

# **York Allotments CIO**

(CIO Number:1174306)

**Trustees Annual Report & Financial Statements**

**for the year ended**

**31st December 2020**

# **outsourc**e

Charity accounts preparation &  
independent examination service

# York Allotments CIO

(CIO Number:1174306)

## Contents

<b>Index</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Report of the Trustees</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Independent Examiner's Report</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Receipts &amp; Payments Accounts</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Statement of Assets and Liabilities</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Notes to the Accounts</b>	<b>9</b>

# Trustees' Annual Report

From: 1st January 2020

To: 31st December 2020

Charity's full name York Allotments CIO

Registered Charity number 1174306

## Objectives and activities

### Summary of the purposes of the charity set out in its governing document

To provide or assist in the provision of facilities for allotments in the City of York and the surrounding area, in the interests of social welfare for recreation or other leisure time occupation for the public at large with the object of improving their conditions of life.

### Summary of the main activities in relation to those purposes for the public benefit, in particular, the activities, projects or services identified in the accounts

To provide an effective and responsive administrative system for the allotments it manages (e.g. letting, rental collection, waiting list management, etc)

To ensure allotment plots are kept in good condition and sites well managed with grass, hedges etc. appropriately maintained

To balance income and expenditure to ensure financial sustainability

To avoid/limit rent increases while generating income surpluses sufficient to meet potential future costs and/or provide funds to improve allotment provision/sites

To publicise the availability of allotments and promote allotments as a leisure activity

To improve the knowledge and skills of plot holders to better use and manage their allotment

To improve facilities on allotments sites

To support allotment associations and encouraging wider community engagement

To foster the innovative use of allotment plots and sites in ways that have wider social, health, economic and environmental benefits

To operate in a transparent and open way and ensuring that allotments are let and managed in an equitable manner and in accordance with legislation e.g. Equality Act (2010)

To ensure allotments are managed and used in a way that protects the environment and wildlife

The trustees consider that they have complied with their duties to have due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission.

## Achievements and performance

**Summary of the main achievements of the charity, identifying the difference the charity's work has made to the circumstances of its beneficiaries and any wider benefits to society as a whole.**

### COVID 19

The COVID pandemic and first lockdown in March 2020 had a significant impact on the charity's activities throughout the year. Further details of specific impacts are noted in the relevant sections of the report below. Throughout the year the priority has been to mitigate the effects of the pandemic and restrictions on tenants. Aware that allotments have been a haven for many people in difficult circumstances, trustees put in place a variety of special measures to both keep tenants safe and support those unable to make use of their allotment as normal.

### Administration

Trustees continued to engage the services of a part-time self-employed administrator. This followed a review of the administrator's contract with slight changes to terms before the start of the reporting year. The administrator continued to work on average 20 hours per week although there were considerable peaks and troughs with the busiest time early in the year dealing with matters relating to tenant invoicing.

We continued to make use of the Colony allotment management system provided by MCPC to maintain records, generate invoices and reminder letters, etc. As in 2019 the majority of tenants made use of the online payment facility provided by the system to pay rents. This greatly improved the efficiency of administration by streamlining the payment process.

Trustees, in collaboration with the Administrator, carried out further work on a range of documentation designed to standardise and improve the administrative process. In particular, the Manual, a record of policies and procedures, was fully revised and updated. Revisions were also made to the Tenant's Handbook and Site Secretaries Handbook. Consideration was also given to the amendment of rent concessions and the letting of plots to co-tenants.

In addition a few modifications were made to the Tenancy Agreement to come into force from the 2021 rental year. These followed issues arising from the Tenancy Agreement inherited from City of York Council. In normal circumstances these changes would have been put before members for consultation at an AGM. However, because an AGM could not be held, and because the changes were considered urgent, the changes were instead publicised in the October Tenants' Newsletter.

Site Secretaries continued to play a key role as YACIO's representative on each site. Trustees are particularly grateful for their continuing support.

