

Allotments Rules and Guidance Notes

These notes are intended to complement the Tenancy Agreement (clause 14) and provide site specific information governing the cultivation of your tenanted plot.

References to clause numbers are to the Tenant's Obligations in the Tenancy Agreement.

Failure to meet these guidelines may result in a Non-Cultivation Notice or a Notice to Quit being served, if it is deemed that the tenant has not met the conditions of the Tenancy Agreement.

1. Cultivation

1a Definition

This section refers to clauses 4 and 5 of the Tenancy Agreement and sets a minimum standard of 'cultivation': Cultivation is generally defined as follows:

The whole plot is to be kept reasonably weed free and the ground is to be prepared during the winter months. During the growing season, vegetables, fruit, flowers, winter crops etc. are raised, grown and harvested. A weed is defined as a plant growing where it is not wanted.

In determining 'cultivation' the Authorised Officers decision shall be final.

If you take on an uncultivated plot, consider how you are going to tackle the weeds.

- If you decide not to use weed killer, the best way to get started is to lift the turves, dig a trench and bury a layer of the turf in the bottom of the trench
- Do not stack turves in a pile on the plot as this reduces the fertility of the soil and leaves you with a grass mound that you can not cultivate

- Areas covered with horticultural membrane or plastic sheet should only be used as a short-term solution to control weeds on overgrown plots
- Compost the green waste on your plot. Once it has rotted down, spread the compost to keep the soil fertile and help to retain water for the plants
- Do not use vacant plots or your plot as a dump for rubbish (clause 12)

1b. Grass areas

Grass is to be regularly mown or cut short. Grass areas are usually, where ever possible, kept to a minimum. Grass areas are not generally considered to be 'cultivated' areas but rather a necessity for gaining access to the cultivated plants or other plots on the site and/or occasionally as amenity areas.

1c Paths

Note clause 11 of the tenancy agreement regarding the maintenance of paths.

1d Trees and Bush/Cane Fruit

The planting of trees is not permitted at Eastwick, Highlands Road, Bentsbrook and Pixholme Grove Allotment Gardens.

On sites where trees are permitted; trees should generally be:

- Fruit trees only, on a dwarf stock to maximum height of 3 metres
- Planted with careful consideration as shade from the tree(s) may cause a nuisance to other allotment holders (see clause no. 10)
- The area allocated to fruit trees and bush or cane fruit should not exceed 50% of the plot and should be kept reasonably weed free. The remaining area must be cultivated as described above
- Maintenance of the tree(s) is the responsibility of the plot holder

2. Structures

This section refers to clause 8, not to build anything without permission, and applies to all structures. These are generally defined as Sheds, Greenhouses, Cold Frames, Poly Tunnels, Chicken Coups, Tool Boxes or Fruit Cages.

- Structures other than Tool Boxes and Fruit Cages are not permitted at Pixholme Grove, Eastwick and Ranmore Road Allotment Gardens
- No new structures are permitted on the top half of the site at Little Bookham
- You must get written permission to build any structure (see clause no. 8). You can apply by email, online or write to; Parks Section, Mole Valley District Council, Pippbrook, Dorking, Surrey, RH4 1SJ, detailing the proposed size, type and location of the structure
- You must consider the impact of erecting a structure on adjoining plot holders as it may cause a nuisance to other allotment holders (see clause no. 10)
- It is recommended that structures are glazed with polycarbonate and NOT glass which can become hazardous if broken.

3. Bonfires

Bonfires are tolerated but they can cause problems. You must keep bonfires to a minimum by composting your green waste (clause 12) and removing all your rubbish to your local tip, or skips when provided from time to time by the Council. If you have a bonfire, you must follow these rules:

- Respect neighbouring residents (see clause no. 10)
- Ensure smoke blows away from adjacent properties
- Never leave a bonfire unattended
- Make sure the bonfire is completely extinguished before leaving the site
- Do not burn 'green' or damp material as this produces more smoke
- Check for hedgehogs before lighting
- Please contact the site agent for details of a communal bonfire.

4. Wildlife

Allotments provide habitats suitable for a variety of wildlife. You may come across slow worms, hedgehogs etc; you must treat them with respect. Slow worms are completely harmless and can often be found in compost heaps and under plastic sheeting.

