



Following on from the item in the last issue about the visits of GoodGym to the site, Angela Johnson has tried out their services for herself. Here's her report, followed by an account by Barbara Griffin, who led the taskforce.

We reckoned this merited a special edition of the newsletter and hope that it will encourage more tenants to use this group to help them with any work they want to do over the winter.



Have you a task on the allotment that you are putting off because you can't manage it on your own? If you're over 60 years of age, GoodGym volunteers can be your answer. In early November I tried out the system – AND IT WORKED.

MY TASK: to get a supply of manure from the manure bay in the Car Park up the hill to my allotment (I guess about 400m and half uphill!).

THE PROCESS: I emailed GoodGym on tasks@goodgym.org and explained my name, location and need for help. I was asked to telephone, 02034323920 to discuss this further. (I could have phoned without the email approach first.) The first telephone conversation confirmed that they would be able to help, possibly as soon as the coming Saturday (this was on Tuesday) and that three volunteers were available to help. A second call on Thursday confirmed the names of the three volunteers and the agreed time for meeting up. And on the Saturday three GoodGym volunteers arrived, on time.

TASK COMPLETED: they brought 12 barrowloads of manure up to the plot in about 1.25 hours. The loads were tipped on my plot exactly to my specifications. A task that would have taken me probably four visits was done for me, and all with a smile on their faces. And I just got on with spreading the manure as I wanted.

RESULT: FOUR VERY HAPPY PEOPLE – MYSELF, BARBARA, LINDSAY AND VICKY.

SOME GENERAL POINTS TO BEAR IN MIND IF ASKING GOODGYM TO HELP:

- ❖ A single volunteer will never be sent (for safety reasons). The number of volunteers allocated is task dependent and organised by GoodGym.
- ❖ Usually a minimum of two hours is allocated, but more time can be allowed if needed to complete the task.
- ❖ The runners prefer a specific defined task rather than general gardening, as it's more satisfying for them.
- ❖ You provide any equipment needed. The volunteers will bring their own gloves if the task requires it.
- ❖ Some GoodGym volunteers are experienced gardeners, but all will carefully listen to any instructions given.

Myself, Vicky and Lindsay met Angela, Chair of the Allotment Association at Low Moor Allotments on an overcast Saturday afternoon. Our task was to wheelbarrow some manure from the huge pile in the car park to Angela's allotment some distance away (and uphill too).

First we were tasked with filling seven bags of manure and then wheelbarrowing them up to Angela who was waiting for us at her allotment. We put the bags inside Angela's fruit cage for later use (using bags as the wheelbarrows were too big to get into the fruit cage).

Our next task was to wheelbarrow manure to the back end of Angela's allotment and she requested nine barrows (or 12 if we could manage it). Of course we obliged and did the full 12 and Angela was very grateful.

We took the wheelbarrows back and locked them safely away in the children's allotment where Angela kindly offered us some Bramley (cooking) apples to take with us. Exactly what I needed to go with my rhubarb I'd planned to have after dinner that evening!

