

Spring 2025



# NEWSLETTER

THE LATEST NEWS FROM YORK ALLOTMENTS



**AGM**  
22nd March  
Clements Hall,  
10:00am - 12:00pm

## MEMBERS' DAY AND AGM

With this newsletter you'll find details of our Annual General Meeting and Members' Day to be held on Saturday 22nd March between 10 o'clock and midday. Once again we'll be at Clements Hall situated on Nunthorpe Road opposite Scarcroft School and a short walk from Blossom Street. Everyone who is a tenant of a YACIO allotment is a member and is welcome to attend.

The meeting will be in two parts; our formal Annual General Meeting which should take no more than 30-40 minutes followed by refreshments and an 'open forum'. This is an opportunity for you to ask questions, make suggestions, learn about what's happening on other sites or meet and talk to trustees and other plotholders.

You are welcome to ask questions or make suggestions during the open forum or submit them in advance by emailing [contact@yorkallotments.org](mailto:contact@yorkallotments.org). We're also happy to receive email questions or suggestions if you're unable to attend the meeting.

**Best plot competition**  
Best plot • Best newcomer • Prizes!  
Self nominated  
Details coming soon!

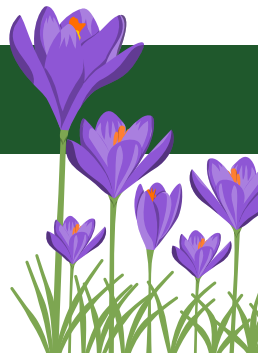


### WHAT'S INSIDE:

Keeping plots secure - 2

Allotments; the place to bee - 3

Plotlines; times and seasons - 4



## KEEPING PLOTS SAFE & SECURE



You will all be aware, having recently received an email, that there was a serious incident of theft on Bootham Stray Allotments. Particularly serious in that it appeared to have been a well organised intrusion with a vehicle on hand to remove stolen goods. Dozens of sheds were broken into by intruders who were equipped with all the necessary equipment to force entry. One of the trustees, who happens to be a plot holder on the site, notified the police and attended a site inspection with a police constable.

As we all fully appreciate, allotment sites are extremely vulnerable in respect of unauthorised intrusion - even the locked sites. While we have become relatively accustomed to occasional intrusions by youths who tend to be wantonly destructive and less inclined to steal, we are less prepared for attacks by organised adult intruders intent on stealing valuable gardening implements.

Over the past few years, YACIO has made a point of liaising closely with the police both in reporting incidents and seeking advice on how we might better defend our plots and property. While YACIO has endeavoured to work on the practical advice provided, e.g. improved boundary fencing and lowering plot hedges (which provides perfect cover for intruders), the trustees have been less successful in persuading tenants whose property has been damaged or stolen, to report these incidents to the police. The police tell us that, despite YACIO making them aware that there have been intrusions, they have received very few (and sometimes no) reports from tenants. This means that, as far as police records are concerned, incidents of vandalism and theft on York Allotments are rare. As a consequence, the police inform YACIO, they are less likely to be able to divert resources to assist us.

YACIO would like to take this opportunity to remind all tenants that if there is evidence of unauthorised

intrusion, vandalism or theft on their plot, they should report the matter immediately to the police via a 101 telephone call and follow that up by notifying YACIO both of the incident and actions taken.

The trustees would also like to remind everyone that YACIO recommends NOT keeping anything of value on your plot.

It is only by working together with the police, that we will improve our chances of averting future incidents.



## COME ALONG AND CEILIDH!

Green Lane Growers are proud to present, by popular demand, their second annual Ceilidh which will be held on **Saturday 15th March**, from 6:30pm at English Martyrs Church hall on Dalton Terrace, YO24 4DA. Come along and celebrate St Patrick's weekend with a warming drink and an even warmer dance (no dancing skills required). Spoil yourselves and bring your own favourite food and drink or, share a table with friends and bring a feast. Tickets, which are £10, sold very quickly last year so, secure yours by calling Mary on 01904 789576 or Colin on 07758857943. There's even a raffle so please bring all your loose change. Look forward to seeing you there.



Last year's Ceilidh

## ALLOTMENTS; THE PLACE TO BEE

Our allotments play a significant role in supporting pollinators in urban areas when compared to other urban spaces. This is what researchers from Northumbria University found when they surveyed pollinator diversity in four cities across the UK; Edinburgh, Leeds, Bristol and Reading. Having sampled a total of 360 sites across nine different land uses including; residential gardens, parks, road verges, pavements, churchyards, urban nature reserves and allotments, researchers found that allotments, along with residential gardens outperform all other land uses when it comes to supporting the largest number and variety of pollinating insects, particularly bees and hover flies. Furthermore, despite the small area they cover in cities, allotments have a disproportionately positive impact on pollinator numbers. And it's not just allotments themselves that benefit from having high numbers of insect pollinators. A patch of land near an allotment will also benefit significantly by having larger numbers of visiting pollinators too.

