



Chichester City Council

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Town Clerk: Mrs Sam Tate

ALLOTMENTS RULES & GUIDELINES

(Referred to in Clause 10 of the Tenancy Agreement)

Contact details:

The Allotments team can be contacted at;

Chichester City Council, The Council House, North Street, Chichester. PO19 1LQ

Telephone: 01243 788502

Email: allotments@chichestercity.gov.uk

These rules should be read in conjunction with the plot holder's tenancy agreement.

The rules will be amended from time to time; an up to date copy can be examined on the web site or by request from the council's offices.

PLEASE NOTE: THE COUNCIL HAS A ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY ON ABUSIVE AND AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR TOWARD COUNCIL OFFICERS, SITE STEWARDS AND OTHER ALLOTMENT HOLDERS.

SUCH BEHAVIOUR WILL BE DEALT WITH BY IMMEDIATE EXPULSION FROM THE ALLOTMENTS.

Emergencies

In the event of an emergency contact the Emergency Services and ensure that the access gate is open. The Police will be needed if forced access is required.

Site Stewards

Tenants are advised to make contact with their Site Steward, who is the local representative for the City Council and will be able to provide advice and assistance for most of the issues experienced by gardeners. Contact details can be found on the site noticeboard.

Allotment Site Stewards are NOT responsible for applying the allotment rules. That is the responsibility of Officers of the City Council.

Site, plot and personal property management and security

- The site gates MUST BE KEPT LOCKED AT ALL TIMES.
- Tenants are NOT permitted to remove plants, equipment or other items from another Tenant's plot without explicit permission from the other Tenant.

- Tenants are NOT permitted to dump waste of any kind on another tenant's plot OR in any of the common areas maintained by the City Council.
- Any Tenant found undertaking ANY form of fly tipping will have their tenancy cancelled with immediate effect. This includes and is not limited to dumping any waste on any part of the allotment site and burying inappropriate waste on any part of the allotment site.
- Any theft from or vandalism on a Tenant's plot should be reported to the Police in the first instance.
- The City Council is not responsible for liaising with the Police in the event of theft or vandalism on plots but Tenants should keep the City Council informed of these issues so a record can be kept.

Cultivation

- **There is a six month trial period for new allotment tenants.** If your plot becomes neglected and/or Rules & Guidelines are broken, then your tenancy may be terminated with 7 days notice to remove any personal belongings.
- The Tenant must keep the allotment plot clean and free of weeds and otherwise maintained in a good state of cultivation and fertility. Plots must be fully cultivated to provide fruit and vegetables for personal consumption only.
- It is not permitted to grow produce for commercial sale/profit.
- Wildflower areas are not permitted, nor is the cultivation of nettles for any purpose, including for animal feed.
- Overgrown areas are not acceptable even if other parts of the plot are well tended.
- Pathways abutting the plot should be kept unobstructed, weeded and regularly cut.
- Tenants are reminded that plots should be maintained to ensure crops are able to be grown throughout the year. *The National Allotment Society* guidelines (and many other publications that include crop rotation plans) contain details of how this can be done. Tenants should contact the site steward or Allotments team for any further assistance.
- If the City Council's allotment officer feels you are not maintaining your plot satisfactorily, they will contact you. This may be a phone call, email or a minor/official uncultivated letter which allows you an allocated time to resolve the issue. Every time the problem is not dealt with it will lead to the next notice being issued which eventually will lead to your tenancy being terminated. **Please do not ignore these notices if you wish to keep your plot.**

Biodiversity

In light of the City Council's Declaration of Climate Emergency (5 December 2018) it is understood that biodiversity loss is the 'other side of the coin' in climate change/breakdown and differing cultivation practices can be utilised to enhance the level of biodiversity on your allotment.

Use of 'green manures', organic and soil-friendly techniques of propagation are encouraged.

If you have an area that is unsuitable for cultivation and would like to use it for extra biodiversity, then please contact the allotment officer.

If permission is granted, then this area must be maintained tastefully and not allowed to become overgrown with weeds.

If a wildlife pond is approved, it must have a small fence around and a warning sign to help prevent accidents.

Fruit trees and bushes

- **Trees other than fruit trees are not permitted.** Trees must be fruit or nut bearing rather than decorative and should be kept well pruned to a manageable size which does not overshadow or cause obstruction to communal paths or neighbouring plots.
- If any tree surgery is required, this will be at the plot holders expense.
- If you already have a mature tree on your plot you may need to discuss its retention/reduction/removal with the allotments officer.

