

GROUND BREAKING!

Summer
2020

NEWSLETTER

of THE LOW MOOR ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION

www.lowmooralotments.co.uk

 @lowmoor_york



Welcome to the Summer edition of the Association's newsletter. The site as a whole is looking really good, with lots of plots very lush following recent sunny weather and decent rainfall. Many more seem to be sporting numbers as well, a happy side effect of the recent batch of orders, when we asked customers to ensure their plots could be identified!

The committee has held a second virtual meeting. While nowhere near as much fun as our usual get togethers in the pub, they are an efficient way of discussing business.

One of the topics this time was the Association Annual General Meeting. Normally we have this in June and we assemble together in the area alongside the car park. There is no way that can happen this year! To be fair, it's never been ideal or universally popular, so the Committee has decided to try to hold it in February 2021 and then keep it at the beginning of the year. This has the advantage of being out of season and the timing is better, as it will allow us to set our direction for the year ahead. We can hold it indoors too and make more of an event out of it, as other Associations in York do. In the meantime, Officers and members of the Committee have indicated their willingness to continue in post until that time. To delay the date of the AGM is an unusual step to take, but I need hardly remind you that we are in unusual times and we are far from alone in this situation. I hope members of the Association will agree with this course of action.

The other main topic of discussion was the shop and its possible reopening. After the second order and delivery round, there was a need to radically re-stock with many basic items – there wasn't a lot left! Since then we've had an order from one of our major suppliers. We took the view that most people now have what they need for the growing season. Trade is usually pretty quiet in the summer months, so there is no need to rush headlong into opening, especially as the advice from both YACIO and the National Allotment Society is that communal areas, including shops, should remain closed.

We need to check on the willingness of our current volunteers who work in the shop to continue to be available and then we have to set up systems and equipment in order to safeguard their safety and that of customers coming into the shop. We've no hand washing facilities, for example, and will have to rely on sanitizer and regular cleaning of surfaces.

We may need to set up an alternative system of paying for goods. We've always relied on cash, but it may be that there are unacceptable risks associated with handling this and we may need a rethink. Bank transfers worked well for the recent orders, but anything more sophisticated will incur possibly unacceptable costs. We need to decide arrangements for access and movement around the shop. It may well be that we can learn from the experience of the high street as more shops, perhaps including those manned by volunteers, open in the next few weeks.

A load of manure has arrived and this will be sold via the shop as previously, with distancing requested around the bay. Please do not help yourself before then! We are also seeking to build another large bay to increase the storage of such items.

So there's a lot to think about before we will be ready to open. More information and the details of arrangements will be provided when we have a definite date.

SITE SECRETARY'S CORNER

A big thank you to everyone who has been working hard on site to follow the coronavirus guidelines. I know it has been a real inconvenience not to have fires, but it makes a real difference to air quality, especially for those most at risk for whom their allotment or back garden may be their only safe outdoor space. This time of year sees a burst in growth of hedges and brambles, so whilst we still cannot burn them, it would be really helpful if everyone could trim back where these may be starting to affect access on paths. Please do be careful as many birds are still breeding, and disturbing nesting birds is an offence.

Even though plot letting had been suspended for a time, it has now restarted via email. We have had significant turnover in the first half of the year, with 31 new tenants taking up plots since January. I know everyone will welcome and encourage their new neighbours (in a socially distanced way).


On a side note, I've spent more time at the allotment this year than usual and I've been amazed at the birds using my plot that I never knew were there! Of course there are the robins, blackbirds, dunnocks, wood pigeons, blue tits, long tailed tits, great tits, chaffinches, crows, magpies, etc. but I have also observed more closely than before the goldfinches and bullfinches and was delighted to discover that greenfinches, goldcrests and chiffchaffs make use of my plot as well! It's really made me more conscious of the wonderful, wildlife-rich place we have to look after.


IN BRIEF

- Thanks from Angela to Low Moor plot holders who supported the Kids plot seedling sale and for their generous donations – we raised £76!
- In the light of a recent theft, a reminder to lock up your tools and valuables or at least put them out of sight. Keep an eye out too for any anti-social behaviour: we've had reports of a noisy group of teenagers congregating in a shed. While these may be isolated incidents they could also be more widespread, so please report any concerns to the police straightaway on the free non-emergency number 101. This will elicit a much better response than a report done by someone else after the event. Reporting also helps ensure police understand when we are having a spate of incidents and means they may occasionally walk through the site which helps deter crime.

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