



Feed Leeds In-person Meeting – Monday 17th November at 4pm

The Tetley Pub, Hunslet Rd, Leeds LS10 1JQ

Present: Sarah-Jane Mason (FL and RHS), Annie Whitehead (FL and Leeds Community Composting); Sonja Woodcock (FL, FoodWise Leeds); Rosie Atkins (FL and FL Farm Gp), Becky Mears (FL, IE Aireborough and Season Well CIC); Rosie Hall (FL and Sec Leeds Allotments); Abbie Lees (LCC Allotments); Alan Thornton (Fruitworks co-op, Leeds Food Growing Network), Jacob Turner Hetchman (Yum Community Pantry Co-ordinator Armley)

Apologies: Rob Moores (FL Chair, P4P); Becky Mears (FL, IE Aireborough and Season Well CIC); Lynn Brown (FL and Beckhill Community Garden); Ama Chaney (FL and Grow to School); Cllr Marshall-Katung (LCC); Alison Varley (RHS); Paul Magnall (FL and Rainbow Junktion); Penny Pinn (FL and Horsforth Community Garden)

MINUTES

Approval of minutes from last meeting (for a copy of the minutes see the Feed Leeds website home page <https://feedleeds.org/>).

1. Leeds Annual Celebration and networking event (AGM) 9th Feb 2026

Save the date: Feed Leeds Annual Celebration

5.30 pm on 9th February 2026, Meanwood Valley Urban Farm

Feed Leeds Food Growing Awards 2026 – voting deadline 26th January

Categories for the Feed Leeds Food Growing Awards were discussed and finalised.

- Most Enthusiastic Young Gardener
- Outstanding Community Champion
- Best Business Support for Food Growing
- Outstanding Community Composting
- Special Award for Innovative Projects

We would like to generate media coverage for the event to share details of the Food Growing Awards across the city – this will include promotion when we launch the awards and also once the winners are announced.

Zoe's promotion last year was great and looked very professional, Sonja will see if we can book some of her time to do this and look at wider promotion via local media outlets and LCC media contacts of Abbies.

ACTION Sonja

- Revise wording and voting form for the categories and share with committee for comments. We would like to launch before Christmas and for deadline of 26th January to be used. This will allow for nominees to be notified and certificates to be printed before the event. *Sonja confirmed that we have funds in the FL account to offer nominees free tickets if this is a barrier to them attending*

- Discuss media strategy options with Zoe and agree how much time she will need to promote (celebration event and awards), share good news stories and announce winners after the event. Once promotion and words completed then Abbie will share via LCC media contacts.

LCC Councillor to present Awards at the Celebration was confirmed as Cllr Mohammed Rafique (LCC Executive Member for Climate, Energy, Environment and Greenspaces. and Cllr for Chapel Allerton). The marketing strategy outlined above will promote that Cllr Rafique will be presenting the winners on the night. It was discussed that we would need to put some wording together for the Cllr to use (both for promotion and on the evening) and for any media outlets to share.

ACTION Rosie A Plan content for the celebration event which the committee can approve and Cllr Rafique can use on the day for his intro and presentations.

Planning event content and meal options

We confirmed that we would like the event to be ticketed and for all payments to be taken through Eventbrite. In the past we have used the Foodwise Eventbrite but this may not be available to use this year.

ACTION SJ & Sonja will look into ticketing and decide if FL needs its own account setting up on Eventbrite (with the FL Bank details) or if there is an alternative platform we can use.

In addition to the Awards we also need to ensure that the Committee AGM business is also completed. This includes reviewing the previous years minutes and voting in the Committee. We currently have vacant positions for Chair, Co-Secretary and Communications Officer as well as general committee members. We would also like to have a representative from the council on the committee, Cllr Dalton, Rafique and Cunningham were suggested as potentials.

ACTION ALL If any members would like to be voted onto the committee please share a small expression of interest to info@feedleeds.org SJ will ensure positions are advertised and promoted before the Celebration too.

Proposed agenda agreed as follows:

5.30-6.00	Arrival and networking	Tea and coffee on arrival SJ to purchase biscuits/cakes/soft drinks
6.00-6.15	Welcome by Sonja Food Growing Awards update by Alan Thornton	Sonja to summarise last 12 months activity, thank Rob for his time as chair and SJ as time as co-sec.
6.15-6.25	Feed Leeds Committee – voting in members	Vacant positions include Chair, Co-Secretary and Communications Officer as well as general committee members.
6.25 – 7.25	Food Growing Awards presentations	Cllr Rafique to present awards SJ to take photos for socials/Zoe to use
7.25-8.25	Celebratory Meal and networking	Rosie A to book catering and check costs – as before 2 meal options (1 veggie and 1 vegan)

2. Update from the Committee on plans for 2026

Rob Moore has sadly resigned as Chair of Feed Leeds. We wish to thank him for all his support and work as Chair of Feed Leeds for the last 2 years. The Committee agreed that if nobody comes forward to be voted in as new FL chair then the position will remain vacant for the next 12 months.

Due to the limited capacity of Committee members, it was agreed that we could not continue the 'Get Growing' seedling distribution project in 2026. As such we will not

be applying for funding for this (however we may apply to other funding sources for costs such as web hosting and admin).

The overall plan for 2026 is that we hold the AGM (celebratory event in February) plus 4 other meetings (see below for proposal)

2026 Meeting Dates

Social and networking evening event Tuesday 21st April. Date, time and venue tbc.

