

Hempland Lane-Heworth Allotment Association



Summer Newsletter 2020

Hot from the Hut!

Committee Members

Name		Plot
Julian Ayres	Committee Member	43b
Ellen Bradbury	Committee Member	9
David Brinklow	Site Secretary and Treasurer	14
Nigel Collinson	Secretary	66
Gayle Enion-Farrington	Chair and Publicity Officer	34,35
Moira Grainger	Committee Member	93a
Karel Holland	Committee Member	44
Kevin Holland	Committee Member & Easy Access Area	44
Amy Johnson	Committee Member	63b
Jean Pulley	Committee Member	81
Lisa Tindale	Committee Member	59b
Lisa Maunder-Wood	Committee Member	95
Lorraine Wood	Shop Manager	64
Dave Wood	Shop Manager	64
Mark Farrington	Website Administrator (not part of the committee)	35

Message from YACIO

Dear Tenants,

When YACIO took over the allotments from the City Council we tried to think about the issues that might crop up. As you might imagine, responding to a global disease pandemic wasn't one of them!

Once the lockdown was announced, our priority was to make sure all those still able to work their plot could do so in a safe way. For those unable to go to the allotment we introduced temporary measures, such as halting plot inspections. At the same time we made sure that necessary maintenance, like grass cutting, continued.

Now that the Covid restrictions have been eased allotment life can start to return to 'normal'. **You'll see elsewhere that Site Inspections will resume in August.** The Covid crisis has increased demand for plots. Although we'll do everything we can to support tenants having difficulties maintaining their allotment, we do need to ensure, in fairness to those on the waiting list, that let plots aren't neglected.

Alongside the pandemic we've also had some rather challenging weather. The deluges of winter were followed by two months of drought. This has led us to think further about water use – there's some useful advice included here we hope all tenants will follow. Let's hope the weather will also turn more 'normal' and that, despite it all, 2020 will be a year of bountiful harvests.

-Tony Chalcraft – Chair of Trustees tony.chalcraft@yorkallotments.org

Update from Gayle, Chairperson

Usually at this time of year we would be having an awesome summer fair and getting the whole community together. I know this will happen soon, but we thought this would be an option!

To celebrate **National Allotments Week 10 August till 16 August 2020**, we are running a fun competition to find the ‘Best plot’, ‘Best Newcomer plot’ and Best scarecrow tribute to our Key workers’. The judging will take place on **Sunday 16th August 2020 between 10am - 2pm** and announced on our notice boards, website, emails and Facebook that evening. Please do not congregate around the shop to find out the results, as this defeats the object of doing a socially distanced competition. However, please do wander the site at your leisure during this day.

Update from Nigel

All our lives changed when “lockdown” was imposed on us on 23rd March 2020 because of the Coronavirus (Covid -19). As I write these allotment observations some restrictions have been “eased” but they could easily be re-imposed should the virus start to spread again with R rising above 1!

As a committee we immediately took the decision that for the coming weeks/months we would have to stop opening our allotment shop on a Sunday morning & we would also have to suspend our tea/coffee & cake on a Sunday morning also. The tea/coffee & cake has proved a great success & also is a very interactive social event between allotment holders, dog walkers & visitors to our site. The visits & help from the Community PayBack Teams were also immediately suspended until further notice.

With so many businesses being affected, many plot holders have been furloughed from work or are working from home or very sadly have been laid off work altogether. Shops, Theatres, Pubs, Restaurants, Hairdressers, and Garages to name a few all closed down overnight. From plot holders point of view also Garden Centres also closed down.

So what did this mean for us as an allotment site & was there anything we could do to make the situation more bearable? Well as you know Lorraine & Dave run the shop & Nigel Plot66 has a key & often sells items during the week as well. We had our shop stock so why not try & still sell the things we have rather than just let them “sit in the shop”.

We soon found out that this was the correct decision & has been well supported on an ongoing basis. With the garden centres & the likes of B&Q being shut gardeners/plot holders still wanted seeds, canes, chicken pellets, plants and the like. We set up a system where Nigel has a table outside his plot & Dave & Lorraine set up sheeting over their compost bins to set shop stock out on it. This way they could serve people at a safe distance & Nigel could speak to & advise people whilst on his plot this complying fully with “social distancing”.

Having an “honesty box” on his table “customers” have been able to pay for their items & get their change if required from the box. If items have been required from the shop one of us has gone in & brought the item out such as canes or netting & put them down at a distance for people to pick up. We then advise them how much they owe & into the box it goes with no contact. Lorraine has had a similar system set up, people put the money on the table & if they require change Lorraine sorts it.

