

GROUND BREAKING!



2020

NEWSLETTER

of THE LOW MOOR ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION

www.lowmoorallotments.co.uk

@lowmoor_york



UPDATE FROM THE COMMITTEE

Now might be a good time to bring plot holders up to speed with what has been done this year and what we are planning as we look ahead to 2021. Obviously things have been very different from what was envisaged in February 2020.

The Gardeners' Store

In February Chris, our storekeeper for the last five years, resigned and the Committee took over the general responsibility of running the shop. We would like to record our thanks to both him and Kerry for all the work they did to keep the store so well stocked and running so smoothly. After some last-minute re-stocking, the shop opened on time and traded, as normal, for six weeks until lockdown. After that, ongoing concerns around the virus meant we ran a system of pre-order and deliver/collect at intervals during the season rather than reopen. This included the goods from the shop and separate collections of manure (our best seller!) and chippings. We hope to hold another session for these when restrictions are eased.



At our October meeting we decided to move responsibility for managing the shop to a subcommittee of committee members, accountable to the Association committee, and utilising help from other members when required. The subcommittee is now looking to re-stock the shop ready for early Spring sales of potatoes, onions and seeds as well as other items of stock. In February this will again be a pre-order and collect arrangement, although we hope to return nearer to normality as restrictions allow.

An Environmental Policy

Recent AGMs have talked of the site moving towards raising awareness of how we can protect the environment, as we work on our allotments. Members of the Committee have worked on preparing a policy that would be a framework within which to progress these thoughts. We plan to put this forward for the consideration of members early in 2021, but already we are looking to order more environmentally friendly products for stocking in the Gardeners' Store.

Membership

With only a relatively small number of memberships for 2020 paid up before the shop had to close, the Committee decided that membership would be extended to all plot holders regardless of any payment. (We know who paid for 2020 and will recompense in some form at a later date). We are currently only able to email 170 of some 270 plot holders. (This includes those on our own membership listing, plus others who, after prompting by YACIO, have asked to be added to our address list, and new tenants who have indicated to our Site Secretary that they would like their email

address to be included.) We are aware that there are some people who don't have email and would urge plot holders to pass the necessary information on to neighbours who you are aware are not receiving information. Copies of crucial messages and the Newsletters are displayed on the notice boards but maybe their attention needs to be drawn to them.

Annual General Meeting

Amendments to the Constitution will be required for some of the changes and developments I have outlined above to "officially" be ratified. But in these exceptional times the Committee feel that we should make the changes, on a temporary basis, (subject to later discussion with, and ratification by, the membership). We shall also need to determine who our "membership" is composed of.

I hope that members will endorse this approach. We had hoped to hold an AGM in early Spring but that may now not be possible. We shall keep members informed as the situation becomes clearer.

Thanks

The Association Committee have all worked together on delivering the initiatives, mentioned above, and I would like to publicly thank everyone for their support. All are happy to continue in post to the next Association AGM. We'd also like to thank everyone who has pitched in to help with the orders and deliveries from the shop, as well as everyone who has supported the system by buying from us.

As ever, comments or suggestions arising from this newsletter are always welcome.

And finally let's remember how grateful we have been to have had our allotment available as a refuge, and an aid towards maintaining health and wellbeing during 2020. As we prepare and plant for next year, let's hope for a more "normal" 2021.

Angela Johnson, Chair, Low Moor Allotments Association

LOOKING AHEAD

Preparations are well underway to stock the shop for the 2021 season. We've ordered seed potatoes, onion sets and shallots from our usual reliable supplier, JBA. They should be delivered by mid-January and available to you from the beginning of February, in plenty of time to get those potatoes chitting before you plant them out.



We've chosen a good range and we'll send out a flyer with details of all the varieties in the new year. The products are top quality and they benefit from being stored in cool, dim conditions (our shop!), a million miles away from the warmth and brightness of the average garden centre.

We've also put in our annual order with Kings seeds. These are another reliable company and we get a good discount which we pass on to members.

We have some new varieties in the shop for 2021. These include the clubroot resistant cabbage Kilaton and swede Tweed. If you've had trouble with carrot fly, which is a particular problem in Yorkshire, we also have the carrot Flyaway. And for tomato blight resistance there is the tomato seed Fandango.

We've extended our range of green manures with a winter mix that includes a nitrogen fixer and lifter to improve your soil over the winter months. Just turn it in in spring. We also have Phacelia, winter tares and field beans. If you want to know more about using green manures see <https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?pid=373>.

There are some new pollinator friendly flowers including French marigolds, nasturtiums, an annual bee mix and the herb Bergamot, also known as bee balm. And we are trying out a new variety of basil, British, which has been especially bred to be grown outside in the UK.

APPLE GRAFTING



Richard Ward is hoping to run an apple grafting workshop again in 2021 if there is sufficient interest. Assuming Covid-19 restrictions will be in place, it will be an outdoor, socially distanced event. It will cost £10 a head for which people will get two potted apple trees (once grafted). He'll need to order rootstock over the winter, so please let Richard know by December 17th if you are interested: rward0210@googlemail.com

BITS & PIECES



- No plot crawl took place this year, for obvious reasons, but we plan/hope to do one next year.
- A tool marking security event took place on Saturday October 3rd, according to the Met Office the UK's wettest day ever! Unsurprisingly participants were few and far between, with the organisers calling it a day after half an hour! We'll try again next year.
- Thanks to our woodchip suppliers, Steel and Maw Tree Experts for providing a steady reliable stock of material, something we've been after for a long time. Worth checking them out if you need any work on trees or hedges.



SHY

This year we've linked up with SHY (Secret Helpers York), an organisation that helps families in financial difficulties, by collecting surplus fruit and vegetables via the good old free shelf. This is what Jake Freeman a volunteer for SHY and Low Moor tenant, says:

We started our surplus vegetable collection box in spring early this year, and during that time we have received so many items, from potatoes, blackcurrants, rhubarb, lettuce, tomatoes etc. All were greatly appreciated by the families that we help, especially this year: families have managed to still have nice healthy meals and to the point of creating courgette bread, pancakes, and jam. Thank you all for coming together and helping with the donations.



CAN YOU HELP?

Low Moor has been experiencing something of a crime wave, with an unprecedented number of break ins and incidents of anti-social behaviour being reported. In response, and with the encouragement of our PCSO, Claudia Bishop, we've set up a WhatsApp group to help with rapid reporting. The Neighbourhood policing team will monitor this and Claudia intends to post crime prevention advice. She adds: "We are in the process of putting an action plan together for the area, so be assured we are taking this seriously. Keep encouraging people to report all incidents to the police".

The more pairs of eyes and ears we have on the ground the better, so if you want to be added to the group email helen.balawajder@gmail.com with your name, plot number and your phone number and a member of the committee will be in touch with the details. Please note that to be in the WhatsApp group, you will have to have WhatsApp installed on your phone. The Association won't keep a record of your phone number, but just to make you aware, everyone within the group will be able to see your name and your phone number.

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.