

# GROUND BREAKING!

**WINTER**  
2021/22

## NEWSLETTER

of THE LOW MOOR ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION  
[www.lowmoorallotments.co.uk](http://www.lowmoorallotments.co.uk)  
@lowmoor\_york



### LOW MOOR ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2022 SATURDAY 19TH FEBRUARY 2022 10AM – 12NOON

Following the example of last year, the Committee has decided to continue having the AGM in early spring. This seems the ideal time to plan and look ahead to the growing season that is to come. The AGM presents an opportunity to report on the past year, plan activities and events for the year to come and elect the Committee who will lead the Allotment Association through that year.

At the time of writing we don't know whether meetings indoors will be allowed, and, if so, whether members will want to attend. Two arrangements have been made:

- The Harriet Centre, York Cemetery has been booked for a hybrid event: a face to face meeting with a Zoom link for those who prefer not to attend in person or
- If changes in restrictions prevent this, the meeting would be on Zoom for all. In this scenario we shall take steps to ensure that paper agendas are available for those tenants who do not have computer access and any members who wish to comment on matters are offered the chance to send their comments in writing and have them read out to those participating.

### COMMITTEE 2020 – 2021

Chair – Angela Johnson

Secretary – Bette Chambers

Treasurer – Simon Wild

General Committee – Helen Balawajder, John Gower, Anthony Day, Sarah Harrison, Jelena Kusakina, Lindsay Maxwell, Christine Robertson, Richard Ward, Nick Ford

In attendance (as Asst Site Secretary) Amanda Kent

Shop Committee – Lindsay Maxwell, Christine Robertson, Simon Wild, Nick Ford

Amanda started to attend Committee meetings after becoming Asst Site Sec, (Christine and Sarah were elected as members at the last AGM.)

Two members are leaving the Committee – Helen Balawajder and Angela Johnson. All other Committee members have indicated that they are happy to continue. We are looking for some new faces to come on to Committee. If you don't want to join Committee, we shall also be very pleased to accept any offers from people who will help out in some capacity.

Nominations will be requested in mid January, and also taken at the AGM, so there is time for anyone who is thinking about standing, to talk with a committee member to find out about how they might help.

### LEAVING THE COMMITTEE

Helen has served on Committee for 8 years since joining in 2013. She has had the key role of communicating with

members, maintaining the contact listing and circulating information on events, activities, warnings of problems etc. During lockdown this included the 'Click and Collect' arrangements of shop stock. In addition she has produced two copies a year of this newsletter *Groundbreaking*. As well as being informative it was always eminently readable and, with a range of photos and images, very attractive. It's Helen who has produced the membership cards since 2015 and who, in recent years managed the potato and onion order and organised the bagging up of both by helpers. We've already got a volunteer for parts of this role and I'm sure that there will be others to step forward and help.

I have been on the committee almost since I first got my plot, that is probably since 2005. I have done a range of duties and have been Chair for the last seven years. I think I need to let someone else have a go! (I think Angela is being unduly modest here!)

### A REVIEW OF THE PAST YEAR

The Committee have 'met' four times, all via a Zoom link. Thank you to Anthony for setting these links up. Nick Ford was new this year and then co-opted on to the Shop Committee in late summer and his energy and enthusiasm have been a real tonic. Amanda Kent has started attending meetings after appointment as an Asst Site Secretary. The year has been a busy one with all members of Committee playing a full part.

Two activities pre-occupied us during the first six months – the plethora of anti-social behaviour that occurred in early Spring, and our efforts, during lockdown, to offer a service to our members, especially access to the seed potatoes, onion sets and seeds that were stocked in the shop.

The level of anti-social behaviour in the spring was a real concern. The Committee worked with the Police and YACIO, communicating with tenants re damage that had been caused, and distributing to tenants the advice that we were receiving to try and address the problem. Eventually actions being taken were successful and although we remain alert, the problem now appears to be contained. It was very heartening to see the response from tenants to our call to help and clear a plot that had been a focus for much of the anti-social behaviour.

The Committee decided that a modified 'Click and Collect' would be employed to take orders and allow collection of goods. We tried order and delivery, but that was a step too far once we started to expand the range of goods we offered. Thanks here are especially due to Helen who took on the organisation of each collection and the people, committee members and other volunteers, who assembled the orders inside the shop ready for collection. Payment by BACs worked really well in nearly all cases.

