

Hotwells & District Allotments Association

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 gardening on your new allotment plot.

If you are an experienced gardener who may have had an allotment elsewhere, we really appreciate the expertise you bring and hope that you will be able to pass on your knowledge to others on your allotment site.

If this is your first allotment, you will have given some thought to what is required before you applied for a plot – so now you have one, don't be put off by the challenges which lie ahead! Whether the plot you are taking on is in a good state, or needs a lot doing to get it into the shape you want, help and advice are to hand. You will find that many of your fellow gardeners are only too keen to spare some time and offer advice if you need it. Taking a stroll around your allotment site and seeing how others manage their plots is a great way to pick up ideas: what is currently being planted; what crops are being harvested; how best to make a compost bin; how to protect soft fruit from birds; how to re-felt a shed roof...and so on.

Don't forget to visit our Allotment Shop which is situated on Alderman Moore's site, Ashton Drive. The Shop stocks a basic range of items which you are likely to need, as well as top quality seeds and seasonal items. Our website is also an excellent resource, so please take time to explore it.

If you have any specific questions or encounter a problem, please speak to your Site Rep. If he or she is unable to help, they may refer you to an appropriate member of the committee. You can also contact your site rep via the Contact page.

Good luck!

Yours sincerely,

John Holland

Chair - Hotwells and District Allotment Association

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

As strange as it might seem, allotments are subject to their own legislation which dictates how they must be used and looked after. The purpose of this document is to provide a plain English interpretation of the legislation, but does not replace your Tenancy Agreement. Persistently breaking any of the rules may result in you being sent a Notice to Quit your allotment plot.

DO's

- You must cultivate and keep clear of long grass and weeds at least 75% of your plot.
- The path on the right-hand side of your plot when viewed from the haulingway must be maintained in good order and kept to an optimum width of 600mm/24 inches.
- You must ensure that your plot has a number which is clearly visible from the haulingway.
- If your plot has a shed on it, you must maintain it in a serviceable and safe condition.
- You can bring your dog to the site as long as it is kept on a lead or confined to your plot at all times.
- When entering and leaving the allotment site, please ensure that the gate is locked behind you.
- The main purpose of having an allotment plot is to grow vegetables and fruit, but you may grow herbs and flowers as well.
- If you have fruit bushes/trees you must maintain the area around them in good order.
- You need to apply to the Association for permission to erect a shed, greenhouse, polytunnel, permanent fruit cage or similar structure. (http://www.hwdaa.co.uk/structure_application.htm).
- You can have a small lawn as long as it is regularly mowed.
- If you build a pond, it must be clearly visible and safe for people and animals.
- You are responsible for cutting the inside of any hedge adjacent to your plot.
- You must pay your annual rent within 40 days of receiving the invoice.
- If you think you qualify for low income rent discount, you should apply to Bristol City Council between 1 June and 2 September every year. (http://www.hwdaa.co.uk/rent_discounts.htm).
- Please inform the Association if you change your home or email address. (<http://www.hwdaa.co.uk/contact.htm>).
- Always 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.
- If you suffer an injury on the allotment site, do report it to your site rep or by completing the [injury report](#) available from the website.
- If you vacate your plot, you must pay any outstanding rent owed.
- If you vacate your plot, you must remove all your belongings within two weeks. You are not permitted to dig up or remove any fruit bushes or trees.

DON'Ts

You are not allowed to do any of the following:

- Sub-let all or any part of your plot.
- 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 to use, or leave, on your plot (e.g. as ground cover, path surface).
- Bring any form of rubbish onto the site. If you do you will be charged for its removal.
- 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, which includes using an incinerator, between 1 April and 30 October. If you have a bonfire at another time of the year, it must not cause a nuisance to other tenants, nearby properties, roads or pathways and must be extinguished when you leave the plot. (See Bonfires & Incinerators).
- Dig up paths between plots.
- Move the position of your shed, unless you have permission from the Association.
- Tell other people the gate code to your allotment site so that they have free access.
- Go onto other plots without the permission of the tenant concerned. This includes allowing your children to stray onto other plots.
- 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 etc.
- Use any form of verbal or physical harassment or violence on the allotment site.

Cultivation requirements made clear.

- From the start date of your tenancy agreement, you have a three month period in which formal notice for non-cultivation cannot be issued. After that time you will receive a Notice to Remedy if at least 75% of your plot is not at a good level of cultivation.
- Good cultivation involves a regular amount of work and means having crops planted or the ground cleared and weed-free ready for planting. Covering large parts of the plot with black plastic or similar does not count as 'cultivation'.
- You should not allow your plot in whole or part to become covered with weeds/rough grass which run to seed and spread.

- If you grow fruit trees/bushes/plants they must be dwarf stock and the area round them must be maintained to a high standard and not allowed to become overgrown and covered with weeds/grass.
- 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 uestions. If he or she is unable to advise you, they will refer you to an appropriate member of the Committee.



Rent Facts

Here's some facts about rent.

1. Your first rent payment is pro rata so it will nearly always be less than the annual rent.
2. Your plot rent becomes payable on **1st October each year**.
3. I issue invoices for the rent and NAS subscription to you on a yearly basis. I aim to get these out in late September. (See below.)
4. Rent rates are set in August of each year and may or may not increase.
5. If you haven't paid your rent by 1st November, you will incur a £5.00 surcharge.
6. If you haven't paid your rent by 14th November your tenancy **will be terminated**.