Due to COVID restrictions lettings of new plots was temporarily suspended. We were however, able to put in place a system of 'contactless' letting which enabled the resumption of lettings to meet high demand. Similarly, to protect tenants unable to use their plots due to shielding or quarantining, the decision was made to suspend plot inspections until August. We also provided additional time for payment of invoices. Both these actions resulted in an additional administrative burden later in the year and impacted on the efficiency of the service to tenants

### Structure and Governance

Due to COVID restrictions the AGM scheduled for the end of March had to be cancelled at short notice. Having sought advice from the Charity Commission, trustees made the decision not to proceed with an online AGM in anticipation of being able to hold a replacement in person meeting later in the year. However, increases in the rate of COVID infections followed by the imposition of further restrictions in the autumn made this impossible.

As a result of being unable to hold an AGM all trustees continued in post except for Tina Funnell who decided to step down early in the year. The charity now has six trustees whereas the Constitution provides for up to nine. Recruitment of additional trustees, which had been planned at the start of the year, was put on hold with the outbreak of the COVID pandemic. Trustees continued to meet monthly. Except for a few face-to-face meetings in the summer this was online.

Trustees continued to support the Administrator and Site Secretaries where difficult issues arose. A new support system was put in place with trustees assuming specific responsibilities. Those identified were: Site Maintenance; Administrative Support and Management; Association Liaison; Complaints; Site Specific Matters; Environment. As a follow up to this change, Lisa Turner also visited most sites and met with Site Secretaries during the latter part of the year to gain a fuller picture of particular issues. Maria Lewington-Gower continued to act as interim Site Secretary at Howe Hill and Adam Myers and Colin Smith continued to provide support to Glen. Due to COVID restrictions regular meetings between Trustees and Site Secretaries were suspended.

### Operational Management

We continued to use the same contractor for site maintenance having renegotiated the contract before the start of the year. Again feedback was generally favourable although there were some issues with areas of grass and hedging not being cut as scheduled.

As previously we also used the services of a small scale gardening contractor with a small vehicle to carry out 'odd job' maintenance and clearance work.

#### **Performance Management**

Established 206 new tenancies.

Managed waiting list with 1532 applications (note: applications can be made for up to three sites therefore this figure is not the number of people on the waiting list)

Evicted 190 tenants for non-cultivation.

#### **Risk Management**

Continued to provide public liability insurance covering all operational activities and trustee responsibilities

Maintained membership of the National association of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners making use of their legal and other advice

Trustees were also aware that the dependence on the Colony IT system with its known deficiencies and one self-employed Administrator with no backup were significant risks.

#### **Community and Wider Initiatives**

Due to COVID restrictions progress in engaging with allotment associations was limited. However, trustees continued to work on policies such as that for community plots. We also offered support to associations where necessary on a range of administrative and other issues including site improvements.

Due to COVID and uncertainties about the budget impact, we did not repeat the 2019 process of inviting bids from Site Secretaries and associations for site improvements. However, through our 'odd job' contractor a limited number of site enhancements were carried out.

We continued to produce a newsletter distributed to all tenants on a regular, approximately quarterly, basis.

#### **Issues and Challenges**

Disputes between individual tenants, or groups of tenants, continued to occupy a good deal of trustee time. The use of a more structured complaint process and the impact of social distancing restrictions to some extent ameliorated these problems but they remain a significant challenge.

Low levels of anti-social behaviour and vandalism continued to occur but in December there was a significant spate at Low Moor. Trustees and the Site Secretary responded by liaising with the Association and police and considering counter measures.

The Colony IT management system provided by MCPC again caused administrative issues and delays. The long term viability of this system remains a significant concern.

At the end of the year trustees still did not have a completed lease agreement to sign from City of York Council. Trustees felt this was a concern due to the possible impact of local government reorganisation scheduled for 2022. Delay appeared due to a number of issues beyond the control of trustees, primarily communication problems within the Council. These resulted in a version of the lease being drawn up by the legal department that did not reflect the terms trustees had previously agreed with Council officers.

Following consultation revisions were underway at the end of the year with the expectation that a final lease document would soon be signed.

