

June 2021

Dear Tenants

It's now nearly four years since YACIO took over responsibility for running the allotments from the City Council. During this time the emphasis has been on trying to get the basics right: for example, regular grass cutting, behind the scenes improvements to administration and, most of all, not increasing rents.

Trustees hope this focus on getting the basics right reflects the priorities of ploholders. But we're also very aware there's a lot more to be done. Most allotment sites are in need of an overhaul. Except for some initiatives led by associations, there's been no significant development and investment for years.

As a charity YACIO is set up to serve its members, that is every allotment tenant. On the 9th October we hope, the Covid situation permitting, to hold a 'members' day' event where there'll be an opportunity to discuss how YACIO could both improve the basics and set about starting to revamp allotments. More details on this will follow in the next newsletter. In the meantime, we'd very much like to hear from members. Is the focus on the basics right? Are there things that still don't work well? And when it comes to future site enhancements, what should be some the priorities?

As well as wanting your views on how to take allotments forward we also need you to help us keep everything ticking over. If something on site needs fixing, perhaps a dripping tap, a dodgy lock or a hole in a fence tell us at contact@york.allotments.org. Don't assume someone else will do it!

-Tony Chalcraft – Chair of Trustees

tony.chalcraft@yorkallotments.org



New Trustees Needed!

We currently have vacancies on the Board of Trustees. If you'd like to help make decisions about how the allotments are run then go to **yorkallotments.org/new-trustees** to see what the role involves and get in touch!

www.yorkallotments.org
contact@yorkallotments.org
0808 2812642

Charity Registration 1174306

York Allotments
Popeshead Court Office
Peter Lane
York
YO1 8SU

Co-Tenants on Plots

When you signed up for your allotment plot you may have just put your own name down but did you know you can add a co-tenant to your tenancy? A co-tenant has all of the same rights and responsibilities over a plot and can take over the plot if something happens to you. If you want to add a new co-tenant then they must have been registered for 2 years before being eligible to take on the tenancy in their own name, this is to prevent abuse of the system by people trying to 'jump' the waiting list.

There are benefits to having a co-tenant registered, if your contact details change we have another person to reach out to to ensure that you don't miss important messages and have your tenancy terminated. You are also both covered by YACIO's public liability insurance for your activities on site. (Speak to your local Association about insurance available for non tenants through NSALG membership.)

You can add up to 2 co-tenants to your tenancy agreement, you just need to fill out the Co-tenant Form available on the FAQ page of our website (or ask the Administrator for a copy).

This form must be filled out by the current tenant, you cannot apply to add your own name to their tenancy without their permission.

Meet The Trustees: Tony Chalcraft

I was first dragged to the allotment as an infant. An early memory is being plonked in my grandfather's wooden handcart and being wheeled along a bumpy track. Twenty years later I had my first plot, high on a windswept hill above the sea in Brighton.

In York I've shared a plot at the Carr site in Acomb with my partner Jane for forty years. For 20 of these we were the youngest tenants on a site; in fact for quite a few years we were almost the only tenants.

As in the rest of the country, allotments in York have undergone a renaissance. I got involved with YACIO because I want to keep it that way, but also because I want to help develop and improve allotments.

Growing fruit and vegetables has been a lifelong passion. No crop is off limits, not even tricky ones like aubergines.



Cultivation

After a difficult year for everybody last year, one of YACIO's key goals for 2021 is to increase cultivation standards across the city and make sure that neglected plots can be brought back into cultivation. There are more people than ever waiting for the chance to enjoy their own slice of allotment life so we cannot have plots left to degrade for years. We know that sometimes life can get in the way and things happen but if you're not going to be able to garden your plot, you need to let us know why. If possible take steps to temporarily cover beds so that weeds don't spread or enlist reliable help from friends or family to tide you over.

