

GROUND BREAKING!

SPRING
2018

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



HEDGE LAYING



Three cheers (and then some!) for the regular volunteers who have shown up despite rain, wind, sleet, hail (you get the picture!) over the winter to continue with the hedgelaying on the southern boundary of the site. As the pictures show, huge progress has been made this year and participants have really enjoyed themselves. The

support of the Association has been vital in providing equipment and Angela has even supplied refreshments on several occasions! As a long term tenant and ecologist, I think the south end of Low Moor is being transformed in a very positive way with the work being done something that generations into the future will admire. Wildlife is already thriving: we've witnessed a lot of voles making use of the cuttings as cover and no doubt birds and hedgehogs will shortly be making good use of the improved habitat. (Thanks to Christine for this report)



Bloom is a horticultural festival organised by Make it York, in conjunction with City of York Council. Whilst its city centre focus will be the 250th Summer Flower

Show, organised by the Ancient Society of York Florists, and many events will take place in the centre, there has been a push to develop a programme of events throughout the wider city area. Allotment sites have been one type of locality approached and the Association feel that we would like to support Bloom, with the aim of introducing potential new allotmentees to allotment gardening in general and the attractions of Low Moor in particular. We are looking to organise two events.

SATURDAY 7TH JULY: OPEN AFTERNOON 2-5PM

This will include a **PLOT CRAWL**, with two guided walks at times to be agreed, alongside a self-directed walkabout with a map showing the route to be taken. We want a number of tenants to put forward their plots to showcase different approaches to allotment gardening: the 'serious' vegetable grower; a mixed approach growing fruit, flowers and vegetables; an informal wildlife focus; a plot for the family, ensuring that children are entertained/can share in the fun of the garden; a green space to enjoy; unusual crops being produced. Tenants would need to man their plots for the afternoon, ready to explain what they have done/plan to do in the future on their allotment.

Near the Gardeners' Store, which we hope will be open, we'll offer some refreshments and a chance to buy some fresh produce (an opportunity for your surplus produce to go to good homes).

SATURDAY 7TH & SUNDAY 8TH JULY: SUMMER FLOWER SHOW

Normally entries in the show are restricted to members of the Society, but some separate classes have been negotiated for us – we are termed 'novice gardeners'! The classes that are open to us are:

VEGETABLES: BROAD BEANS, LETTUCE, RADISH, CARROTS

CUT FLOWER: LUPINS (York horticulturalist George Russell is noted for his work developing Russell Hybrid Lupins)

CHILDREN'S CLASS: FLORAL BOUQUET

A chance here to show that allotment produce is best, although unfortunately it won't be possible to compare the taste. If you would like to be included in Low Moor entries, then please let us know. We'll collect the produce from the site on the evening of Friday 6th and may have to do a mini-selection if the response is overwhelming, before deciding which to enter. Any produce not entered can be sold on our stall on Saturday afternoon.

WE HOPE PLOT HOLDERS ON LOW MOOR WILL SUPPORT THESE INITIATIVES AND SEE THE POTENTIAL THEY OFFER TO CONVERT MORE PEOPLE TO ALLOTMENT GARDENING ON LOW MOOR.

If you'd like to get involved, please get in touch with Angela.

CONTACTS

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WINTER WORKS

Low Moor plot holders rallied to help with the end of year shop clean on Saturday 18th November. Eleven volunteers, Anthony, Jamie, Hazel, David, Jackie, Hazel, Lindsay, Norma, Nick, Mark and Ehren, the two new tenants on Plot 144A, arrived to wield brushes, cloths, mops and the new Henry to clear away the cobwebs, dirt and dust that had accumulated over the year since Chris and Kerry's last major clean. The targeted areas were completed surprisingly quickly proving the old adage "Many hands make light work".

We had similar success with sessions to bag up the potatoes and onions ahead of the shop opening for the season. This is always tricky to arrange – the stock comes from Scotland so we are subject to the vagaries of the weather and we only get a delivery date at the last minute. Peter, David, Steve (who doesn't even have an allotment here!), Jackie again and Sarah all got stuck in and the job was completed speedily and cheerfully.

