

# Hempland Lane-Heworth Allotment Association



Spring / Summer Newsletter 2017

## Hot from the Hut!

### Committee Members

Name		Plot
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
Lisa Tindale	Committee Member	59b
Lorraine Wood	Shop Manager	64
Dave Wood	Shop Manager	64
Julian Ayres	Committee Member	43b
Ann-Marie Knowles	Committee Member	16
Available !	Easy Access Plots Rep Would You Like to Represent this Area?	?
Jean Pulleyn	Committee Member	81
Mark Farrington	Website Administrator (not part of the committee)	35

Would you like to represent the Easy Access Plots? If so please speak to a committee member

### Future Management of Council Allotment sites in York - update by Ray Walker (Plot26)

At the end of last year York city council (YCC) started the process of consulting allotment tenants about the transfer of the management of YCC's allotments to some other body (it has always been the intention that YCC would retain ownership of the land with the management organisation granted a lease on all the allotments). All tenants were invited to initial consultative meetings at which it became clear that the favoured option would be transfer of the allotments to a body of which all allotment tenants would be members.

A working group was set up with members drawn from most allotment sites. They took the decision to recommend to YCC that all allotments should be transferred to a new charitable association and six members of the working group (one of them from Hempland Lane) agreed to become the first trustees until elections were held. The intention is that there will be nine trustees with three positions coming up for election each year.

The six trustees have now lodged an application with the Charity Commission for York Allotments to be registered as a charity and are working on what the staffing arrangements should be and on job descriptions. The key emphasis is on putting effective administration arrangements in place that are also cost effective (if nothing changes tenants will face a substantial increase in rents next January). The nine trustees will focus on wider policy issues whilst site secretaries will play an even more significant role with better admin and IT support. At present one-to-one discussions are being arranged or have taken place with all site secretaries.

A report by the senior council officer responsible for allotments is due to go to the relevant member of YCC's executive who will then take a final proposal to the executive by the end of June.

With well over a thousand allotment tenants there have been a few voices raised against these proposals (as somewhat misleadingly reported in the Press). However, as YCC took the decision three years ago, in principle, to transfer its allotments there seems to be a general consensus that, given that decision, a body comprised of, and responsible to, all allotment holders is clearly the best way of protecting allotments and the rights of tenants.

[If you have any questions or queries please do not hesitate to contact](mailto:raywalker690@gmail.com) Ray Walker on email [raywalker690@gmail.com](mailto:raywalker690@gmail.com), Phone 01904 500463 or see him on plot 26. His contact details are also on the website.

**ALLOTMENT SHOP - Is open every Sunday 10am-12noon until mid - late October 2017. Hot Drinks are also on sale, with proceeds going towards fundraising the easy access area.**

### **Future dates for your Diary**

Sunday Morning Café - open every Sunday until October 10-12 noon

Stall at **Friends of Hempland School Summer Fete** - Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> June 11.30am - 2pm

Please can all donations of plants, New potatoes washed and bagged in 1lb weight, Rhubarb sticks bundled in 1lb weight, salad leaves bagged, Jams and other preserves labelled and any other produced washed and nicely presented ready to sell, as we will not have the facilities on the day. All to be given to Gayle (or left in her greenhouse at 1 Allington Drive by 16<sup>th</sup> June 6pm, or taken directly to the Allotment stall at the school on 17<sup>th</sup> June between 10 - 10.30am.

**Summer Fete & Harry Potter & Friends Scarecrow competition - Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> July 2017 10am - 2pm (at Shop)**

**Fun Autumn Show Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> September 2017 12noon - 3pm (at Shop)**

**Strimming Weekend 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> September 2017 10am - 2pm each day (wildlife area)**



### **HONEY BEES**

We are now entering the swarming season when bee populations multiply rapidly and hives become overcrowded. This is the trigger for the older bees to seek out a new home when thousands of bees can be seen swarming overhead before clustering in bush or on a fence post until they find somewhere permanent. Colonies of bees are valuable and if recovered in time can be set up in a new hive. If you see a swarm please can you ring Nick Mansell on 01904 416367 or 07851 370385 asap or leave a message if not in, giving exact location.

Thank you.



### Bee Hotel in Wetland Wildlife Area



Visitors to the Wetland Wildlife area may have noticed this structure which has appeared on the site, close to the pond.