Fruit trees

- any new fruit trees must be dwarf root stock
- each tree must be maintained in good condition and regularly pruned
- branches should not be allowed to cause obstruction on common pathways
- planting should be well within the boundary of the plot with the spread of roots being taken into consideration
- trees should not cause undue shade to neighbouring plots
- tree height should not exceed 2.5 metres
- the aim should be to harvest fruit and to prune the tree without climbing the tree or any other structure.

Suitable rootstocks are:

Apples

- M9 rootstock for a small apple tree 2.5 metres
- M26 for cordons or espaliers
- M27 for stopovers or trees in pots

Pears - larger than apple trees even on dwarf rootstock

- 'Quince C' or 'Quince Eline' are suitable for a small tree, cordon, fan or espalier

Plum - choose trees grown on VVA-1 rootstock

- 'Pixy' or 'Ferenain' are best for a small, fan trained tree

Cherry

- 'Gisela 5' rootstock is good for a small tree (3m) and for fan training.
- Celeste, Stella and Sweetheart are recommended varieties.

Figs, Bay, and Olive must be planted in a tub, not directly in the soil.

- Flowers and shrubs are preferred to be planted under trees rather than turfed areas, these areas can be used for extended biodiversity.

Plot Inspections

The allotments are inspected by City Council Officers during the growing season, generally in May and August. However, an uncultivated notice can be served at any time.

Uncultivated Notices/Tenancy Terminations

The following procedure will be followed for Tenants of any plots deemed to be in an unacceptable state of cultivation:

- 1) A **Notice of Non-Cultivation** (letter 1) will be sent to the Tenant asking them to contact the City Council to confirm their intentions for the plot:
 - a. Work has started or is about to start, the plot is about to be or has been cleared and can be re-inspected within the timeframe allowance, or
 - b. the plot is to be relinquished.
- 2) If the plot remains in an unacceptable condition after the timeframe allowance a **Notice of Termination of Tenancy** (letter 2) will be sent advising the tenant that, **14 days from the date of the letter**, the tenancy will be terminated.
- 3) If no contact is received from the Tenant and/or no significant improvement is seen on the plot within the notice period a final **Confirmation of Tenancy Termination** (letter 3) will be sent and the plot and any plants, materials and equipment left on the plot will become City Council property.

If you receive a Notice please contact the allotments officer as soon as possible.

If you are experiencing difficulty in the cultivation of your plot, please contact us to discuss options, including reducing the size of the plot.

The allotments officer will be willing to discuss individual arrangements where plot-holders find themselves temporarily unable to attend their plots for a variety of reasons, some of which may include the following:

- a) change in personal/family circumstance
- b) personal or family illness or incapacitation
- c) normal holidays/time away
- d) other unforeseen but legitimate reasons

Terminating a tenancy is a last resort and will be avoided if at all possible.

Green waste management

- Tenants are advised to follow the *RHS guidelines for composting* suitable green and brown waste organic material.
- Material unsuited to these guidelines should be removed from the site and taken to the County Council's green waste recycling depot.
- Tenants **MUST NOT** pile up green waste on their plots OR on any other part of the site.
- Compost must be contained in bins and a maximum of 3 bins is allowed. These must be managed correctly.

- Only sufficient green waste that can be composted on the plot using accepted methods is permitted to be kept on the plot.

Water conservation

- The water on every site is metered.
- The cost of supplying water to all the sites amounts to a considerable sum each year and the annual cost increases year on year.
- Should you have any reason to suspect that there may be a water leak, please report this to the allotments officer in the first instance.
- **The use of sprinklers is prohibited, as is the unattended use of hosepipes.**
- Short term hand-held use of hose pipes is permitted as is the refilling of water butts by hosepipe.
- We urge all Tenants to actively practise water conservation by installing a water butt on their plot and collecting rainwater via guttering on sheds and/or greenhouses.
- In the event of the abuse of the water supply or continuing increases in water use, the City Council reserves the right to introduce a separate water charge based on a “per rod” fee. The City Council also reserves the right to introduce additional measures to limit wasteful use of water.
- Please bear in mind that the water supply to all sites is turned off when the clocks change in the Autumn and will not be turned back on until the clocks change in the Spring.