Site visit and networking event at a Community Garden in wk/c 15th June, 4pm. Date, time and venue tbc.

Site visit and networking event Mon 14th September 4pm. Venue Hollin Lane Allotments.

Social and networking evening event wk/c November 9th. Date, time and venue tbc.

3. FL Members updates

Beckhill Community Garden Lynn Brown

After the Thackery community gathering, Lynn has linked up with Jen from the [National Education Nature Parks](#) which has been great. The team will be visiting my school to see how we can change some of our spaces into nature areas and we have started mapping the site with the students as part of their AQA skills awards.

Beckhill Garden is awaiting funding application for a joint 2 year collaboration with Fruitworks and possibly Carr Manor School and the local community.

We also sent an application to Harrogate Spring flower show which was accepted and starting to plan for the creative border we designed!!

Fruit Works Alan Thornton

Fruitworks is celebrating it's 5th year with an event for supporters and connections at All Hallows Church on Thursday 27th November. The team are **currently offering pruning courses for groups or individuals** <https://www.fruitworks.org.uk/courses> It was a bumper year for apples and the heritage orchard offered fruit shares for the first time, this was very successful and Fruitworks hopes to continue this each year.

Leeds Allotments Federation Rosie Hall

LAF will be hosting their annual 'Learning Day' at HEART on Saturday 7th March 2026, with speakers and activities. The event is open for all members of Leeds Allotment Federation, an organisation created to support self-managed allotments across the city. Abbie confirmed that if there were tickets available, she could promote the event to the LCC allotments too. The group are still planning a Harrogate flower show garden next Spring. The theme will be new, maybe small spaces growing, tbc. The collaboration with Weetwood School children was successful last school year but has not re-started as yet.

LCC Allotments. Abbie Lees

Abbie has been in role for 6 months now, she has focused on updating allotment waiting lists initially as several sites have over 100 people waiting! This shows the appetite for growing across the city and she is looking forward to getting out and meeting groups. In the future she hopes to explore how the 'Right to Grow' campaign fits with LCC policies with LCC Officers.

Composting Initiative Annie Whitehead.

Annie is now operating as a sole trader, there is interest in building community composting bins, following her success with 'The Leeds Compost Collective' and she hopes to continue with this work with groups. Her latest project is working with Yum Food Pantry in Armley, building composting bins at the Food Pantry for local residents to use.

Food Wise Sonja Woodcock

Sonja confirmed that Foodwise will operate until the end of the year, they are hoping to be successful with funding bids to continue the FoodWise work. She was at the 'Sustainable Food Places' lobbying event at Westminster on 13th November. MPs want northern Mayors to be involved. Sonja Woodcock. <https://www.sustainablefoodplaces.org/news/nov24-food-partnerships-in-westminster/>

Yum Community Pantry Armley (part of the [Food Savers Network](#)) Jacob Turner-Hetchman
The numbers attending the Food Pantry don't seem to be rising, despite the increasing cost of living, but it's not clear why. Jacob is exploring the coverage of Food Pantries for people in adjacent areas to Armley, to try to ensure everyone can have access.

RHS. SJ Mason

SJ confirmed that the work-based recruitment across all 5 gardens will be launching on 1st December. The first positions being advertised are for Level 3 and 4 Diploma Students at Wisley. The Apprenticeships will launch in January and the Professional Work Placements will launch in February. For more details visit <https://www.rhs.org.uk/education-learning/qualifications-and-training/work-based-training/> or contact Sarah-Jane Mason on sarah-janemason@rhs.org.uk

RHS Community Outreach Alison Varley

Many FL members attended the RHS Community Gardening Meet Up at the Thackray in October to learn more about research into peat free, water saving and setting up community gardens. Thackray is also working with the RHS on an exciting family gardening exhibition for Summer 2026 exploring how plants and gardens can nurture both mind and body.

4. AOB

Leeds Food Growing Network Plans The Leeds Food Growers' Network (LFGN) is an informal network of all the different community and livelihood food growers across Leeds. Alan Thornton, a director of Fruit Works Cooperative, has funding for 35 days over 9 months. He plans to contact both Community Growers and livelihood growers to find out what works, what doesn't work, what support they need and what help they can offer others. We will share the survey link to our members and on socials to encourage participation. He will also explore what successful models for Food Growing Networks exist, including in northern America. Alan Thornton.

The 'Boring Fund' Applications now open! £200 grants available for small charities, CICs and voluntary groups towards some of those boring but essential and hard-to-fund costs, like insurance, web hosting, admin time, etc.
<https://www.christinapoultoncreative.co.uk/boring-fund>

RHS 'Space to Grow' Report the first national research mapping the scale, impact and needs of community gardening in the UK, with insights into the challenges and opportunities from over 2,000 community gardening groups <https://www.rhs.org.uk/get-involved/community-gardening/spacetogrow> The report, aimed at government and organisations working in the community gardening space, offers clear, practical recommendations to help community gardening thrive and overcome the hurdles it faces. It demonstrates how a well-supported community gardening movement can improve health and wellbeing, unify communities, help grow nutritious and healthy food, support nature and biodiversity and reduce isolation, loneliness and division.

Free coffee grounds Yorkshire Housing in Leeds City Centre are looking at ways to make the office more sustainable. They have two bean-to-cup coffee machines, and these generate a lot of used coffee grounds on a daily basis. They are looking at giving these away to the local community for gardening! If you would like to have any of these coffee grounds to help with your gardening, please contact Ellie Gobbitt on ellie.gobbitt@yorkshirehousing.co.uk