It is a bee/insect hotel and has been donated by Urban Buzz to help us improve the variety of insects which live in the area. We will be filling the crates with appropriate living spaces over the coming months. If anyone would like to help with this please contact David Brinklow on 07812 069302.

We have also planted a copse of alder, hazel and willow whips in the angle between plot 99 and the wildlife area. This is designed to provide coppice poles in the years to come. The whips, which were planted in February, were donated and the planting was carried out by George Hughes and Daphne Brinklow.

**Association Membership Benefits** If you are a plot holder, then please consider joining in the fun and become a member of the allotment association. It only costs £5 per year and this entitles you to a 10% discount on all garden related items at both Vertigrow and Deans Garden Centre. **Renewals were due in January 2017 but you can still join now at the Shop on a Sunday 10am - 12noon.** If you would to make use of our composting toilet whilst on your plot, please purchase a key from the shop for only £5. Keys for the perimeter gates are also available from the shop. Please do not get a key cut from someone else as they are the property of the council and we must track who has a copy. All you need to give is £5 for refundable deposit to the shop.



**Cubs from Christ Church,  
Stockton Lane, York earning  
their Community Badge**



Cubs from Christ Church, Stockton Lane, York helped give a new French tenant at Hempland lane allotments a true Yorkshire / Heworth welcome by helping her to dig over her derelict plot. The cubs were working towards their Community Challenge Badge and by digging/planting on the site they were helping the community. The Akela (leader) Mrs Ann Shannon and Ian Purcell, plus eager parents came along to support the cubs as they got stuck in moving old carpet and dug over a large area of the plot, ready for their next visit in June, when they are planning to sow wildflower seeds to encourage birds, bees and insects.

Gersende (new tenant at 53a) is currently unable to do heavy duty digging, therefore with the help of Gayle Enion-Farrington (Chairperson of Hempland lane Allotments) and Ian Purcell (Cub Leader) it was agreed to turn half of her plot into a wildlife attracting area by clearing it, digging and sowing green manure that will help reduce weeds and attract birds, bees and insects, whilst she is unable to manage her entire plot.



They also sowed plants in the easy access beds that are currently undergoing refurbishment, so that the produce can be sold at the allotment shop on Sundays, creating more funds for restoring the remainder of the easy access site.

They return on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2017 to sow wildflower seeds.

### **Updates from Nigel**

When I was writing my last "bits" on 12/2/17 I was bemoaning the fact we had some horrible wet weather. Well it could be "Groundhog Day" as today 15/5/17 it has been another horrible day, the difference is three months on the rain was really needed. As gardeners or allotment holders we are never satisfied with the weather & it is always a topic of conversation!

We all know we have had a particularly dry few weeks but there is still moisture in the soil & plants will find it. There have been several discussions about the use of hosepipes during this dry Spring spell but basically you should not be using a hosepipe to water your plot. Your tenancy agreement states " The Tenant shall not use any water supply which may be made available for use by tenants of allotment gardens, other than for filling butts & containers, prior to distributing their contents on the Allotment Garden".

**We all want our plants to survive so a few handy tips:-**

When planting new plants, such as lettuce or fruit trees, give them a good drink at planting time. You could also consider using some water retaining gel in the planting hole. When sowing seeds when it's dry give the seed drill a good watering before sowing & then by covering the seed with dry soil or compost it will help to retain the moisture. A good mulch between rows or around individual plants also helps to retain moisture, an excellent reason for making your own compost. If you are planting out the likes of cabbages or beetroot from cells in plastic trays make sure they have been kept moist up to planting time. For plants like Squash or Marrows, when planting them out put a plastic bottle near the plant roots with the bottom cut off it. You can then water & feed into the bottle & the water goes straight to the plant roots & does not just "run off" dry ground to be wasted.

All of the above hints will help you save water & it goes without saying if you have a shed or a greenhouse on your plot install some guttering & a barrel to save the rainwater. It so happens we have some guttering & a water butt for sale in the shop if anyone is interested ... or see Nigel Plot 66.

Thank you to all those plot holders and Associate Members who have already joined our Association for 2017 or have indeed joined us for the first time it is very much appreciated. Your support of both the shop and our association makes the efforts we put in from the committee feel well worthwhile. We now have 105 members so if you haven't joined yet please consider doing so, thanks.

We still have a good selection of seeds in our shop, a lot of which you still have plenty of time for sowing this year. For those of you with internet access you can check out our selection and prices on our website [www.hempland-lane-allotments.co.uk](http://www.hempland-lane-allotments.co.uk) look under shop.

