

New Tenant Guide



A guide containing important organisational and **safety information** for new tenants of the Hotwells & District Allotment Association. **Please read thoroughly.**

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WELCOME

Dear New Tenant,

A warm welcome to Hotwells and District Allotments Association (HwDAA). I hope you will enjoy many years of enjoyable and productive growing on your allotment.

If you are a new grower there is plenty of advice and help around if you need it:

- Talk with neighbours and long time allotmenters who are often ready to advise.
- Look at what is growing well, what established growers are planting etc
- Check the HwDAA website for a wealth of advice and information on, for example, composting, maintaining a shed, watering, protection of crops etc.
- Visit the shop which provides cheap basic equipment, low cost seeds, seasonable perishables (seed potatoes, onions), compost, netting and more. There are often people in the shop happy to advise.

People work differently but we recommend that new tenants plan to spend at least six hours per week on their allotment. Regular tending works better than an occasional blitz.

If you have any specific questions or difficulties please speak to your site rep. If he or she is unable to help try committee members who can be reached via the website.

Happy gardening

Best wishes

Jenny Hendy

Chair HwDAA

THE 'DO'S AND DON'TS' OF ALLOTMENT GARDENING

HwDAA leases its allotment sites from Bristol City Council. The leases specify how the allotments must be cultivated. There is also national legislation specifying how designated allotments must be used and maintained.

Your tenancy agreement and the following guidelines are designed to ensure HwDAA committee and members/ tenants fulfil these legal obligations.

PLEASE DO

- Cultivate and keep clear of long grass and weeds at least 75% of your plot.
- Maintain the path on the right-hand side of your plot when viewed from the haulingway in good order, keeping an approximate width of 600mm/24 inches.
- Ensure your plot number provided is clearly visible from the haulingway.
- Maintain your shed, whether your own or provided by HwDAA, in a protected and safe condition.
- Keep any dogs on site on a lead or confined to your plot at all times.
- Ensure that the gates are locked behind you when entering or exiting the site.
- Maintain the area around any fruit trees or bushes in good order (see website for guidance on rootstock).
- Apply to the Association for permission to erect a shed, greenhouse, polytunnel, permanent fruit cage or similar structure.
(https://www.hwdaa.co.uk/structure_application.htm).
- Keep any small grassy area regularly mown.
- Ensure any pond is clearly visible and safe for people and animals.
- Keep any hedge adjacent to your plot pruned and cut back.
- Pay your annual rent within 40 days of receiving the invoice. If you qualify for Council tax reduction or Housing benefit and would like to claim 50% reduction in rent please apply to the Treasurer each year by 1st August.
(https://www.hwdaa.co.uk/rent_discounts.htm).
- Inform the Association if you change your home or email address.
(<https://www.hwdaa.co.uk/contact.htm>).
- Inform your site rep if you have any problems or will be unable to garden your plot for some time due to ill health or similar reason.
- Report any injury suffered on the allotment to your site rep or by completing the injury report available from the website.
- Ensure any fruit trees planted are on dwarf rooting stock.
- Collect rain water and look at the advice for effective / efficient watering.
- Discourage rats by turning compost bins regularly and ensuring bird food does not drop onto the ground.
- Look at the HwDAA website for further guidance and information

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Please Don't:

- Sub-let all or any part of your plot or give it to another person
- Use your plot for trade or business.
- Use the water troughs for washing vegetables, flower pots, dirty hands, wellies etc.
- Use a hosepipe or sprinkler to water crops. In exceptional circumstances (eg. incapacity), you may apply for permission to fill a tank on your plot using a hosepipe.
- Bring carpet or any form of rubbish on site
- Let your dog stray onto or foul other plots, paths or the haulingway.
- Block communal pathways/haulingways - including with deliveries of manure.
- Have any form of bonfire or use an incinerator, between 1 April and 30 October. Bonfires at other times of the year must not cause a nuisance to other tenants, nearby properties, roads or pathways and must be extinguished when you leave the plot. (See <https://www.hwdaa.co.uk/bonfires.htm>)
- Dig up paths between plots.
- Move the position of your shed, unless you have permission from the Association.
- Tell other people, apart from regular helpers, the gate code to your allotment site.
- Go onto other plots without the permission of the tenant concerned.
- Allow children to play on the haulingway, or with water tanks or taps.
- Stay overnight on your plot or the allotment site.
- Bring any form of firearm, air weapon or similar onto allotment sites.
- Keep cockerels, pigs, sheep or horses on an allotment plot. You may keep hens, rabbits or bees providing you have the permission of the Association.
- Cause a nuisance to other allotment users or household neighbours by using bad or racist language, getting drunk, playing loud music, using any form of verbal or physical harassment or violence on the allotment site.