We prefer to send invoices by email rather than ordinary mail as it saves a considerable amount in postage. You can opt to have your invoice by email by going to the website and completing a simple form here: <http://www.hwdaa.co.uk/contact.htm>.

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

We do not accept Standing Orders, Direct Debits or Credit Cards for rent payment but we do accept Cheques, BACS payments (details on your invoice) and Cash.

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

Bob Corfield

HwDAA Treasurer

Bonfires, what's the problem?

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

The following can occur if a bonfire is burning locally;

- Asthmatics can have breathing difficulties
- People cannot open windows on warm days
- People avoid using their garden
- Visibility of drivers on nearby roads may be affected
- The smoke can make washing smell
- Fire can spread, risking life.

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 garden waste. After a few months, the garden waste will be converted into an excellent soil conditioner and peat substitute.
- **Recycling** is an effective and environmentally friendly way to dispose of non-garden waste and can help alleviate the problems associated with landfill. Most households have a weekly collection. Contact the Customer Services Centre for further information – see below.

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.

For **Furniture**, there are non-profit organisations that can collect your old furniture to reuse, repair and recycle, providing low cost furniture for low income households – see Emmaus or Sofa Project below. Alternatively you can arrange collection of bulky items through the Customer Services Centre – there is a charge for this service.

Contact numbers and addresses for more information and to arrange a collection are on the back of this leaflet.

What if I still want to light my bonfire?

A bonfire can be a Statutory Nuisance under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 which could then result in formal action by the Council. For example, if smoke materially interferes

with the use and enjoyment of neighbouring properties an Abatement Notice will be served requiring the fire to be put out and prevent the reoccurrence of the Nuisance. Failure to comply with the Notice would be an offence on summary conviction with maximum fines of £5000 for domestic premises. The burning of cable to recover metal is also an offence under the Clean Air Act 1993.

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.
- Secondly, if it is still causing you a problem contact the Pollution Control Team at Bristol City Council see details below. They will provide advice on the next steps to take.

Whilst we would always recommend that you find alternative more acceptable means of disposal, if you still wish to light a bonfire then please follow these guidelines in order to minimise the risk of causing a nuisance:

- Use dry material only
- Avoid burning at weekends and Bank Holidays as these are the times when people are more likely to be affected outdoors.
- 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 and make sure that no washing is hanging out in the vicinity.

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. It is very important that the shed is kept watertight, so please check the condition of the roofing felt from time to time – especially during the winter when strong winds will tear felt and rain will then penetrate the shed. It is essential that damaged roofing felt is 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 an unimpeded flow of air under the shed, as this reduces the likelihood of rot. Sheds should be on foundations of impervious material such as concrete blocks, bricks or stone.

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4. Nearby trees and shrubs should be pruned back so as not to damage the shed and 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 take up a 'set' where they are no longer upright – perhaps caused by the foundations having shifted, or the effect of strong winds. 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.



Plot names and numbers

Every tenant has plot which is identified by the name of the site it is on and the number of the plot on that site. The site names are usually referred to by their initials: AM = Alderman Moore's; BA = Bower Ashton; KL1 = Kennel Lodge 1; KL2 = Kennel Lodge 2, MD = The Meadows; WC = White City.

If you have a half plot, the half nearest the main hauling way is, by convention, referred to as 'A' and the half furthest away as 'B'. However, some small plots on Alderman Moore are numbered Left (A) and Right (B).

All Association records are based on this identification system for plots. It is therefore essential that you refer to your site/plot number in any correspondence with the Association.

It is a condition of your tenancy that you ensure your plot has a clearly visible sign with the number on it. Ideally, the sign should be at the front of your plot facing the haulingway. While there is no objection to the number being displayed on your shed, problems arise where the shed is shared (the case with most half or small plots) and it is unclear which is the 'A' and which the 'B' plot.

We therefore ask that you display a number at the front of your plot, irrespective of having one on the shed.

It is your responsibility to keep the sign on your plot clear of grass and weeds. If you need to replace your sign, please ensure that the new one is made of durable material. Your Site Rep will advise you if need be.

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**
 - All chemicals (eg pest and weed controls) 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** - we want you to be safe and enjoy gardening. Please stay with a family member or friend and do not play where you might be at risk from cars or other vehicles. Please leave the taps and water tanks alone.
9. **Bonfires including incinerators.**
 - Check notices about bonfires and adhere to any restrictions, such as the period when the city-wide allotment bonfire ban is in force (March to October inclusive).
 - Compost as much material as possible to reduce the need for lighting a bonfire.
 - Avoid burning 'green' material as this is likely to produce excess smoke.
 - Under no circumstances use any form of accelerant (eg petrol, barbecue lighter fluid).
 - Take account of the wind direction to avoid smoke nuisance/danger to nearby houses, traffic and other allotment users.
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.

13. **PERSONAL SAFETY:** if you believe that you are the only person working on the allotment site, please take extra care to avoid injuring yourself as no one will be available to provide assistance and first aid if necessary.

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).
- 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



Picture by Mark Bolton: <http://www.markboltonphotography.co.uk/>