

HEADLEY PARISH COUNCIL ALLOTMENT PLOTS



A Plot Holders Guide

1. Background

There are in the region of 100 allotment plots in the Parish which are looked after by over 70 plot holders. The Parish Council owns and maintains the site and works closely with Headley Allotment Holders Association (HAHA) who manage the day to day running of the allotments on behalf of the Council.

2. The Allotment Garden Agreement

The allotment Garden Agreement defines the responsibilities of each party. Please take time to read through the responsibilities before you sign. The agreement is for a period of 5 years and the Council may make changes to it during this time. If this happens plot holders will be issued with an Addendum to the Agreement.

3. Headley Allotment Holders Association (HAHA)

All plot holders are members of the Headley Allotment Association. The Parish Council collects the membership fee at the same time as the allotment rent. Each year at its AGM the allotment association elects a Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer together with other interested plot holders to form a Committee. The Committee meets with the Parish Council twice a year, produces a newsletter, maintains the waiting list and let plots and organise plot inspections.

4. Allocation of Allotment Plots

Headley Allotment Association maintains a waiting list for allotment plots. Residents living in the Parish of Headley will be given preference over non-residents. Existing plot holders who wish to rent an additional plot must be placed on the waiting list. Existing plot holders with two full plots may not apply for another. New plot holders will not be able to rent an additional plot within the first 24 months.

5. Deposit Scheme

The Councils deposit scheme gives plot holders the incentive to maintain their plot to a good standard as it is the sum of money that could be lost in part or full if the Parish Council is required to arrange for works to be done to salvage an uncultivated plot at the end of a tenancy. All plot holders are required to pay a one off deposit of £50.00. Existing plot holders wishing to take on an additional half plot will be required to pay a further deposit of £25.00.

6. Return of the Deposit

When a plot holder wishes to give up their plot they must inform the Parish Office to mutually agree a date for the tenancy to be terminated. Plot holders are expected to ensure their plot is in a suitable standard for re-letting before the deposit is returned. The criteria in the allotment agreement will be used to determine the standard for re-letting, as well as the Allotment Inspection Checklist. Prior to the return of the deposit the plot will be inspected by an Officer of the Parish Council and one member of the Allotment Association Committee to determine what works are required, if any. If works are required the Council will inform the plot holder and mutually agree a timescale for the works to be completed, and subsequent re-inspection date. Any costs incurred by the Council as a result of the works not being undertaken within the agreed timescales will be deducted from the deposit.

7. Allotment Plot Inspections

The majority of plot holders are keen to maintain their plot(s) to a high standard. However there are some people who may have set out with the best intentions, but underestimate the time and effort required to keep a plot in good order. A change in circumstances such as ill health may also mean that you are unable to tend to your plot. Untidy plots that have not been cultivated for some time will have an impact on neighbouring plots and make the site look generally untidy.

In order to ensure the plots are being cultivated, a small group of volunteers from the Allotment Association Committee carry out periodic plot inspections during April to September. The volunteers use an Allotment Inspection Checklist as a guide to the standards the Parish Council requires.

8. Plot Inspection Letters

If it is considered that a plot holder has not cultivated their plot, they will be sent an initial letter from the Association as a gentle reminder. If after a month, there has been little or no attempt to cultivate the plot, a more formal warning letter will follow from the Parish Council. Finally, if after a second letter, there is still little attempt to cultivate the plot, the Parish Council will write to the plot holder in order to commence eviction proceedings. At every stage of the process, plot holders are asked to contact either the Chairman of the Allotment Association or the Parish Council to inform us of any changes of circumstances that mean you are unable to look after your plot. We strongly urge you to keep us informed to avoid any unnecessary upset and potential loss of the deposit.

9. What is Cultivation?

The cultivated area is defined as the area that is cultivated for crop or flower production. Cultivation requires the tenant to regularly dig, mulch, prune and weed 75% of the plot. Compost bins, greenhouses, water butts, poly-tunnels and fruit cages are also included within the cultivated area as are ornamental flower crops.

Allotments must be kept clean and maintained in a good state of cultivation (minimum 75% cultivation). An area that is annually cleared of weeds and grass yet remains un-cropped or unplanted during any one year will be considered as non-cultivated. The whole plot, including any uncultivated leisure areas must be kept tidy, safe and free from flowering weeds.

10. Sheds, Greenhouses, Poly-tunnels

Permission to erect any of the above on your plot must be obtained from the Parish Council in advance. All are subject to size restrictions which are included as an Appendix 1 to your Allotment Garden Agreement.

11. Bees and Hens

It is possible for hens to be kept within the boundary of your allotment plot and there is a designated area for keeping bees. Plot holder must obtain permission from the Parish Council prior to making any commitment. There are conditions pertaining to each activity that must be met & adhered to and are included as an Appendix 2 to your Allotment Garden Agreement.

12. Site & Equipment Security

Allotment sheds have been subject to break-ins over recent years. Plot holders are responsible for arranging their own insurance. In the event of a theft, please inform the Parish Council but it is the plot holder's responsibility to report the loss to the Police as the owner.

13. Communal Compost and Bonfire

There is an allocated area for materials that can be composted and a separate area for non-compostable materials which can be burnt. Plot holders are not permitted to bring any items from off-site to these facilities. The cost of emptying these facilities when overfull, is met by the Parish Council.

14. Access to the Allotments

The vehicle access to the allotments is via May Close which is an unmade road. The Parish Council requires that plot holders are respectful of the residents and drive slowly through May Close to the top entrance gate.

15. Respect

It is expected that every plot holder will behave in a polite and courteous manner towards fellow plot holders.

For further information please contact the Parish Office:

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