

Spring 2026



# NEWSLETTER

THE LATEST NEWS FROM YORK ALLOTMENTS



**AGM**  
28th March  
Clements Hall,  
10:00am - 12:00pm

## MEMBERS' DAY AND AGM

Our Annual General Meeting and Members' Day will be held on Saturday 28th 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 ploholders. This year a police officer will also attend to answer any questions you may have about security on our allotments.

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)

Help shape the future of York's allotments



Details inside!

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## A NEW LEASE FOR OUR ALLOTMENTS

### A New 35-Year Future for York's Council Allotments

We are delighted to share some very good news for York's allotment community. York Allotments Charitable Incorporated Organisation (YACIO) has secured a new 35-year agreement with the City of York Council to continue managing the city's council-owned allotment sites.

This long-term commitment recognises the success of the model that York pioneered in 2017, when management of the council allotments was transferred to a local charitable organisation run by allotment holders themselves.

YACIO is not a private company and it does not operate for profit. Instead, it is a member-led charity, with trustees who are themselves plot holders and gardeners with a direct interest in the wellbeing of York's allotments. Every tenant with a plot on a YACIO site is automatically a member of the charity, with the opportunity to attend the Annual General Meeting and vote on important decisions.

This structure helps ensure that decisions about our allotments are made by people who understand the value of these spaces – for food growing, wildlife, community and wellbeing – and who care deeply about their long-term future.

The trustees meet regularly to oversee the running of 17 sites across the city, supported by two part-time administrators and a network of volunteer site secretaries who play an essential role in managing plots and supporting tenants at each site.

Securing this new agreement provides stability and confidence for the future, allowing YACIO to continue improving sites, supporting biodiversity,

maintaining fair access to plots, and protecting these valuable green spaces for generations of York residents to come.

York's allotments have always been rooted in community. This new 35-year agreement ensures that they will remain locally run, member-led and focused on the needs of plot holders for many years ahead.

## HELP SHAPE OUR FUTURE



York Allotments Charitable Incorporated Organisation (YACIO) manages the council-run allotment sites across our city – places where people grow food, build friendships, share knowledge and spend time outdoors.

These sites are special not only because of what happens on them, but because they are run by the allotment community itself.

YACIO is a member-led charity governed by a board of volunteer trustees, many of whom are plot holders. Together they oversee the running of 17 allotment sites across York, helping ensure that these green spaces remain well managed, accessible and thriving for future generations of growers.

But this model only works when members are willing to step forward.

Trustees play an essential role in guiding the organisation, making important decisions and helping to safeguard the future of York's allotments. Without people willing to contribute their time and skills, YACIO simply could not function.

**We are now looking to welcome new trustees to the board.**

You do not need previous trustee experience. What matters most is a willingness to think carefully, work collaboratively and care about the future of York's allotments.

We are particularly keen to hear from people who may have experience or interest in areas such as:

- Health & Safety practice and implementation
- Allotment site maintenance, estates or infrastructure management
- IT, digital systems or website maintenance

Serving as a trustee is a voluntary role, but it is a genuinely rewarding way to support York's allotment community and help ensure these much-loved spaces continue to flourish.

If you value York's allotments and want to help secure their future, please consider getting involved.

To find out more or register your interest, visit: <https://yorkallotments.org/trustee-expression-of-interest> and complete the short Trustee Expression of Interest form. **If you're curious but unsure what the role involves, completing the form simply starts a conversation.**



Each year YACIO publishes a Trustees' Report and Accounts explaining how the charity has been run and what has been happening across York's allotment sites. The full report is available on the website, but here are a few highlights from the past year.

### **A challenging year for allotments**

2025 was one of the most challenging years YACIO has faced since taking over management of the council allotments in 2017. Many sites experienced unprecedented levels of theft, vandalism and

anti-social behaviour, including shed break-ins, fires and several serious arson incidents. Trustees and site secretaries worked closely with the police, councillors and local residents to respond to these issues and improve site security.

The growing season itself also presented difficulties. A very warm and dry spring and summer made cultivation harder for many tenants and resulted in a significant increase in water costs for the organisation.

### **Behind the scenes**

Despite these challenges, a great deal of work continued behind the scenes to keep the allotments running smoothly.

Two part-time administrators appointed in late 2024 have now settled into their roles, helping improve the speed and consistency with which routine enquiries and administrative tasks are handled. Trustees also introduced new systems to help manage operations more effectively, including an Action Log for decisions and an Incident Report Log to track theft and vandalism across sites.

Work has also continued on improving the charity's digital systems. Trustees are reviewing options for a new allotment management system and preparing the launch of a completely redesigned website, which will allow better communication with tenants and improved online services in the future.

### **Financial position**

The charity's finances remain stable and carefully managed. Total income for the year was £88,908 and expenditure £85,437, resulting in a small surplus. Much of YACIO's income comes from plot rents, which means trustees are always mindful of balancing costs while keeping rents affordable. One notable cost increase this year was water. The unusually dry weather meant charges more than doubled compared with previous years.

### Demand for allotments remains high

Demand for plots across York continues to be strong. At the end of the year there were over 3,200 applications on the waiting list, representing almost 1,700 individual applicants.

Although some applicants no longer take up a plot by the time one becomes available, waiting times on many sites are still several years, particularly for those closer to the city centre.

### Looking ahead

One of the most significant developments for YACIO is that agreement has now been reached with City of York Council on a new 35-year lease for the council allotment sites. This provides a much more secure foundation for the future and allows the charity to begin planning with a longer-term perspective.

Under the previous seven-year lease, long-term planning and external fundraising were difficult. The new agreement will open up opportunities to pursue grants and other funding that can support improvements to sites and the development of new initiatives.

Trustees will also continue work on a number of priorities in the coming years, including improving administrative systems and IT, exploring opportunities for new allotment provision, supporting biodiversity across sites, and providing more advice and training for tenants.

### Find out more at the AGM

The Annual General Meeting will take place on 28 March and is open to all YACIO members (all plot holders). It is an opportunity to hear more about the year's work, ask questions and take part in discussions about the future of York's allotments.

You can read the full Trustees' Report and Accounts on the [website](#).



**In case we need to contact you**  
**Have you moved house, changed your email or phone number? Please let us know.**

## TIPS FOR BETTER BEETROOT



Beetroot are one of the easiest vegetables to grow. If you've had mixed success, here are a few tips for a better crop.

If sowing direct into the soil, don't be too hasty. Germination is usually poor before mid-April. For early sowings that are sensitive to cold, use a bolt-resistant variety such as Boltardy.

For the best quality tender roots, sow in batches from April to June. A single early sowing will likely result in monster beetroot by autumn. The last batch started by midsummer should give roots into early winter.

Once germinated, beetroot usually need thinning. Unless a variety is described as 'monogerm', it will be 'multigerm', meaning one seed produces several seedlings. Thin several times while plants are young, aiming for about 5cm spacing.

While not normally troubled by pests and diseases, black aphids sometimes stunt and curl the leaves, while birds can pull them off at the seedling stage. Rodents are also attracted to beetroot roots, especially later in the season.

Although tolerant of dry conditions, young plants can struggle to establish during rainless spells.

## CONTACTING US

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