Structures

- The Tenant must not, without the prior written consent of the City Council, erect any building or structure, shed or greenhouse on the allotment (such consent not to be unreasonably withheld). An application form may be obtained either on line or from a member of our office staff.
- No more than 10% of the plot should be taken up by structures.
- As a general guide, sheds and greenhouses should not exceed 2.44m x 1.83m (8ft x 6ft) with a maximum height of 2.0m (6’6”) to the ridge and polytunnels should not be more than 3.05m (10ft) in length with a maximum height of 2.6m (8’6”) to the ridge.
- However, the allotment officer has discretion to consider larger structures on a case-by-case basis based on the size of the plot.
- Only 1 shed, 1 greenhouse and 1 polytunnel and 1 fruit cage is permitted per plot.
- All structures must be kept in good state of repair.
- Please note the following rules regarding the construction of the structures:
 - 1) **Glass greenhouses** are permitted on all of our allotment sites.
 - a) Greenhouses are to be of the shop bought variety or alternatively constructed from timber and glass.

- b) UPVC double glazing units, inclusive of doors, windows etc may not be utilised for the purpose of building such structures.
 - c) A deposit will need to be paid for any glass constructions. Please ask for an application form before you purchase any materials or bring them on site. The application form will need to be approved and the deposit paid before any work is started.
 - d) The deposit will only be refunded if the glass structure is in safe condition for the next tenant or all glass/structures are removed from site for the next tenant. Deposits will not be refunded if your tenancy is terminated.
- 2) All structures must be on a firm but **temporary base**, such as sleepers, loose laid paving slabs or compacted gravel.
 - 3) **Concrete or similar permanent bases are not permitted. (Polytunnels may be anchored by means of buried builders buckets filled with concrete.)**
 - 4) Brick or block-built structures are not permitted.
 - 5) No material shall be used that may pose a risk to health or a risk of contamination. Barbed wire, corrugated metal sheeting, sharp materials and any asbestos containing materials are **specifically prohibited**.
- Once a structure is approved it is the Tenant's responsibility to ensure that it is maintained in a reasonable and safe condition.
 - Any structure for which consent has not been obtained may be removed by the City Council without notice. The cost of removal may be recharged to the Tenant. (Existing structures that pre-date this Rules and Guidelines document may remain in place provided they are in reasonable and safe condition).
 - The City Council reserves the right to inspect structures from time to time in order to ensure that they are in a safe and sound condition.
 - The City Council reserves the right to require a Tenant to repair or remove any unsatisfactory structure. Failure to undertake the repairs or removal in the stated timescale may result in the cost of removing the structure by the City Council being charged directly to the Tenant.

Storage

- Sheds and other areas are not storage spaces and tools and other items on your plot or in any constructions must be used on a regular basis for the purposes of cultivating the allotment.
- If it is felt you are storing or holding unnecessary or inappropriate items on the plot, the allotment officer will contact you and ask you to clear the unnecessary items within an agreed timescale.
- Please do not bring items onto the site until you are ready to use them.

Turf

- Turf and grass seed may only be introduced as allotment paths no wider than an average wheelbarrow or 60cm/2 feet.

- Grass may be introduced under trees if you do not want to plant flowers to attract pollinators but any such areas must be trimmed regularly and must not exceed the diameter of the tree's crown.

Unsuitable Materials

There are certain items and materials which are not deemed suitable for allotment sites.

Examples of such materials include but are not limited to:

- Carpet
- Cardboard
- Car tyres
- UPVC double glazing units
- Shower screens
- Bathroom sanitary wear – e.g. bathtubs, handbasins, toilets
- Household appliances
- Corrugated metal
- Plaster board
- Kitchen cabinets

Dogs

- All dogs must be securely held on a leash and controlled and prevented from entering any neighbouring plot.
- Any fouling must be immediately removed.
- The City Council reserves the right to ban any dog which causes a nuisance.