As in 2019 trustees were able to operate with a small surplus. As a result no rent increases were necessary for 2020 or planned for 2021. Whether it will be possible to avoid rent increases from 2022 and beyond is unclear. Rents are the charity's only source of unrestricted funds. Although trustees wish to avoid rent increases this cannot be guaranteed for future years.

The length of the allotment waiting list, which increased considerably during the year, was perhaps the most significant challenge. Although this can be partially managed by letting half or smaller sized plots to new tenants, this alone will not meet demand. Ultimately, current demand can only be met through the provision of new allotment sites.

### Future Plans

In many respects future planning was put on hold during 2021 because of the uncertainties and difficulties resulting from the COVID pandemic. Plans previously outlined in the 2019 Annual Report remain largely in place. These include:

- further increasing the efficiency of administrative and other routine operational activities to enhance services to tenants and be more responsive to Site Secretaries
- further developing and speeding up the programme of plot clearance (where plots have become unlettable due to neglect) to ensure that we are making full use of all available space
- further considering the policy on concessions in light of overall fairness to all groups and in the context of the charity's overall financial situation
- increasing tenant awareness of environmentally sustainable growing and develop management plans for sites that are sustainable and promote biodiversity
- developing closer relationships with site associations in order to support their endeavours and assist in the development of association representation at sites where none currently exist
- finalising a clear policy on community plots and supporting community and other innovative growing activities
- supporting any initiatives that promote overall well-being, for example improving mental and physical health, alleviating social isolation, provide sustainable locally produced food, support the local economy, etc.

As already outlined, the increase in the allotment waiting list is of growing concern. Considering how to respond to this, especially to what extent to which the charity can actively promote and campaign for additional allotment provision within the City of York area, is an important and urgent future planning issue for trustees. Similarly, as other allotment sites within the city also have lengthened waiting lists, liaising and collaborating with other allotment providers is a further issue for future consideration.

### Financial review

#### Review of the charity's financial position at the end of the period

A surplus has been made ensuring the charity has healthy reserves

#### Statement explaining the policy for holding reserves stating why they are held

25% of annual turnover as detailed in the reserves policy.

#### Amount of reserves held

£45,557

#### Reasons for holding zero reserves

N/A

#### Funds materially in deficit

None

#### Explanation of any uncertainties about the charity continuing as a going concern

None

### Structure, governance and management

#### Description of the charity's trusts

#### Type of governing document

#### How the charity is constituted

Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) with voting members

Trustee selection methods including details of any constitutional provisions e.g. election to post or name of any person or body entitled to appoint one or more trustees

**Reference and administration details**

Charity's full name York Allotments CIO  
 Other names the charity is known by YACIO  
 Charity's principal address Popeshead Court Offices  
 Peter Lane  
 York  
 Postcode YO1 8SU

**Names of the trustees who manage the charity**

Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
Tony Chalcraft	Chair		
Lisa Turner	Treasurer		
Colin Smith	Secretary		
Adam Myers			
Simon Wild			
Marie Lewington - Gower			

**Names and addresses of advisers**

Type of adviser	Name	Address
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**Independent Examiner** Karen Wood ACMA Outsource Accounting Services & Independent Examinations  
 Hiscox Building  
 Peasholme Green  
 York, YO1 7PR

**Bankers** The Cooperative Bank

**Name of chief executive or names of senior staff members**

**Declaration**

The trustees declare that they have approved the Trustees Annual Report and Accounts

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature



Full Name ANTHONY CHALCRAFT  
 Position CHAIR OF TRUSTEES  
 Date 1/4/21

**Independent examiner's report to the trustees of York Allotments CIO**

I report on the accounts of: **York Allotments CIO**  
for the year ended: **31st December 2020** which are set out on pages 7 to 9.

