

Summer 2023



# NEWSLETTER

THE LATEST NEWS FROM YORK ALLOTMENTS



## CHANGES TO RENTS & CONCESSIONS

Since YACIO took over running the allotments from the Council in 2017 there has been no increase to the allotment rents. We had hoped to avoid an increase for 2024. Unfortunately, due to the high rate of inflation, YACIO's costs have risen, for example we are paying substantially more for grass and hedge cutting. As a result, so that YACIO can continue to maintain the allotments there will be a

small overall increase in rents for all tenants from next year. The new rates for 2024 will be (current rent in brackets): quarter plots £25 (£24); half plots £50 (£48); full plots £100 (£96); extra large plots £135 (£130).

In addition, we are also making some changes to concessionary rents. At present a concessionary rent providing a 40% discount is available to those in receipt of state pension or universal credit, those registered as disabled and full time students. As from 2024 these concessions will no longer apply. Instead an increased concessionary rate of 50% will

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be introduced and be available to any tenant in receipt of a means tested benefit. This does mean that those in receipt of state pension will no longer be automatically entitled to a concession unless receiving a means tested benefit.

Trustees have thought long and hard about these changes. Although we appreciate that some tenants will pay more as a result of the concession alterations, we believe the adjustments are fair and will help make allotments more affordable for many people. It also helps ensure we can continue to maintain and develop the allotments for the benefit of all tenants. The changes were also discussed at the Annual General Meeting and endorsed by the majority of members (tenants) present.

We would also like to emphasise that any tenant who feels they are genuinely going to struggle to pay their rental fees (whether or not they are in receipt of a benefit), can apply for a concession, in complete confidentiality, by contacting YACIO. We do not want any tenant to give up their plot because they can't afford it.

## COMPETITION TIME!

If you'd like to get some recognition for all the hours you spend tending your plot, then enter the new YACIO Plot Competition. All you need to do is fill in a simple entry form on the YACIO website ([yorkallotments.org/best-plot-competition](http://yorkallotments.org/best-plot-competition))

Plots will be judged early July by panels of experienced gardeners who are not connected with your own site. The judging criteria will include:

- Condition of the plot.
- Crop quality and range of plants grown (considering the size of the plot).



- Sustainability and biodiversity: composting, wildlife habitat, encouraging pollinators, recycling.
- Where applicable: structures (sheds, greenhouses, polytunnels) in good condition, water harvesting from structures.

The size of your plot will not be a factor in the competition, so please enter even if you only have a small plot. At each site there will be a winner in the "newcomer" category and the "established" category, so even if you are new to growing you have a good chance of picking up a prize. There will be winners in each allotment area. The area winners will then go forward to the overall York-wide winner for each category.

Prizes will be given out at an award ceremony probably during National Allotments Week (7 – 13 August 2023) - to be confirmed. The details of the winners will be published in a future YACIO newsletter and there may be other local publicity. So fill in the form now – entries must be made by the end of June!



**Open Day**  
11.00am  
Saturday, 17th  
June

## Holgate Community Orchard Garden

After a year of digging, building and planting, Holgate Allotment are about to unveil their new community orchard garden. If you live locally come along to our open day on Saturday 17th June at 11:00am to take a look. There'll be refreshments and some live folk music to enjoy from 12 noon. Hope to see some of you there.

## PLOT LINES "LONG DAYS"



It's the crazy time of year now, and the fast climb up to summer solstice. Growth is extraordinary and if you miss a few days on your plot the change is astonishing, and demands even more work of you.

Perhaps you're finding yourself aching from all the hours weeding and sowing and planting. It's always good to remember to extend forward from the hips, keeping the back and front bodies long and open, and your feet parallel to one another, rather than hunching up towards the ground. That really helps keep the lower back happy and free, so you can go on and on with all you need to do.

It's a great time to be making compost, as you're probably running out of what was already made as you spread it for your crops. When the weather is warmer the whole process speeds up, and having big heaps also helps the processing. Remember to build layers with greens and browns, nitrogen and carbon, with as much cut comfrey and nettle tops (not the roots) as you can generate. It's best not to use coloured cardboard because of the inks or dyes, but brown cardboard boxes torn up are excellent compost material. If you have any grass paths, the cuttings will also contribute to rich fast maturing compost.

