

GROUND BREAKING!



2018

NEWSLETTER

of THE LOW MOOR ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION

www.lowmoorallotments.co.uk

@LowMoorAllots



BLOOM



Despite good publicity both by the festival organisers and around the site, we had no takers at all for our Bloom event, a chance to visit several plots and meet the tenants. We were

hit by a combination of factors, including the start of the heatwave and England's unexpected appearance in a World Cup quarter final. Perhaps most significant was the festival's jam-packed programme: with so much going on in the city centre, we understand that ours wasn't the only peripheral event to suffer. On a happier note, entries to the produce show from Nick Ford and the Kids' Allotment were prize winners, while John Gower, who would have led the tour, knows a lot more about Low Moor than he did before having done copious research in preparation!

GOOD GYM



Much more successful was the visit of Good Gym in early September. Good Gymers combine running with offering help with practical tasks, usually to those over 60. We had originally tried to link them up with individual plotholders, but when that didn't work they came to help clear overgrown, vacant plots instead. We had no idea how many to expect, what they would be willing to tackle or what they'd be capable of, so the welcoming party of committee members with a random collection of tools awaited their arrival with some trepidation.

We needn't have worried: 41 (!) turned up and got stuck in with a vengeance for around 45 minutes. They didn't seem to mind tackling nettles and brambles dressed only in shorts and their distinctive red T-shirts, disdaining power tools in favour

of loppers, secateurs and forks. We all enjoyed working with such a friendly and positive bunch and with a smaller cohort returning the following week to pick up where they'd left off, real progress was made revealing what lies beneath some particularly tumbledown plots. The Site Secretary was well pleased, as it's far easier to let a plot if the prospective tenants can get a good idea of its size and layout.

We'd love to have them back in future and now that we've met them and seen what they can do we can confidently recommend their services. So if you're the right age and could use a little help on your plot do get in touch with them. Email: tasks@goodgym.org. Tel: 0203 432 3920.



SHOP UPDATE

The shop is approaching the end of another season of steady trading. We'd like to thank Chris and Kerry for the effort that goes into keeping it so well stocked, as well as the small band of volunteers who staff it during opening hours at the weekend. We'd welcome more volunteers to maintain the numbers on the rota: you'd be committing to two hour shifts (12-2 on Saturdays or 11-1 Sundays), usually around one per month between February and November. New recruits will get training and will work alongside experienced volunteers until they are confident to do it on their own.

If a backroom role is more your thing, then perhaps you could help with the annual clean, which will take place on Sunday November 18th between 10 and 1. As well as mucking out the shop itself, we'll have a go at its immediate environs, assuming we have the numbers and the weather is decent.

The shop is also the place to put forward any suggestions or raise any questions about the activities of the association. Most of the input is about the store itself, but you can raise anything at all – if the person on duty doesn't know the answer they'll make a note and it'll get passed on to the relevant committee member.

Last day of trading for 2018 will be Saturday November 24th, so make sure you get in by then for all your winter needs.

PUMPKIN COMPETITION



The annual pumpkin competition took place on Sunday, October 14th despite the rain, with a fantastic array of pumpkins and squash on display. The winner for biggest pumpkin went beyond the scale at 22+kg and winners went away pleased with their prizes.



Recent events have seen very low attendance, with the summer plot crawl cancelled altogether. We're keen to ensure the events we're putting on are events you want to join in on. What sorts of things would you like to see Low Moor Allotments Association organize? Why haven't you attended recent events? We want to hear from you! Email Jessica at jochalek@gmail.com with your comments and suggestions.



Anyone who keeps records of their crop yields may be interested in MYHarvest (Measure Your Harvest). This is a research project run by a team at the University of Sheffield that will estimate the contribution people who grow their own fruit and vegetable crops are making to UK national food production.

At present, there is a recognition that own-growing in the UK makes a really important contribution to food security, healthy diets and general well-being, but we currently have a poor understanding of how much own-grown food people are able to produce. The team hope to be able to establish the average yield of typical UK staple fruit and vegetable crops. This will be key to providing the vital evidence base to support the use of land for growing spaces within our cities and towns, at a time when people are becoming increasingly interested in growing their own fruit and vegetables.

To join in you need to create an account, then submit measurements of your growing area and its yield – you can do this for around 40 fruit and vegetable crops, either as you go along or as a total once you've harvested everything. Visit myharvest.org.uk for full details.

SITE SECRETARY UPDATE

Christine Robertson, our Voluntary Site Secretary, is working steadily at the moment to allocate vacant plots. At the time of writing there are some 20, with around 85 people on the waiting list – although some of those are existing tenants who would like to graduate from half plots to full ones. In addition, there are around 15 plots on notice, following a site inspection earlier this year. Now that the records system has been sorted, and following the helpful efforts of volunteers and Good Gym in clearing some plots, she is looking forward to a blissful day soon when the site is fully tenanted!

Autumn and winter is a great time to catch up on allotment work, especially hedges and boundaries. As specified in the tenancy agreement, hedges and boundaries should not exceed 1.5 metres in height. Giving your boundaries a good trim now can be achieved easily with tools available from the shop – or join Simon's hedge-laying crew to see if this skill can be applied on your plot!

Hedge trimmings and other work might generate a pile that you'd like to burn. Please note that whilst you can burn on your plot, it's best to let vegetation dry out as smoky fires are a nuisance to neighbours. This time of year, a tarpaulin left over debris can be a useful intervention, but be sure to move the pile and check for hedgehogs or other little beasts who might be attracted to a warm, dry hiding place. (See YACIO's website for further guidance around bonfires.)

If your winter work entails adding a shed or other structure, please email Christine at lowmoorallotments@gmail.com for a short approval form in advance.

HEDGELAYING



After last year's success, hedgelaying will be getting underway again in the autumn. The group hope to start with a couple of sessions before Christmas, starting in early November. 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 team is concentrating on the hedge on the southern boundary of the site and got about half way along last year. The hardy core group, who turned out in all weathers last winter, will be happy to teach you the techniques, so don't be deterred if you're new to it. Contact Simon to find out more: sammy.wild@live.co.uk.

CONTACTS

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York Allotments Charitable Incorporated Organisation (YACIO) 📧 contact@yorkallotments.org
www.yorkallotments.org: for general information such as how to pay for your plot and reminders about aspects of your tenancy agreement, such as hosepipe use and bonfires.