We are also doing well with a good selection of plants available in our shop, many thanks to all who keep "donating" to us to help us raise funds. Also the Sunday morning tea/coffee & cake is going very well, thanks to all who regularly support us, many of whom do not have an allotment. I have to say a big thank you to Pam Plot 65 for providing (donating) cakes each week for us to enjoy with our drinks. For anybody who hasn't been on a Sunday morning we charge 50p a cup for tea & coffee & 50p for a slice of cake, a bargain.

Whilst mentioning the shop thanks as always to Lorraine & Dave for their regular sterling efforts despite both of them not being in 100% best of health at the minute. I know they have appreciated the assistance they have had from people this year already helping them with the shop.

As you know I am often about down at my plot so I do tend to see a lot of plotters & dog walkers. I get asked lots of questions & various comments past about all sorts of allotmenting. What has been really nice, is we have some visitors in recent weeks & some of their comments have been very much appreciated. The best one was possibly the last Sunday from a plot holder from another site "You have got a good atmosphere down here on a Sunday morning. Your shop is open & welcoming, you have organised refreshments to raise funds. Nigel has his Charity stall for Martin House & Moira was there this Sunday with her Charity book stall. We have nothing like this on our site, I wish we had".

Its comments like that you really appreciate & it makes everything all worthwhile.

Nigel would like to say a big "thank you" to those people who keep buying & indeed donating to his Sunday morning stall. He has just recently sent another £72.45 to the Martin House Children's Hospice. There is a copy of their letter & receipt up on the notice board near the shop for people to read.

I am sure after this rain & the warmer conditions we will get a flush of weed seedlings. Although this will mean more weeding, look on the bright side most of them make good additions to your compost heap.

Did you know we nearly all grow some potatoes. They are "*Solanum Tuberosum*" ... tuber bearing the potato. *Solanum* the name given by Pliny, the Roman naturalist to one of the nightshades; possibly derived from a solace because of its medical virtues! You might never look at a potato the same again?

You still have plenty of time to sow spinach (annual & perpetual), salad leaves such as mizuna & rocket, beetroot, dwarf french beans, chicory, courgettes, squash & turnips to name but a few. Be planning ahead so you have plants ready to get a second crop once early crops are cleared.

**This is from a letter in the current edition of the Kitchen Garden magazine.**

"After years of battling with identifying seeds when they are sown & the information on the plastic plant label fading over the season. I had a simple idea of putting numbers on the labels with a permanent marker pen. Then put all the information i.e. date, seed variety, supplier etc all in a small notebook. When I shared this idea with my wife she came up with the idea of numbers for the vegetables & letters for the flower seed. Also they can be used time & time again with no need to clean them off or to buy new ones" Geoff & Helen Harris, Devon. Comment the simple ideas are the best!

Nigel

### **Drying herbs and flowers**

Pick flowers for drying when they are in bud or newly opened. Herbs are best gathered just before they flower, unless you want their flowers as well. Make sure the flowers/herbs are dry when harvesting, which should be done towards midday.

Bunch together no more than about six stems and tie each bunch with an elastic band. Do not pack stems too tightly but allow the air to circulate through and around each bunch. This helps to avoid the risk of mildew. Cut flower stalks at different lengths so that the flower heads are staggered. Protect from dust with a loose paper bag tied over each bunch, and hang (stem upwards) in a warm, dry, airy place - e.g. an airing cupboard, warm loft or kitchen.

Remember that colours will fade if exposed to direct sunlight, and that a speedy drying process will retain the colour best. When drying is completed (after one or two weeks) the leaves should be paper dry but not so dry that they crumble when touched.

*From the book All Year Round by Ann Druitt, Christine Fynes-Clinton and Marije Rowling*

## **New to allotmenting? Here is a guide for the next three months**

### **May (now that it is warm it is not too late to do these jobs)**

#### **Overview**

May is always looked forward to as the first month of summer but it marks the end of the spring. It is a month when we can get caught out by mini droughts and heat waves. The biggest threat is to any young plants that have recently been transplanted into the open ground and any freshly emerging seedlings. Be sure to keep all of them well watered and if the young transplants look as if

they are flagging give them some shade protection from the heat of the sun or drying winds. On the otherhand May can be a complete disaster month bringing damaging frosts, cold winds with heavy rain or hail, so be prepared to take steps to protect plants if it is necessary. With it being cold and wet recently it is not too late to start Mays jobs now.