We will be making inspections on all sites over the year and if your plot is looking neglected then we will write to you and ask you to take steps to rectify the issues within three weeks or your tenancy may be at risk of termination. We ask that the majority of all plots are used for the cultivation of crops, be it fruits, flowers or vegetables, and that all paths or areas of grass are kept weed free and well maintained. If you are using coverings on your plot these should not be in use long term. Black plastic membrane is not considered a crop!



Water Reclamation

Water is one of the major costs to the allotments and the use of mains water to water crops can be wasteful. If you have a shed or other structure on your plot consider installing rainwater capture systems wherever possible.

They don't have to be expensive, a piece of guttering and an old plastic bin can do the job just as well as a purpose built water butt!

Some crops will do even better with rainwater rather than chlorinated tap water and the ecological benefits of using the (usually) abundant natural resource available to us can have a whole host of benefits. Having a water butt on your plot means that you should have water available to you even when others are using the taps. Perfect for popping down to the plot to enjoy these warm summer evenings!

Barbed Wire

As part of our efforts to improve sites and address safety issues, YACIO no longer permits barbed wire to be used anywhere on the allotments. However, there are some sites where existing barbed wire is still prevalent. If you have barbed wire on your plot look at how you might go about removing this. We're not asking for it all to be removed immediately but as barbed wire is a hazard we will be looking to gradually remove this from all sites over time. If you are unsure how to go about this then help can be made available to you.

Crops for Late Summer Sowing and Planting

Gardeners who think sowing and planting are only for spring months are missing a trick. In late June and July there's still enough growing season left for lots of different crops.

Beetroot and carrots sown up to the end of June should provide a decent late autumn harvest if they germinate quickly. Dwarf French beans are also worth a try. Getting them in the ground in the first week of July is usually in enough time to get pickings from mid-September.

Other crops can go in even later. Turnips, especially the fast growing smaller types such as Purple Top Milan, can be sown as late as the end of July and still produce good size roots before cold weather sets in. The same is true of winter radish and its oriental relative mooli. Leafy crops are amongst the best for late summer sowing. Have you tried spinach in spring and early summer only to have the plants bolt? Spinach sown in August is far less likely to throw up a seed head. Chard too will give a useful autumn crop if sown in July. The white stemmed type is the hardiest. Most years this will stand through winter to provide more leaves the following spring.

And there are the salad crops. Faster growing types of lettuce can be sown until early August. Even quicker are salad leaves such as rocket, mizuna and mustards. Most of these can be sown as late as early September. What's more, if grown when the weather is cooling, there's less chance of bolting and reduced damage from the pesky flea beetle that tends to pockmark the leaves in hot summer weather.

Courgette Fritters

Makes 6-10 Fritters (Depending on the size of your courgette, its moisture content and the size of your fritters!)

1 large ish courgette, grated
(Use the food processor attachment if you have one!)

1 tsp salt

1 large egg

fresh ground black pepper

1/2 cup plain flour

2tbsp cooking oil

- Place your grated courgette in a sieve over a bowl or sink and sprinkle with salt. Leave it for 5-20 minutes then gently press out any liquid.
- Combine the courgette, egg and pepper in a mixing bowl, give it a good stir!
- Add the flour and mix until well combined.
- Heat a few tbsp oil in a heavy frying pan then add a few spoonfuls of your mixture, well spaced, and press down slightly to level.
- Cook for a few minutes until crisp and golden brown then flip over and cook for another few minutes until golden brown on the bottom and feeling solid when pressed in the centre.
- Place on paper towel on a plate and leave in a warm oven while you repeat with the remaining mixture.
- Enjoy as a side to a main meal, serve for an unusual brunch, take on a picnic to your plot, whatever takes your fancy!

Keep In Touch!

If you change your contact details please don't forget to let us know! Just drop us a quick note and we can update your records so that we don't lose touch.

If you didn't receive any emails from us this year, then we do not have your email address on file, so let us know so we can keep you up to date with important notices throughout the year.