Inspection and standards of cultivation

As said above, HwDAA leases each of its sites from Bristol City Council. In the terms of our leases BCC specifies that we should ensure "allotments are substantially free from weeds, ... and maintained in a proper state of cultivation and fertility". There is a lot more small print!

In addition, there is a long waiting list of Bristol residents keen to get growing. The inspections are not intended to be intrusive or draconian, merely to ensure that HwDAA fulfils its responsibility to see that all plots are productive and well tended and to manage its waiting list. There is more information about standards for plots, sheds and paths on our website.

If plots are abandoned or seriously, continuously neglected tenancies may not be renewed for the following year. This will not happen without repeated communication (letters, emails or phone calls) with tenants.

If there is any reason (illness etc) why you can't tend your plot please discuss this with your site rep. or contact the chair on chair@hwdaa.co.uk. There's often help available.

If you take on a neglected plot you will not be expected to have it completely under cultivation in the first year as long as you are making progress.

Please note the following point:

- Good cultivation involves a regular amount of work and means having seasonal crops planted or the ground cleared and weed-free ready for planting. Ground covered in plastic in the growing season does not count as cultivation.
- All the Association's allotment plots are subject to inspections during the main growing season and tenants who fail maintain these standards will be issued with a Notice to Remedy.
- If you fail to improve the condition of your plot following receipt of a Notice to Remedy; receive three Notices to Remedy within three years; or fail to pay your rent within 40 days of receiving an invoice - you will be issued with a Notice to Quit. If you manage to remedy the condition of plot within the Notice period, the Notice to Quit will be cancelled (except after receipt of three Notices to Remedy within three years).

Please remember - Your Site Rep is your first point of contact for any questions. If he or she is unable to advise you, they will refer you to an appropriate member of the Committee.



Rent

The Association's financial year runs from 1 October to 30 September. Your first rent payment will be pro rata according to the start date of your tenancy.

Rent rates are set by the Committee in August each year and may or may not increase. Invoices for the rent and the National Allotments Society subscription are then issued during the month of September.

As far as possible, invoices are sent by email rather than ordinary mail as it saves a considerable amount in postage, so if you've given us your email address you will receive your invoice by that method.

Your plot rent becomes payable on 1st October each year. If you haven't paid your rent by 1st November, you will incur a £5.00 surcharge. If you haven't paid your rent by 14th November your tenancy will be terminated.

Rent Discounts: See the webpage: http://www.hwdaa.co.uk/rent_discounts.htm

We encourage tenants to pay their rent by bank transfer but we do also accept cheques and cash. We do not accept standing orders, direct debits or credit cards.

If you have any queries about rent, please contact me by email at: treasurer@hwdaa.co.uk

John Buchanan

Treasurer HwDAA

Bonfires

Bonfires are often viewed as an easy and simple way to dispose of allotment waste but bonfires can cause considerable nuisance to local residents:

- by making asthma, bronchitis or other respiratory conditions worse
- by affecting visibility for drivers on nearby roads
- because fire can spread to nearby fences or buildings
- because piles of garden waste are often used by animals for shelter

The Alternatives

There are a number of alternative ways to dispose of waste rather than lighting a bonfire.

- **Composting** is by far the best way to deal with most allotment waste, including weeds.
- **Garden Waste** can also be disposed of through the Council's Green Waste collection service – Contact the Customer Services Centre for information.
- **Large Quantities of Waste** can be disposed of at one of Bristol City Council's Household Waste Recycling Centres. A special collection can be arranged by contacting the Customer Services Centre.

If, despite the above, you still want to light a bonfire please note the following guidance:

- Bonfires across the whole city, including allotments, can only be lit between November 1st and March 31st
- Use dry material only
- If possible avoid burning at weekends and Bank Holidays as these are the times when people are more likely to be in local gardens or on neighbouring allotments
- Do not burn tyres, cables, plastics, rubber, painted products or any household waste.
- Do not leave a burning fire unattended and do not allow it to smoulder overnight.
- Warn neighbours that you intend to have a bonfire.

If a bonfire is causing you a problem you can take the following action;

- Firstly, ask the person who is responsible if they can put out the bonfire and explain to them your problems.
- If the problem persists talk to your site rep

Shed maintenance

All tenants are reminded that they are responsible for the maintenance of the shed/s on their allotment plots. Where a shed is shared (as is the case with most half/small plots) responsibility for maintaining the shed in good condition lies with both tenants who share it. The condition of sheds is taken into account during site inspections which take place from spring to late summer.