### **Harvest**

Sprouting broccoli, cabbage, spinach, rhubarb, spring onions, early sown lettuce, beetroot, radish and peas. Cut asparagus regularly to maintain the supply. Start to remove the side shoots on tomatoes. Use up of the last leeks. Clear away any old or finished crops and dig over the soil and prepare the site ready for the next crop.

### **Sowing and planting**

Plant in pots or trays under glass, Dwarf and climbing French beans, runner beans, sweet corn, outdoor cucumbers, courgettes, pumpkins, squashes, outdoor cucumbers - all which can be planted out next month.

Savoy cabbage, winter cabbage, endive, kale and sprouting broccoli can all be sown in the open ground now, ready to be planted out next month.

Continue making direct successional sowings in the soil of lettuce, radish, spinach, turnips (switch to kohlrabi when the weather becomes hot) beetroot for summer use and also main crop beetroot to put into store at the end of summer. While the leeks, Brussels sprouts and French beans sown last month under glass, can now be planted out.

This is also your last opportunity to sow peas and parsnips this year

### **General**

Thin out whilst still very small, the seedlings of beetroot, carrots, lettuce, onions, parsnips, turnips and always water along the row to settle the disturbed seedlings back in, once the job is completed. Put up poles for runner and climbing French beans. Support peas and broad beans before they become too tall. Start to earth up potatoes especially if a frost is forecast.

Keep hoeing between crops to control weeds and also create a "dust mulch" to conserve precious soil moisture. Try to water in the cool of the evening if possible using a watering can to direct the water around the root area of the crops.

If you can get it, put some straw underneath the developing strawberry fruits to keep them off the soil and try to avoid watering overhead to reduce any problems with mildew.

### **Pest and diseases**

look out for blackfly on broad beans, greenfly on peas, lettuce, cabbage root fly, carrot fly, thrip damage on brassicas especially when the plants are small. Spray the affected plants with soapy water (diluted washing up liquid) or squash the flies with your thumb and finger. You can buy insecticides if you prefer, including a fatty acid soap to spray on the plants.

## **June**

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Flaming June should bring us a hot sunshine filled month with the risk of frost past and those in more northerly parts should be able to catch up with those in the south. We're also moving towards the

longest day, June 21st being the summer solstice so there is plenty of daylight to let you get on with things. There is a lot to do in June but the rewards for our efforts are coming in the harvest.



### **Runner Bean Poles and beans starting up them at the beginning of June**

#### **Direct Sowing**

In dry weather draw your drill and water it well prior to sowing and then just water with a fine rose after wards to settle the seeds in.

Successional sowing each fortnight of beetroot, french beans, early carrots, kohlrabi, early peas, lettuce, rocket, turnips, endive, radish, spring onions will give you a constant supply of salads and vegetables at their peak for your plate.

**French and Runner Beans, Maincrop peas, Beetroot, Carrots, Turnips, Swedes, Cauliflowers, Chicory, Endive, Kohlrabi, Sweetcorn, Squash, Courgette and Marrows**

#### **Planting Out**

If you follow my method of starting brassicas in pots, especially if you have clubroot, then it's time to plant out.

**Broccoli, Calabrese, Brussels sprouts, Summer cabbage**

Pot grown runner and dwarf beans should be safe to plant out now as the danger of frost should be past. Outdoor tomatoes can also go into their final position. Don't just move them straight from the greenhouse or they'll be checked. Use a cold frame to condition them or move them back into the house at night for a few days before they go into the big wide world.

Your leeks may well be ready now, about pencil thickness. I like to plant mine as a follow on to the early potatoes which will be up by the end of the month. When transplanting leeks don't follow the old advice of chopping the top foliage and roots back, it doesn't do any good.

#### **Fruit**

If we do get a prolonged dry spell, don't forget that that fruit bushes and trees need watering. Swelling apples and currants need water as much as leafy vegetables. Once again, give a good soaking rather than little sprinkles that encourage surface rooting.

In June apples have the "**June Drop**" where the tree drops excess fruit. After this it is worth thinning out if the branches are still overcrowded. Tie in blackberry canes as they grow and check netting, fruit cages etc have no access for the birds.

