we needed somewhere green so we put our names down on the list expecting to wait for several years. Surprisingly, we were offered a plot on Low Moor less than a year later. We couldn't believe our luck because Low Moor is such a beautiful and peaceful place, yet less than 30 minutes walk from the centre of York.

The allotment was very overgrown despite having been tenanted every year. We were given much advice from friends re what to do next – rotavate, cover, burn, no dig – but decided to 'attack' it bit by bit. So over the last few months (we acquired the allotment in July) we cut down foliage, removed debris and dug and dug. We had frequent

trips to the tip taking over 100 bags of garden waste, plus the 'necessary' allotment items of previous tenants – over a dozen empty beer bottles, shopping basket, cricket bat and a crutch!

It was hard work, but generally really enjoyable, although we admit that at one point – when digging what we thought was a thick clump of weed roots that turned out to be a large nylon carpet (3x3 metres) buried several centimetres below the surface – we almost felt like giving up. However, we persevered and although it was too late to grow anything this year the plot is hopefully prepared for next season. We did have produce though, because the damson tree had abundant fruit meaning we had endless damson crumble and more than enough to supply my mother with damsons for pickling (apparently a Yorkshire delicacy served with ham) and to fill many bags for the community shelf.

There are so many positives to having an allotment on Low Moor, apart from its wonderful location. The soil is great, the area is well drained and sunny. It's a sociable site and we've received much advice and support from our friendly allotment neighbours Helen, Ray and Norma. It has been hard work but on another plus side we've lost weight and have been told we both look healthier. We're both looking forward to (hopefully) a productive 2018.



Before...



... And after!

MENTORING

We are looking for volunteers for our 'mentoring' scheme. This aims to link up new plot holders, who may be complete novices, with more experienced gardeners (this does not mean experts!) in order to help them make a start on their new allotment. You will not be expected to do the work for them, just give advice and encouragement. The sort of things they might need help on are:

* When to sow things and which things are easy/straightforward to grow.

* Which crops need protecting and what from (e.g. how to keep pigeons off your brassicas).

* How to improve the soil and how to make compost.

* How to identify and deal with whatever weeds they have.

We would expect that this could be done in a few visits to their plot.

If you think you have the time and energy to spare for this then please contact Lindsay: email lindsay@clannet.co.uk, phone York 651334/mobile 07821765409.

Even if you don't want to commit formally to the scheme, do keep an eye out for new starters in your neighbourhood – even a few friendly words over the fence can be a help! Those who might like to be mentored should also shout up, drop Lindsay a line and she will match you up to someone.

AND FINALLY...

❖ A reminder for tenants to report any incidents (such as theft, vandalism, anti-social behaviour) on their plot to North Yorkshire Police on the non-emergency number 101. According to our PCSO, nothing has been reported recently. It's hard to believe the site has been completely crime-free: if tenants think their incidents are too trivial to report, the police don't get a true picture of what is actually happening and won't accord us the appropriate resources and patrols.

❖ If you're having a fire, please pick up and burn some of what is on the pétanque pitch – mostly remnants from previous hedge laying sessions.

❖ To run alongside the mentoring scheme we would like to add to the general information on the 'Getting Started' section of the website. Do you know of anything, be it an online guide, website, accurate weather forecast that would be of interest? While this is primarily aimed at new gardeners, it could develop into a useful resource for all tenants.

❖ Jessica Ochalek has volunteered to act as Social Secretary and under her leadership we hope to hold a number of events at different stages of the season next year, all with the aim of getting people to come along, meet each other and share some food! Lots of ideas have been mooted, including fruit and vegetable shows, a sunflower competition and harvest supper. We will be looking for volunteers to get involved with specific events, so look out for announcements.

❖ All tenants should have received a letter from the Council, confirming the transfer of the management of allotments across the city to York Allotments Charitable Incorporated Organisation (YACIO). If not, then it's possible the allotment database doesn't have your correct details. You can now contact the new charity directly to update your details, or for any other matters, instead of the Council. Get in touch with Anna, your new administrator, and she will update your records (contact@yorkallotments.org). There is a new website in preparation, posters will advertise this soon. The Trustees tell me that they will be contacting everyone using the details held on the database about their immediate plans for York Allotments and how we all, as members, can have our say.

❖ Thanks to everyone who contributed to this issue: Nick Ford, Angela Johnson, Lindsay Maxwell, Lisa-Marie Newman, Jessica Ochalek, Arthur & Sarah Walker. I hope this is the start of a trend!

CONTACTS

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

Christine Robertson: Site Secretary
☎ 07876 393522 ✉ lowmoorallotments@gmail.com