If you sowed green manures earlier in the year, they may be ready to be cut or hoed off now, and added to the compost, or used to mulch around your potatoes. (Potatoes need soil drawn up around the stems, to ensure that the developing tatties stay well underground; any light will turn them green and poisonous.) The green manures like phacelia or crimson



**Do you have an event or piece of allotment news you'd like to share? Let us know and we'll publicise it here.**



clover will be coming into glorious flower, so you may want to leave at least some of them to attract pollinators to your beans, and just to enjoy the show. And if you have any unused space, unlikely as that is at this time of year, you can sow clover and phacelia still, or a mustard for a quick ground cover.

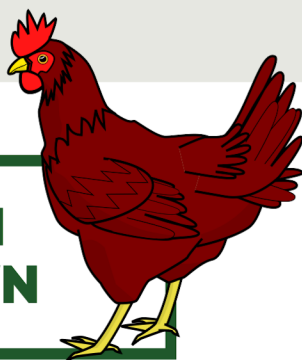
The worst thing about this time of year is netting! The birds are still hungry for food for their young and pigeons are insatiable. Your soft fruits definitely need to be netted to stop birds eating the jewelled currants and raspberries, but it's a tricky job to make sure there are no gaps, even at ground level, weighting it down with stones or bricks or logs; if a bird does get in, they will scoff your fruit, but likely also get stuck in the netting which is a horrible fate. Sparrows will scuff up baby beetroot, and large white butterfly caterpillars will hungrily devour your brassicas (even though they're not mentioned in that children's story!). Carrot root fly and leek moths are much tinier, but will home in on growing crops and spoil them, so use some mesh covering to keep them out. You can keep your nets for many years, and there are some available now which are not plastic and so obviously a better idea.

Meanwhile, amid all these jobs, don't forget to keep sowing: main crop carrots, lettuces (as long as it's not too hot), a further lot of French beans, and summer turnips like Purple Top Milan, so delicious fried with your lightly steamed first broad beans. It makes all the hard work worth it!

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**Plotlines**, written by a York allotmenteer, is a twice monthly blog aimed at anyone who would like some guidance about growing on an allotment. To read more, visit: [yorkallotments.org/plotlines](http://yorkallotments.org/plotlines)

## CHICKEN LOCKDOWN



During the winter, DEFRA (Department of Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs) and APHA (Animal and Health Agency) enforced Housing Orders for Chickens and all other Birds to reduce the risk of Avian Flu spreading. This means that any tenants with chickens must keep them within their coops, or if in an enclosure, the roof must either be of solid construction or covered with scaffolding netting or plastic sheeting. The floor needs to be kept dry. This is because Avian flu is spread by the droppings of wild infected birds. Your chickens can become infected if they stand in the droppings then clean their feet. Cleanliness is vital, so please disinfect your shoes and don't allow anyone else near your hens. Suitable disinfectant can be bought at Thompsons in Murton.

Each year it appears that the lockdowns are longer than the year before, so what can you do to keep your chickens healthy and happy? If you have the space, please use the summer months to expand your enclosure. Build a second story with either steps or a ramp. This can all be done using recycled material. Put in extra perches with hiding places for fresh food so they have to search for it. Keep your enclosure warm and dry by adding temporary sides which can be removed in summer. This has the added benefit of allowing the chickens to continue to lay eggs during winter. Add a swing, believe it or not hens like them and mine often fall asleep on the swing.

The other thing is to watch out for are illnesses caused by being confined, including itchy legs mites. This is easily diagnosed by raised scales on the chickens feet or legs and is easily treated with a spray which can also be bought at Thompsons.

For advice or assistance with animal welfare contact: [heather.whittaker@yorkallotments.org](mailto:heather.whittaker@yorkallotments.org)

## LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!



*York students filming at Holgate Allotments*

We were pleased to be able to facilitate a two day film shoot at Holgate Allotments Carriage Garden to help students from York St John's University complete their second year film project. The comedy short, called 'Canoodle' is a modern adaptation of Jack & The Beanstalk set in a semi-dystopian world. Watch this space for information on the premiere!



**A big thanks to everyone at The Holgate Allotments for letting us use the space for our short film 'Canoodle'. It's a truly unique space and has proven to be an excellent backdrop for our film!**

*George Cuthbert, Director of Canoodle*

## CONTACTING US



[contact@yorkallotments.org](mailto:contact@yorkallotments.org)



0808 281 2642 (answering service)

York Allotments, Popeshead Court Offices,  
Peter Lane, York, YO1 8SU



@yorkallotments



York\_Allotments

Charity registration: 1174306