**Responsibilities and basis of report**

As the charity trustees of the Trust you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

**Independent examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- 1 accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by section 130 of the Act; or
- 2 the accounts do not accord with those records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

**Karen Wood (ACMA)**  
Outsource independent examination  
service  
The Hiscox Building  
Peasholme Green  
York YO1 7PR

**Date:**



**York Allotments CIO**  
(CIO Number:1174306)

**Receipts & payments accounts for the year ended: 31st December 2020**

			<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>
	<b>Unrestricted</b>	<b>Restricted</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>funds</b>	<b>funds</b>	<b>funds</b>	<b>funds</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Receipts</b>				
Rents	68,317	-	68,317	69,882
Fundraising & donations	35	-	35	-
Bank interest	106	-	106	128
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b><u>68,458</u></b>	<b><u>-</u></b>	<b><u>68,458</u></b>	<b><u>70,010</u></b>
<b>Payments</b>				
Administration officer	18,745	-	18,745	17,969
Insurance	1,936	-	1,936	2,239
Memberships & subscriptions	-	-	-	66
Grass & hedge cutting	14,500	-	14,500	14,000
Deposits returned	-	345	345	490
Free plots and honorariums	685	-	685	815
Licences	1,402	-	1,402	1,091
Independent examination fee	300	-	300	300
Admin support & office costs	5,816	-	5,816	5,976
Skip hire & upgrade of sites	574	-	574	1,956
Repairs & maintenance	6,052	-	6,052	4,467
Trustees' expenses & meeting costs	37	-	37	-
Water	6,755	-	6,755	3,290
Bids	-	-	-	7,366
Restricted expenditure on plots	-	-	-	5,204
Bank charges & paypal fees	1,951	-	1,951	1,785
Sundry expenses	45	-	45	-
<b>Total payments</b>	<b><u>58,798</u></b>	<b><u>345</u></b>	<b><u>59,098</u></b>	<b><u>67,014</u></b>
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	<b>9,660</b>	<b>(345)</b>	<b>9,315</b>	<b>2,996</b>
<b>Transfer between accounts</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Balance brought forward</b>	<b>35,897</b>	<b>29,510</b>	<b>65,407</b>	<b>62,411</b>
<b>Balance carried forward</b>	<b><u>45,557</u></b>	<b><u>29,165</u></b>	<b><u>74,722</u></b>	<b><u>65,407</u></b>

**York Allotments CIO**  
(CIO Number:1174306)

**Statement of assets and liabilities at:**

**31st December 2020**

	<b>Unrestricted funds</b>	<b>Restricted funds</b>	<b>2020 Total funds</b>	<b>2019 Total funds</b>
<b>Assets</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Cash at bank and in hand</b>				
Current bank account	42,153	-	42,153	33,303
Deposit account	1,069	29,165	30,234	30,128
Paypal	2,335	-	2,335	1,976
	<b><u>45,557</u></b>	<b><u>29,165</u></b>	<b><u>74,722</u></b>	<b><u>65,407</u></b>

	<b>Unrestricted funds</b>	<b>Restricted funds</b>	<b>2020 Total funds</b>	<b>2019 Total funds</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Independent examination fee	300	-	300	300
	<b><u>300</u></b>	<b><u>-</u></b>	<b><u>300</u></b>	<b><u>300</u></b>

York Allotments CIO  
(CIO Number:1174306)

Notes to the accounts for the period ended: 31st December 2020

1. Basis of accounts

The Trustees have taken advantage of section 144 (2) of the Charities Act 2011 and prepared the accounts on a receipts and payments basis.

2. Restricted funds

<b>Fund name</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Deposits	Deposits which may be refundable if plots are returned in a responsible state

	Balance B/wd	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Transfer between funds	Balance C/twd
<b>Unrestricted Funds</b>	35,897	68,458	58,798	-	45,557
<b>Restricted Funds</b>					
Deposits	29,510	•	345	•	29,165
Total Restricted Funds	29,510	-	345	-	29,165
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>65,407</b>	<b>68,458</b>	<b>59,143</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>74,722</b>

Approval of accounts for the year ended: 31st December 2020

The report and accounts were approved at a meeting of the Trustees held on:

7/4/21  
Date

A. Chalcraft

1/4/21  
Date

Signed for and on behalf of the trustees

ANTHONY CHALCRAFT

CHAIR

Print name

Position (e.g. Chair etc)