All reptile species are now considered to be Species of Principal Importance for the Conservation of Biodiversity in England under Section 41 of the NERC Act.

The adder, grass snake, common lizard and slow worm are protected from being killed and injured under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended.

If you decide to attract wildlife to your plot by naturalising parts of it, you must keep such areas to a minimum as weed seeds can cause a nuisance by blowing onto neighbouring plots (see clause no. 5 and 10). Small areas that are left to nettles/tall grasses/wild flowers etc. to encourage wildlife may be acceptable if carefully managed.

5. Site Access

- Please contact your Site Agent for details of parking facilities (if available)
- If driving onto the site, you must keep your speed below 5mph and take extra care where sight lines are impeded
- If you are the last person to leave the site in the evening, you must ensure you close the gate (and replace the lock where applicable)
- In wet conditions, you must avoid churning up grass access tracks

6. Bees

Beekeeping will only be permitted (see clause 9c) at Barnett Wood Lane, Ranmore, Bentsbrook, Coldharbour and Little Bookham Allotment Gardens and is subject to individual permission and various conditions.

The conditions are detailed on a separate guidance note which is available upon request, however as bare minimum the tenant must:

- Provide proof that they are a qualified Beekeeper
- Provide proof that they are a Member of the British Beekeeping Association
- Hold public liability insurance covering the practice of Beekeeping
- Consult with adjoining plot holders consider any representations made and submit these to the Council.
- You must get written permission to keep bees. You can write to; Parks Section, Mole Valley District Council, Pippbrook, Dorking, Surrey, RH4 1SJ, detailing the proposed location and its suitability, number of hives and proof of consultation with adjoining plot holders including any representations made.

The Council:

- Will not permit apiary sites adjacent public footpaths, roads and residential properties
- Will limit the number of hives on an Allotment site
- Will in some circumstances permit hives on areas of land outside the plot which are not suitable for cultivation. For such sites a separate tenancy agreement will be issued.
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7. Pesticide use

- Only licensed commercially available pesticides must be used on the Allotment Garden in accordance with manufacturer's instructions and for their intended purpose
- You must not wash out any containers that have been filled with pesticide in the communal water points. Any pesticide residue must be washed out on your plot or at your home
- You must ensure the use of pesticide is confined to your plot and does not drift on to other plots, vegetation or footpaths as this will cause damage to or nuisance (Clause 10) to those who garden organically

8. Water

- Water is available for use at communal water points
- Tenants are charged a contribution towards the cost of consumption of mains water at each site
- You must always turn off the tap after use
- You must report any leaks to the Council or Site Agent as soon as possible
- You must use water economically; use cans instead of hoses/sprinklers, try not to water crops in the heat of the day, use mulch to limit evaporation. Hose use must be attended at all times
- Try to collect rainwater in water butts to limit consumption and the charge that is made to all tenants for water

9. General Guidance

- All tenants and visitors must be respectful to everyone on the site. Abuse will not be tolerated and will result in eviction.
- Aggressive behaviour towards site agent and any threats will result in an instant NTQ
- Plot numbers – all plots must display a number
- No baths, tyres or carpets to be brought onto the site and all existing items to be removed
- Bamboo and all invasive plants must be potted not planted in the ground.
- Current tenants can apply for additional plots but will only be allocated once all new tenants have been allocated plots, to ensure fairness.
- Childs play equipment is prohibited.
- At least 75% of plot must be cultivated.
- Pathways to be kept clear and regularly maintained.
- Bonfires must be attended and only burn natural materials only - no plastic, tyres etc.
- Chickens must be registered with DEFRA. All chickens must have adequate space and welfare. Breaches in welfare will result in council officers gaining access.
- Asbestos is prohibited unless it is already in place.
- Tenants must not build up stockpiles of materials on or around their plots (plastic, metal, wood, junk)
- Water must not be left on overnight or unattended.
- Plots must not be fenced or have plot edges which makes them inaccessible. (Site exceptions)
- Please inform MVDC of groups of over 5 people unrelated to the plot holder visiting the allotment at the same time.
- Tenants are responsible for removal of all items brought onto the site
- Tenants may be responsible for the cost of clearing plots