But other matters also received attention. We had spoken about doing something with the old petanque pitch area for

more than two years Jelena took the lead as her focus for the year, preparing a bid for funding and negotiating with Playscheme, a commercial company making play equipment and garden beds for schools etc. to develop a scheme. Eventually in July we heard that our bid for COYC funding via a Fishergate Ward grant had been successful. Nick, almost single-handedly, took on clearing all the perennial weeds and establishing a base covered with bark chippings, and construction began. Many tenants have commented on how good the area now looks.

Of course the job is not finished. Nick has ideas of clearing the surrounding planting and maybe putting in some perennials, but essentially our idea is to have a group of tenants who will volunteer to plant up the beds and maintain them – much like Edible York beds are managed. I know there are people ready to do this (and it is not a particularly onerous task); we just need to put you in touch with each other. There is a small amount still in the budget to pay for some plants, but our feeling is that there will be many plot holders who will donate from their own allotment or garden. And a name for this remodelled area – perhaps ‘The Pitch’?

Another positive development in the first half of the year was the WhatsApp group. During the year this has grown in numbers and has morphed into a vehicle for exchanging news, alerting people to things that are going on, seeking and receiving advice / help / information on gardening topics and even for the ‘sale’/ availability of items that are surplus to requirements. Jelena has administered the group since its inception.

In June the Allotment Shop re-opened. Thanks are due to all on the Shop Subcommittee for managing things during closure, and to them and the volunteer shop keepers who staff the shop sessions. A big thank you to Nick for clearing out the back of the shop, unearthing a few treasures in the process that were snapped up when made available on the said WhatsApp.

In late August John organised a very successful plot crawl with a number of new tenants joining the group to walk round and look at and hear the plans of fellow plot holders. A possible plot crawl in late spring as well as one in late summer is being considered for next year.

It was late summer before YACIO moved on appointing two additional Site Secretaries to work alongside Christine. Congratulations to Sarah Harrison and Amanda Kent on their appointments. Low Moor is the largest site administered by YACIO, and, as has been apparent this year, it has its own character and its own set of problems. It has been an enormous work load for Christine to carry on her own. The three have agreed a division of responsibilities whilst ensuring that they liaise and work together as a team.

A concern in Committee has been the free shelf and the area around the noticeboard. Too often they become a dumping ground for rubbish. Please only use the free shelf for surplus produce and plants or small items that could genuinely be used by other plot holders. Otherwise please take your rubbish home and dispose of it there. To avoid large items being dumped in the surrounding area, YACIO has just built a planter, using some old railway sleepers left on a plot by a departing tenant, alongside the shop. This planter could also be tended by a small management group of volunteer plot holders.

So, a very busy year for your committee and we move towards the AGM and the year ahead. I have chosen to

provide this review as part of this newsletter rather than deliver it at the AGM (whatever form that takes).

My best wishes to all tenants (all now members of Low Moor Association.) for good health and many gardening successes in the year to come.

Angela Johnson, Chair, Low Moor Association



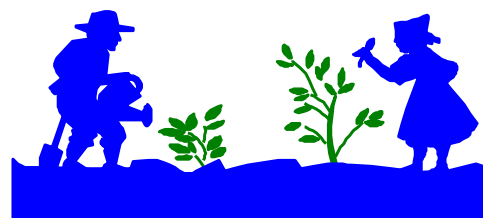
The Kids' Allotment has continued to function throughout the last two difficult years. The plot is organised by volunteers, mostly plot holders on Low Moor. Membership is open to kids from 6 to 12 years, from within the local community.

Sessions usually operate on Saturdays 10am – 12 noon from early March to end of October. During the session children are helped to plant up and garden their own small patch, as well as cultivating the rest of the allotment. A fee of £1 per session usually pays the bills.

For the coming year we have, unusually, a number of spare places . If any tenants are interested to learn more please contact Angela Johnson (angela3147@hotmail.com)

## 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

Angela Johnson: Chair & Kids' Allotment

☎ 07982431687

✉ angela3147@hotmail.com

Christine Robertson: Voluntary Site Secretary

✉ lowmoorallotments@gmail.com

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.