Also to make banking easier for David Brinklow our treasurer, Nigel has been paying funds into his bank account via East Parade PO & then using internet banking to transfer the funds into our Hempland Allotment Association account. Fully itemised breakdowns of the takings are then emailed to David for his records & a copy sent to our full committee for full accountability & transparency!

So a big thank you from me to Dave & Lorraine for their ongoing unstinting efforts to keep us ticking over in these very difficult times, and to our committee members for their contributions of plants for us to sell.

Also from me another big thanks you to all our customers both old & new for continuing to support us. At the end of May, some garden centres, nurseries & the likes of B&Q have reopened their doors to customers. But now with markings to keep your social distance, a queuing system to go in and to pay when coming out and a shortage of some items such as compost. We don't stock compost due to lack of storage space but I could have sold many bags had we had it!

The "bad side" of people during the pandemic, I advised our committee of some of the ridiculous prices that were being charged on eBay. These people have been feeding on people's fears that there may be shortages of fresh vegetables? Below are a few examples of how mad things have been & accentuate what good value we always offer at the allotments.

5 plugs (20 plants) Beetroot, £16 plus £3.99 postage

6 x Pea plugs "Onward", £6.50 PLUS £4.95 postage

2 x Sungold Tomato plants, £14 PLUS £3 postage

12 x Pea plugs "Meteor" dwarf pea, £10 I have been selling trays for £1.50

6 x Small Runner Bean plugs £9.99 plus £3.99 postage!

White Lisbon Spring Onion Seeds 50 for £5.99

Lettuce Salad Bowl 100 seeds for £5.99

Chitted Broad Bean seeds 10 for £5.99, we have had trays of plants for £1.00

100 carrot seeds £5.99, we have SeeKay carrots Early Nantes 10,000 for £2.00

So what do we make of all this? We must all be so thankful that we are part of a thriving allotment site & the fact that we have an allotment. The people buying these must be new to growing vegetables as no one with any vegetable knowledge would pay these prices, would they?

On the subject of renting, an allotment the mantra must continue to be "use it or lose it" as our waiting list now stands at 148. The 16 run YACIO sites now have a combined waiting list of 1774.

Many plot holders have had extra time to tend their plots during these unusual circumstances. We have had many comments of how productive plots and our site in general look now, which is very positive. Also many plot holders have said how much their plot means to them and how it is helping them to cope with things at present. We have all known for years how good home-grown fruit and vegetables are for us but we are now maybe more than ever realising both the health, wellbeing and mental health benefits there are to be had also.

We can all safely enjoy our plots, talk to our neighbours and passersby at a safe distance. We can also enjoy the wildlife and of course in recent weeks the dry sunny weather although some rain would be welcome, but once again none in this week's forecast. At the end of May I ate my first strawberry and picked my first handful of gooseberries! A month on & we have had a fair bit of rain & damaging winds, unusual for late May & June. But the good news is the strawberries, gooseberries & early potatoes are in full flow.

We still have a good range of seeds available in our shop for sale as well as a good supply of Tomato plants, Cucumbers, Marrows, Squash, Sweet Corn and some second-hand tools along with plenty of other items. If anybody has any spare plants or produce, please be kind enough to let us have it preferably on a Sunday morning for us to sell to raise money towards our funds. We will obviously continue with work around our site when it is deemed safe to do so.

Just a gentle reminder that quite a few plot holders have still not paid their £5 membership fees for this year. So far 116 of you have so thank you very much for that and to all of you who have made "donations" for manure, wood chippings and pallets.

Nigel Plot 66 Hempland Allotment Association Membership Secretary

Wise words from Ellen



Because shops have been closed and we have been unable to buy much, one thing we've learnt during this pandemic is that we don't need so many things. Just as I realised I really don't need any more clothes, I also found out that I could manage without buying any (or many) new plants



I didn't get round to clearing my hanging baskets last autumn (laziness!) and they looked pretty dead and sad all winter. Normally I would have thrown the plants out and bought new container plants. But I couldn't do that this year so when I noticed faint signs of life in the trailing geraniums I started watering them again, added a little bit of new compost and fertiliser and hey presto – they have flowered magnificently. They are much bigger plants with more flowers than the equivalent little new plants would have been at this stage. The other thing I've made use of is the self-seeded plants which have sprung up all over my plot. As well as the campanula, cornflowers, nigella, poppies etc which come up year after year, I've found cosmos and antirrhinums which have self-seeded. I've dug these up and either given them away or transplanted them into the garden at home and they seem to be thriving.