There are several reasons for this, but one of the most obvious is probably the diverse range of fruiting plants and herbs commonly found in allotments that offer an abundant food source for pollinators throughout the year.

Another similar study conducted by researchers in the German city of Aachen recorded lower pollinator numbers in urban versus rural sites, with the marked exception of Community Gardens, the German equivalent of allotments. Here, pollinator numbers were found to match those in rural areas. Researchers proposed that something else might be contributing to the uniquely rich concentration of pollinators. That is, what they called the 'near-natural' patches often found in the corners and edges of allotments where native plants naturally spread with minimal management. These areas

serve as crucial nesting sites and provide food for insect larvae to feed on.

We can be very proud of the role our allotments play in supporting York's pollinator population. And it seems, the more 'allotment thinking' spreads to other green spaces across our city, the better.



## WHO'S WHO ON OUR ALLOTMENTS?

Who should you contact if you have a query about your allotment invoice? Who's in charge of your allotment's shop? Are you confused about who does what? Here's an overview of the organisations involved in our allotments.

### YACIO

YACIO is the charitable organisation responsible for the management of the allotments and it is run by a board of voluntary trustees who are all plot holders. YACIO employs two part-time administrators who are your first point of contact for any issues relating to the allotments including invoicing, maintenance or your tenancy.

### Site Secretary

Each allotment site is represented by a voluntary site secretary who deals with letting new plots and reporting any site issues.

### Allotment Association

Some sites have Associations, which are organised groups of plot holders who work to improve their site for the benefit of their fellow allotmenters and the local community. If there is a shop on your site or communal areas such as a community orchard or wildlife garden, these will often have been created and are managed by your Allotment Association.



## PLOT LINES: TIMES AND SEASONS

Food growing, allotmenting: a science or an art? Or a bit of both? What kind of knowledge do we need to acquire in order to be effective 'good' gardeners? How do we know when to start sowing this new season? How do we learn from our mistakes and other people's successes so there is more laughing and satisfaction and less weeping and frustration?

So what is the 'right' time to get started in this new season? What should you be doing first? Hopefully you got all your ground preparation done last year, and your gorgeous soil is ready under cardboard or mulch, just waiting for some warmth (aren't we all). Maybe you sowed some sweet peas and broad beans last month; that often works well for crops a few weeks earlier than those sown next month, but this year the last weeks have been so cold their growth will have been checked and you risk them dying, or struggling and getting too leggy. Maybe you are having pangs of regret for what you haven't done! If you still haven't pruned your soft or top fruit you will probably be aware that you are really (too) late now! Early spring isn't the time. Bushes and trees will already be putting on growth so you'll be pruning away all that new energy that would otherwise be going into fruit buds. Similarly, if you never got around to cutting hedges and pruning hedgerow trees, you're fast running out of time.

We share our plots with other living beings and from the beginning of March birds are prospecting for nests. Likewise, if you didn't divide your pond plants and scoop out dead leaves over the winter, it's too late for this season as all those watery beings will be getting busy in their home there.



**Don't miss out on hearing from us**  
**Have you moved house, changed your email or phone number? Please let us know.**

Observation is key. So keeping records of when you sow and plant and how productive those efforts were begins to form your own almanac of what to do when. But of course the seasons are not what they were even five years ago; our climate is changing, is less predictable, and shows less of a knowable pattern. Will we endure another cold March? Another soaking April? A drought in July? Nonetheless, your own observation of your own patch of earth, your allotment, is still a better guide to what to do when than the books you might read, or the instructions on seed packets (how can they be right for the whole of Britain?). If you keep a record of your losses as well as your harvests you'll be able to adjust year on year and learn what works in your location.

Once annual weeds start to show, it's an indication that green life is emerging out of the quiet of winter. Cleavers, or goosegrass as some call it, is one of the first to show, and incidentally provides a tasty addition to scant salads at this time of year. The first ladybirds are a sure sign of spring and tell us that other invertebrate creatures are, we really hope, also getting out and about. The first nettles show an intense deep green that just shouts their high vitamin and mineral content; so root them out if you need to, but make sure to enjoy a few fresh delicious nettle soups as a spring tonic for your system.



**Plotlines** is a regular blog written by a York allotmenteer. To read more, visit: [yorkallotments.org/plotlines](https://yorkallotments.org/plotlines)

### CONTACTING US

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

 07887 529 195

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

 @yorkallotments

 York\_Allotments

Charity registration: 1174306