Bonfires

- **Allotment bonfires are the cause of many complaints made to the City Council.**
- Repeated complaints against a Tenant may result in termination of the tenancy and/or possible legal action. (The Environmental Protection Act 1990 states that to cause a “statutory nuisance” as a result of “smoke or fumes” is an offence and the Local Authority’s Environmental Health Department can take appropriate action to secure the abatement of such nuisance.)
- **The City Council strongly discourages bonfires and recommends composting as the alternative.**
- However, if a bonfire is absolutely necessary then please observe the following guidance:
 - Bonfires must be restricted to the colder months of the year when neighbours are less likely to have windows open or be drying washing outside.
 - During the daylight savings (when the clocks go forward) small fires may only be lit after 5pm, Mondays to Fridays only. During standard hours (when the clocks go back) small fires may be lit at any time providing all of the other conditions are met.
 - Bonfires are to be avoided at the weekends and when neighbours are likely to be making use of their gardens.
 - Allotment Tenants should be courteous and considerate at all times and extinguish the bonfire immediately if a complaint is received.
 - Never light a fire within an hour of sunset or within 15 metres of any structure.

- Never leave a fire unattended.
- Ensure that you have adequate means to extinguish a fire close at hand in case the fire gets out of control.
- Be aware of wind direction and speed and avoid smoke reaching and causing a nuisance to neighbouring properties and other tenants.
- Do not attempt to burn green waste. This should be composted.
- You must not burn anything on your allotment except for garden waste that cannot be composted. No domestic or any other waste may be brought onto the plot for burning. Many other materials can be recycled rather than burned.
- Produce a hot quick fire using only dry materials that will emit the minimum of smoke. Accelerants such as petrol, oil or paraffin **must never** be used.
- The burning of plastics or plastic substrates is specifically prohibited.

During periods of extended hot, dry weather, the City Council reserves the right to ban ALL bonfires to prevent fires spreading, please check noticeboards before you light a fire.

Health & safety

- Everyone involved in allotment gardening, including Tenants, have a duty to ensure that allotment sites are as safe as is “reasonably practicable”.
- The City Council will undertake annual site safety inspections of all allotment sites. This is a procedure which enables risks to be identified, their relative severity assessed and a strategy developed for managing and reducing risks to an acceptable level.
- In general, the City Council is responsible for health and safety matters relating to site security, perimeter fencing, gates, water supply, common areas, main paths, roadways, untenanted plots and vermin control.
- Tenants are responsible for health and safety relating to paths between plots as well as structures, fencing, bonfires, compost and manure heaps and pesticides etc. on their plots.
- Tenants have a responsibility for the health and safety of any persons visiting their plot.
- An allotment tenancy may be terminated if the Tenant fails to comply with actions necessary to improve and maintain health and safety on allotment plots and sites.
- Any persons under the age of 16 must be supervised at all times whilst on the allotment site.

Pesticides & Fertilisers

Organic and soil-friendly methods of cultivation are encouraged to reduce or preferably eliminate the use of pesticides and chemicals.

Tenants are reminded that all chemical fertilisers, pesticides and soil improvers must comply with the legislation in force. Details of the current approved compounds can be obtained from *RHS Chemicals and Pesticides Guidelines for Home Gardeners*.

All types of weedkillers are to be used sparingly and only when necessary.

Tenants are not permitted to spray large areas of the plot (over 10%) without written permission from the City Council.

Spraying should only be undertaken on a still day.

If spraying is not possible due to weather conditions, Tenants should use a small paint brush and directly paint weedkiller onto the leaves to prevent drift from affecting neighbouring plots.

All Tenants have the right to have an organic plot. If it is proved that your neglectful chemical spraying has affected communal paths and neighbouring plots you will be banned from using all types of weedkillers. Use of weedkillers after such a ban has been imposed will result in your tenancy being terminated immediately, and a period of 14 days being given to remove all personal belongings. Any deposits held by the City Council will not be refunded.

Any chemicals, including but not limited to paint, varnish or pesticides; must be removed from the site and stored elsewhere when not in use. In the event of a fire involving such chemicals, firefighters could suffer life threatening lung damage or other injuries if they are not wearing the correct breathing apparatus. If these products are seen in your shed, you will be asked to remove them immediately. Only bring them on site when needed and then take them home the same day.

Insurance

- The City Council is not responsible for any personal injury, loss or damage to any structure or item on your plot (see also ***Site, plot and personal property security*** above).
- It is advisable that Tenants take out their own Public Liability Insurance Policy and insure any shed, greenhouse or poly tunnel on their plot.