The third thing I've done to avoid buying is to take cuttings from, for example, geraniums, salvias and hibiscus. New plants for nothing! These things have all made up in part for the terrible germination rate I've had for many flower seeds this year. You win some, you lose some!

Ellen Bradbury Plot 9

What a fabulous way to upcycle a wooden pallet, creating a beautiful object out of something so ordinary. This was made by a friend of mine for her plot. So the next time you come across a pallet, remember that it can be transformed into an eye-catching growing space.

Lisa Tindale



News From The Haven

I have been busy in the last couple of months keeping the Haven planted up and managing the weeds. I normally volunteer for the National Trust at Goddards on Tadcaster Road as a gardener on Thursdays, so this has been my alternative gardening fix during lockdown!

I wanted to plant new flowers in the beds next to the front and rear porches, but nature has beaten me to it. Most of the flowers growing in these beds are self sown from last year! We have Cosmos, Nicotiana and Clary Sage. They are really strong and sturdy so should give a great display in a few weeks time. There are some lovely flowers too, planted last year around the trellis fencing in the seating area - Penstemon and Lavender, just coming into flower now.

I have also planted out about 60 Sunflower plants along the length of the Haven by the fence, which Gayle kindly provided. They are now starting to flower too.

The hanging pots are back up with new geranium plants which I grew from small plug plants bought as a bargain for 12 for £2.99 just before lockdown.

We also have wildflowers in one of the un-rented raised beds and potatoes and broad beans which we can sell from Lorraine's plot, in two others.

I hope you will all have a peek at the Haven as you pass by. It's a pity that we can't open the area for coffee mornings etc but let's hope that will be coming soon.

Stay safe!

Karel Holland - Plot 44 and 45B



Kevin's top tips for getting great fruit and veg :

1) Food - lots of it. The shop has good stocks of Growmore, Blood fish and bone, Lime, and chicken manure pellets. If you don't feed every year you won't get good crops.

2) Water - just sprinkling a bit of water around does more harm than good. You need to use 2 full watering cans per square metre once a week, unless the soil is already wet from rain to a depth of at least 5cm. Some crops need more water than others, so do your research

3) Humus - soil needs lots of this to help root growth. Chicken manure pellets alone don't provide enough. Spreading un-composted manure adds very little, and in fact robs nutrients from the soil. You need compost, lots of it. Find out how to make your own using the manure, cardboard, grass clippings, veg peelings, weeds, and green waste from your plot.

4) Protection - birds like your crops, so do insect pests. Don't use chemical sprays as they kill the beneficial insects. Instead, protect your veg and fruit with nets. Debris netting is cheap and effective. Insect mesh is great but more expensive, but we do sell it at a good price in the shop. Protect early - pigeons and jackdaws love young plants !

5) Time - it's important to spend time on your plot looking after your plants , especially keeping them free of weeds. Weeds rob water and nutrients, so keep on top of them. Spending just 30 minutes a day on your plot can help keep them under control.

My recipe for dealing with courgettes:

- take a courgette and slice it into large chunks
- add it to your compost bin
- enjoy ! 😊

Kevin Holland - Plot 44 and 45B

Blueberry muffins Makes 12



250g plain flour	120g unsalted butter, melted
2 tsp baking powder	120g caster sugar
1/2 tsp bicarbonate of soda	2 eggs, lightly beaten
A good pinch of salt	Finely grated zest and lemon juice
100ml full-fat milk	180g blueberries

Preheat oven to 190c/Gas mark 5 and line a 12-hole muffin tray with paper muffin cases. Sieve the flour, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda and salt together.

In a separate bowl, beat together the butter, sugar, eggs, milk, lemon zest and juice until evenly combined. Gently fold in the flour mixture using a spatula, then fold in the blueberries; don't overmix.

Spoon the mixture into the muffin cases and bake for 16 minutes. To check, insert a cocktail stick into the middle of a muffin; if it comes out clean, they are ready, if not, give them another couple of minutes.

Transfer to a wire rack to cool. The muffins are best eaten the same day - ideally still slightly warm from the oven.

Blackcurrants, blackberries and alpine strawberries are all excellent substitutes for the blueberries in these muffins. Half a teaspoon of freshly ground coriander seeds and a few crushed nuts can also be added.

Recipe from The River Cottage Fruit Handbook

Lisa Tindale Plot 59b

Future dates for your Diary

Please be advised that further to COVID19 we have cancelled all the formal events for 2020 Inc Summer Fair & Autumn Show, but we will ensure that it returns as soon as practically possible.

Currently your committee is meeting via digital means and are still here to support you during these unprecedented times.

If you would like to write something for the next newsletter, please email it to gayle.farrington@btinternet.com, by mid September 2020.