Much of the work of the allotments is done by voluntary effort and it is really appreciated. On both occasions we even turned away a couple of late offers of help. Our shop is widely acclaimed as the best in the York area and that is due in no small measure to the voluntary work of Chris and Kerry throughout the year. The response to the Committee's call for help in doing these out of season tasks provided plot holders with a way of being involved and showing their appreciation for the shop facility.

Thanks to all of you.

Angela Johnson, Chair, Low Moor Allotments Association



AN ORCHARD GETS STARTED

Richard Ward took on plot 109B early this year with a view to creating a low maintenance orchard, primarily of apples (though there are a couple of pear trees and a gage). He says: "Whilst I have bought some trees from commercial nurseries, I have grafted a number myself to keep the cost down. I intend to show not only different varieties of apples, both modern and old, but also different root stocks and styles of tree form, such as cordon, bush, espalier and fan. I aim to provide a site that is not only productive, but attractive all year round. Thus far I have planted five apple trees to be grown in pyramid/bush form and established a frame work of hazel staves against which I can train some apples in the form of a fan. Along the western edge of the plot I plan to espalier a couple of pear trees and have a gage to be trained in a standard fan. Finally, to the eastern edge I plan to plant some additional trees in cordons. At the moment I don't what varieties these will be, as that will depend upon the success I have with this year's grafts (some are just starting to form buds, so keep your fingers crossed). Ultimately I'd like to hand the plot, or if all goes to plan the Orchard, over to the the local community and the site as a whole, though given the scope of the project this would be some way down the line". Among the apple varieties planted so far are Nonpareil, Pitmason Pineapple, Jupiter, Egremont Russet and Rajka. Richard's plot is just by the shop, so do have a look at what he's doing. More on this in future editions.

WHO DOES WHAT AROUND HERE?

Committee members and shop workers have had a number of questions about changes to the way allotments are being run and the role of the Association itself; here's an attempt to clarify things.

In November last year York Allotments Charitable Incorporated Organisation (YACIO) took over the management of allotments across York from the Council, although the Council still owns the land. We pay YACIO the rent for our allotments so in a way we have a client/customer relationship with them. The organisation is run by voluntary trustees; there are currently five, all allotment holders in the city. There's a paid administrator, who deals with the day to day work, such as processing invoice payments and answering queries. The website <http://yorkallotments.org/> has more details about the set up and this is where you'd go to join the waiting list. There have inevitably been some teething troubles and delays, hardly surprising when you consider that there are over 1,000 plots on the books, with more than 250 at Low Moor alone!

Christine Robertson, Voluntary Site Secretary, provides a link between YACIO and the tenants, just as she did previously with the Council. Her duties include allocating plots to new tenants on the waiting list, acting as a point of contact for tenants who need help or advice and keeping an eye on plots which aren't being looked after.

The Allotments Association doesn't have any authority or an official role as such, but in practice we do get involved in answering queries and communicating with tenants and YACIO. Our role is to maintain and improve facilities and the condition of the site, so we try to add the little extras, above and beyond what can be funded from plot rentals; to help with this we have an annual membership fee of £3. You could say we provide the 'nice to have' things, which lie beyond the remit of official bodies and everyone who contributes in any way does so as a volunteer.

So such things as skips and general maintenance (e.g. grass cutting) are down to YACIO. The most visible facility the Association provides is the Gardeners' Store. A good example of the sort of project we would promote is this winter's hedgelaying, including training and purchase of tools and materials, which was organised and funded through the Association, with the help of a grant secured by us from Fishergate Ward Committee Funds.

**LOW MOOR
ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Saturday June 16th 2018
At 2pm outside the shop**

Agenda includes:

- ◆ Voluntary Site Secretary's Report
- ◆ Shop & Finance reports for 2017
- ◆ Nominations for officers & committee
- ◆ Approval of new constitution
- ◆ Ideas for site improvements/events!