Tools and equipment storage

- Tenants are advised that all hand operated tools and mechanical equipment should be removed from the site after use and stored elsewhere.
- The council does not provide any secure storage facilities on its allotment sites and accepts no responsibility for any loss or damage (see also ***Site, plot and personal property security*** above).

Allotment keys

- The allotment site key remains the property of Chichester City Council and must be returned to the City Council at the end of the tenancy.
- Plot holders are not permitted to copy the key or give it to any third party without the prior consent of the City Council. (Please also see Co-Workers below).
- If a replacement key is required due to loss or wear, please contact the Allotment team, who will be pleased to provide one. The current cost for lost keys is £5.00.

Co-Workers

- If you require help on your plot from someone who does not live at your address on a regular basis when you are not present, please ask for a Co-Worker form from the allotment officer.
- It is not permitted to allow friends and family on site unaccompanied without consent from the City Council.

- All Co-Workers and accompanied visitors must be familiar with the allotment guidelines.

Plot boundaries

- Please keep the grass walkways surrounding your plot tidy and clear of plants and personal belongings.
- Grass paths should be trimmed every 2 weeks during the growing season. (The current allotment officer recommends buying a battery strimmer.)
- Any hedges, bushes or trees that border your plot must be trimmed on a regular basis.

Keeping of hens and ducks on allotments

- ***The rules and regulations regarding keeping hens on allotments are contained in the City Council's "Keeping hens on allotments" document which is available from The Council House, North Street, the website or the allotment officer.***
- Tenants have a statutory right under the Allotments Act 1950 to keep hens on their allotment.
- You may keep up to 6 hens (minimum of 2) with the written permission of the City Council.
- Tenants wishing to keep hens on their allotment must complete and return a "Keeping hens on allotments" agreement.
- No hens are to be moved on to a Tenant's plot until consent has been received from the City Council.
- Tenants have a duty of care and are responsible for the hens' well-being – Tenants should refer to the detailed notes in the "Keeping hens on allotments" agreement.
- Livestock cages must be regularly cleaned with suitable cleaning solutions such as *Jeyes fluid* diluted according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- **Cockerels, turkeys and bees are NOT permitted.**

Vermin and other pests

- Tenants are advised to use physical barriers such as netting to protect their crops.
- Serious damage by rodents or wild mammals should be reported to the allotments officer.
- Significant issues with vermin or other pests on allotments should be reported to the allotments officer.

Vehicle access and parking on allotments

- Where the site layout allows, tenants may take vehicles on to site for the purpose of delivering appropriate tools and supplies or for the removal of tools, waste and other sundries.

- The City Council does NOT provide longer term parking on ANY allotment site. Once delivery or collection is complete, the tenant must remove their vehicle to suitable parking outside the allotment site.
- The Tenant is responsible for any damage caused by bringing their vehicle on site AND any damage caused by vehicles coming on site at the request of the Tenant. The City Council reserves the right to charge for any repairs caused in either case.
- You may only park on the allotment site for a maximum of 1 hour whilst loading and unloading. After this you must remove the vehicle from the track and find somewhere more suitable to park.
- Please do not block in any other vehicles when parking on site and allow plenty of room for other vehicles to manoeuvre safely.

Roman Amphitheatre

- 1) Vehicle access to Roman Amphitheatre is across Chichester District Council land. Tenants should be mindful of this when taking vehicles to the allotment site.
- 2) Vehicle access is prohibited during the winter months to prevent damage to District Council land or vehicles getting stuck on soft ground.
- 3) Tenants should only park on the left hand side of the gate as you drive onto the recreational ground.

St James

- 1) Tenant vehicle access is limited during regular office hours (09:00 – 17:00 Monday to Friday) due to Council vehicle access. Other times are permitted.
- 2) Tenants bringing vehicles on site should not block access to the council yard and there is a limit of two to three vehicles on site at any one time.
- 3) Access to and from the cemetery gate is to be by foot or pushbike only. You are not permitted to approach this gate by car unless you have permission from the allotment officer. If the grass verge outside the gate starts to show signs of wear and tear from vehicles the padlock will be changed to a maintenance lock so no tenants can access it in the future.

It is the City Council's intention and expectation that allotment holders should have the right to the benefit of quiet enjoyment of their plot and although not finite, these Rules and Guidelines are for the benefit of all allotment holders. Thank you for your anticipated cooperation.

Andrew Watson
Property Maintenance Manager