

Hotwells & District Allotment Association

Cultivation Standards.

What constitutes acceptable degrees of cultivation that do not trigger an adverse report when plot inspections take place? Your Tenancy Agreement, Schedule 2, para 3 requires that the plot as a whole be kept clear of weeds and, “As a yardstick, at least 2/3rds should be under cultivation”

If you have just taken over a plot in poor condition, the inspection team would accept that it is unreasonable to expect that standard of cultivation until your first full year had elapsed. However, a plot taken over in the spring should have at least half under cultivation by the autumn.

As we now only let half plots, this should not be too onerous a task for anyone of serious intent. Remember - your Site Rep probably told you that you should not take on an allotment unless you were able to devote at least 5 or 6 hours a week during the growing season to the task! Paths along and across plots count as uncultivated areas. If you are the rear of 2 small plots (normally the “B” plot), do not forget to clear right up to the fence/hedge as this all counts as part of your plot.

As for ‘cultivation’ – this is digging and planting / sowing! Many people apply plastic or weed-suppressant material to areas that they are unable to cultivate right away or want to ‘rest’. This suppresses the weeds but does not count as cultivation though of course, if you plant through holes in the plastic for appropriate plants, that is acceptable. Keep the ground cultivated over winter with crops such as winter lettuce, broad beans, leeks, garlic, cabbage, purple sprouting broccoli etc. or if there is still a gap, green manures. Put something in, or the weeds will take over. Nature abhors a vacuum.