

# GROUND BREAKING!



2021

## NEWSLETTER

of THE LOW MOOR ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION

[www.lowmoorallotments.co.uk](http://www.lowmoorallotments.co.uk)

@lowmoor\_york



### RETURN OF THE PLOT CRAWL

John Gower reports: On a lovely Saturday at the end of August, 15 people joined the annual plot crawl, back after an enforced year off in 2020. We've been running these since 2015 and the format remains the same. The idea is to have the opportunity to look at other people's plots in a relaxed and uncompetitive way and once again it worked out well. Each plotholder whose plot we visited, told us a bit about the history of their time there, their successes and failures and their aspirations for the future.

It was fascinating to listen to everyone's stories and as before, heartening to realise that we all face similar challenges on our plots.

When we'd finished the stroll round people's plots, we went to the Kids' Allotment, where we took the weight off our feet with a drink and some delicious home-baked food, for which we were extremely grateful.

Before organising the plot crawl for the first time, I'd felt sceptical as to whether it was worth doing. Having now organised a couple and thoroughly enjoyed them, my view has changed. They're a great way to meet fellow plotholders and to exchange ideas in a friendly and convivial atmosphere.

If you haven't yet joined us, please take part in next year's plot crawl. In fact it's been suggested that we could do two next year, to see how plots are going early in the season as well as at harvest time. Watch this space for further information about the next plot crawl!



### AND THE SHOP!

After far too long operating click and collect sessions, we were very pleased to welcome everyone back into the shop in June when we reopened properly and to meet new plotholders. Trading has been steady, with Anthony Day's delicious local honey proving very popular. Looking ahead to

autumn, we will be getting in more supplies of manure once the bay is empty ready to dig and we have a good selection of green manure seeds.

Looking further ahead, we've ordered seed potatoes, onion sets and shallots from our usual reliable supplier, JBA. They should be delivered next January and available to you in February, so plenty of time to get those potatoes chitting before you plant them out. 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're also working on our annual order with Kings seeds. These are another reliable company and we get a good discount which we pass on to tenants. Green manures and flowers have proved very popular this year. We'll send out a flyer with details of all the potato varieties and the seed selection in good time before the shop starts trading in the new year.



We've now got a stock of cardboard, donated by Fulford Framers, which we are collecting on a regular basis and offering free to plot holders. It can be used for suppressing weeds, as a base layer for wood chip paths or no dig beds – just pop into the shop to collect some.

Please note that it's **cash only** for shop sales. We appreciate that everyone has got used to contactless payments over the last 18 months and the committee has had lengthy discussions about acquiring a card reader. We are continuing to research options, although it may be that the cost of a machine, plus the fee we would have to pay for each transaction, will rule it out for our level of sales. Views always welcome!

We'd like to thank you all for your support over what has been a difficult trading period. The order system was well-supported and it was great that everyone (well, nearly everyone!) settled their bills promptly. It's no substitute for the real thing though!





YACIO is in the process of updating the Tenancy Agreement. They've posted a draft of the proposed new Agreement on the YACIO website at <https://yorkallotments.org/tenancy-agreement-updates-21/> (print copies available on request).

Trustees want to have a Tenancy Agreement that's as clear as possible and has the support and confidence of tenants. They welcome comments and suggestions from members. These can be made by email or via three consultative Zoom sessions on 12th, 20th and 28th October.

To comment or for Zoom joining instructions please email [contact@yorkallotments.org](mailto:contact@yorkallotments.org). Make sure you put your views forward!

## SITE SECRETARIES

We have decided to trial a new system and Low Moor now has three site secretaries to better balance workloads and responsibilities. Christine Robertson will remain in post, joined by Sarah Harrison and Amanda Kent, both of whom are established tenants who spend a lot of time on site. The existing email will be the point of contact.

To start with Christine will carry on with the main correspondence, Amanda will deal with lettings and Sarah will conduct site inspections – both have already made a start. Longer term, all will learn to do all jobs so they can circulate responsibilities.

This is a positive development, especially given the length of the waiting list and the massive interest in allotments at the moment.

## PETANQUE PITCH

For several years we have been trying to restore the former pétanque pitch, which was no longer used for its original purpose. It's the last plot before you go through the gate onto the stray at the far end of the main path. Finally we are nearly there!

Jelena Kusakina has been beavering away behind the scenes. She negotiated the complexities of applying for Ward funding and recently received approval for a grant from Fishergate Ward. She's also worked with a professional company on a plan for the site: both of these things were made more difficult because of the pandemic and we really appreciate her persistence. Meanwhile Nick Ford has done a lot of work clearing weeds from the pitch and laying wood chip on the surface. It's ready for the installation which is scheduled for two days beginning on 21st October.

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Every now and again, you discover something amazing. Recently for me, I had one of those 'wow' moments on seeing my first saber wasp! Totally harmless to people, this alarming looking insect was hovering around my bean poles. Reading up on it later, I discovered that what looks like a very long

stinger is instead an ovipositor, the female wasp's egg laying device. This allows the wasp to burrow in deadwood to lay her eggs on insect larvae developing in the wood. Although not rare, this was my first sighting.

Saber wasps, like many other creatures, rely on a complex mix of habitats and interactions with other creatures to live out their lifecycle. It's a reminder to me that leaving a pile or two of deadwood along the fence line and using some old hazel wood for bean poles can make a difference. It's a reminder too that though I've had my plot for 15 years now, I'm just an itinerant caretaker. And, it's another wonder of our fantastic position at Low Moor where our fruit, veg and other flowers contribute to providing part of that complex web nature needs to thrive. (Christine Robertson)



## WHATSAPP

A reminder that we have a lively WhatsApp group on site. It originally started to help with rapid reporting and monitoring of incidents during last year's spate of anti social behaviour, but has developed from there. If you want to be added to the group just reply to this email with your name, plot number and your phone number and a member of the committee will be in touch with the details. The more participants the better!

## CONTACTS

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[www.yorkallotments.org](http://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.