When you've had the last rhubarb, give them a good feed by mulching with well-rotted manure mixed with compost or an artificial like growmore to enable them to build strength for next year.



## **July**

July is usually one of the hottest and driest months so a lot of time may be spent watering. You can reduce water loss and so save yourself some time. Mulching with a layer of organic matter will help preserve moisture but may encourage slugs so you will need to take action against them.

Another good method of preventing water loss is to hoe. This not only kills the weeds but breaks up the top of the soil stopping water from being drawn to the surface by capillary action and evaporating.

### **Direct Sowing**

In dry weather draw your drill and water it well prior to sowing and then just water with a fine rose after to settle the seeds in.

In really hot spells you might need to water young seedlings early morning and late evening to keep them going.

Although the sowing season is coming to a close there are still things to sow in July

**Spring Cabbage, Chicory, Chinese cabbage, Kohlrabi, Lettuce, Peas, French Beans, Beetroot, Carrots, Radishes**

### **Planting Out**

If they've not gone out yet, it's time to plant out your leeks. Just dib a hole about 150mm 6" deep and drop the leek into the hole. Water it in and the job's done. Don't follow old advice about trimming the tops and roots, it has no beneficial effect and is probably harmful. You don't need to fill the holes with soil, enough will wash in with watering and rain. The reason you plant in a hole is to blanch the stem.

**Brassicas from pots can go out as well: broccoli, calabrese, Brussel sprouts and cabbage**

### **Green Manures**

I like to follow on the first early potatoes with leeks but otherwise a green manure can avoid bare ground which is just going to grow weeds. Mustard is fast growing and is supposed to confuse the potato eel worm into breeding at the wrong time, hence a follow on to potatoes. **It is a brassica so don't use it if you suffer from club root.**

Another fast growing green manure crop you can use is French beans. Even if you have enough beans for the kitchen, the plant produces a fair amount of leaf and stem plus the roots, as with all legumes, have nodules containing bacteria that fix nitrogen from the atmosphere. .

### **Fruit**

If we do get a prolonged dry spell, don't forget that that fruit bushes and trees need watering. Swelling apples and currants need water as much as leafy vegetables. Give a good soaking rather than little sprinkles that encourage surface rooting.

Finish thinning apples, pears and plums etc. if needed. It's the right time for summer pruning as well. Keep the base of trees weed and grass free, mulch to keep in moisture and add fertility with garden compost. Pick soft fruits now assuming you've kept the birds away with netting or a cage and they've left you some. Don't forget to use strawberry runners to grow new plants and remove unwanted runners so the plants retain strength. Grub up and replace in another spot strawberries after 3 or 4 years cropping.

## Asparagus and Courgette Risotto

### Ingredients - serves 4

3pts of Veg Stock  
2 small firm courgettes washed and sliced  
1 bunch of asparagus washed and cut into bite size lengths  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of fresh or frozen peas  
2 tbsp of olive oil  
1 small onion chopped  
50g (2oz) porcini mushrooms (or other wild mushrooms)  
350g (12oz) risotto rice  
Salt and pepper  
50g (12oz) Parmesan grated



### Method

Put the stock in a saucepan and bring to a simmer. Cook the courgettes, asparagus and peas in this broth until just cooked but still vibrantly green. Drain the vegetables and keep the broth simmering.

Heat half the oil in a big pan and add the chopped onion. Fry gently until soft and translucent. Meanwhile clean and slice the mushrooms and add to the pan. Fry for a few more minutes before adding the rice. Stir to coat with the oil and when its hot start to add the simmering broth, a ladleful at a time, stirring gently. As the stock is absorbed add more until it is nearly cooked, stirring constantly.

Add Asparagus, courgettes and enough broth to finish cooking the risotto, turning carefully until the risotto is creamy and just al dente. Remove from the heat, add salt and pepper to taste and sprinkle with parmesan.

## Roast Asparagus - serves 2

### Ingredients

450gms Asparagus  
2 tablespoons of light olive oil  
The juice of a lemon  
A little salt

### Method

Place the spears on a large sheet of kitchen foil  
Drizzle over the oil and lemon juice and then scatter over with a little salt  
Bring the edges of the foil together and seal them tightly, like a parcel  
Bake at 180°C / G4 for 15 minutes or until tender.

### Enjoy!

If you would like to write something for the next newsletter, please email it to [gayle.farrington@btinternet.com](mailto:gayle.farrington@btinternet.com), by mid July.