The following list of reminders is intended to help you keep your shed in good state:

1. Shed must keep rain out, so please regularly check the condition of the roofing felt especially during the winter when strong winds can tear felt. Damaged roofing felt should be replaced as soon as possible.
2. The whole of the shed should be given a coat of suitable preservative when the timber becomes pale through weathering. This treatment is likely to be needed every other year.
3. Please check that there is a good flow of air under the shed. This reduces the likelihood of rot. Sheds should be on foundations of impervious material such as concrete blocks, bricks or stone.
4. Nearby trees and shrubs should be pruned back to reduce damage to the shed. Long grass, weeds, brambles etc must be cut.
5. The shed door should be secured with a catch, bolt or similar fastening which will prevent the door being blown open. Loose doors are easily torn from their hinges, damaging the shed in the process.
6. Older sheds may subside and lean. If this happens to your shed, it is important it is reinforced or that the foundations are packed to correct the 'list'. Your Site Rep will be able to offer advice.

Timber preservative, roofing felt and nails are sold in our Allotment Shop.

If your shed is in very poor condition, please discuss with your Site Rep. The Association has a sheds policy which sets out how and when sheds will be replaced and how this is funded. A copy of the policy can be found on our website.

Health and Safety Policy

Important advice to all plot holders, other users and visitors

Following a risk assessment of working on allotment plots, we urge all users and visitors to follow these simple guidelines:

1. **DRIVERS:** pedestrians have priority, so please observe the 5mph signs at all times.
2. Please wear **CLOTHING** which is appropriate for the task – especially footwear and gloves.
3. When **DIGGING**, reduce the risk of back strain by using the correct tool, utilise leg and arm strength to the full, and avoid twisting.
4. To avoid trips, slips and falls, **PATHS** should be kept in good condition and free from obstacles (eg discarded tools).
5. **Chemicals**
 - Most allotmentiers are reducing the chemicals they use to produce crops. If you do use chemical pest and weed controls they should be stored in clearly labelled containers and out of the reach of children.
 - Always follow the manufacturers' instructions.
 - Wash all cans, sprayers etc used for chemicals away from the communal taps and water tanks to avoid contamination and risk to others.
6. When using **POWER TOOLS** (eg strimmers and rotovators), wear personal protective equipment – earmuffs, goggles/visor, gloves, boots and leg covering. Always consider the proximity of others before and during the operation of any power tool.
7. If you have a **POND** on your plot, please ensure that it can be clearly seen, with its edge delineated and nearby trip hazards removed.
8. **CHILDREN** – should not play on the hauling way were cars drive or with the taps and water tanks.
- 9 **BONFIRES and INCINERATORS** – see guidance above
10. **DOGS** must be under the full control of their owners at all times and kept on a lead or restrained on the owner's plot. To remove the health risk associated with dog mess, please encourage your dog to 'go' before arriving at the site.
11. **GLASS, ASBESTOS** etc: please dispose of safely – ideally by removing it from the site. Report possible asbestos finds to the site rep as soon as possible.
12. **BEES:** a few tenants have permission from the Association to locate beehives on or near their plots. Unlike wasps, honey bees are generally docile and only sting when threatened; however, please stay away from bee hives at all times. If a swarm of bees settles on or near your plot, don't panic, contact your site rep.
13. **PERSONAL SAFETY:** if you believe that you are the only person working on the allotment site it's sensible to have a phone. Please take extra care to avoid injuring yourself if no one will be available to provide assistance and first aid if necessary.
14. Check NHS recommendations for tetanus vaccinations and boosters

Injuries, accident reporting and summoning help in an emergency

Please keep a supply of basic first aid equipment in your shed. Minimise the risk of infection from cuts by ensuring that your anti-Tetanus protection is up to date.

All accidents and injuries sustained on one of our allotment sites should be reported as soon as practical by completing an accident report form available from your Site Rep, or via the HwDAA website. Please follow the instructions for returning a completed form.

999 calls: If you suffer a serious injury or are suddenly taken ill and need urgent medical assistance, the following course of action is suggested:

- Call out to attract attention from anyone in the vicinity.
- Use a mobile 'phone to dial 999.
- Ensure that the person taking the call has the post code and location of the allotment site (see below). This information is also on the site noticeboard.
- Get someone to go and open the allotment gate and attract attention of the ambulance.

Allotment site addresses

Alderman Moore's	Ashton Drive, Ashton Vale, Bristol	BS3 2PP
Bower Ashton	Clanage Road, Bower Ashton, Bristol	BS3 2JX
Kennel Lodge 1 (KL1)	Kennel Lodge Road, Bower Ashton, Bristol	BS3 2JT
Kennel Lodge 2 (KL2)	Kennel Lodge Road, Bower Ashton, Bristol	BS3 2JT
Meadows	Kennel Lodge Road, Bower Ashton, Bristol	BS3 2JT
White City	Off Clanage Road, Bower Ashton, Bristol	BS3 2JX

Finally.

Thank you for taking the time to read this guide. If you have any questions or require further information please refer to your site rep. Also, please take a quick browse of our website as it contains a lot of further useful information. A good place to start is the Advice for New Tenants page at: http://www.hwdaa.co.uk/new_tenants_advice.htm