



# HASLEMERE TOWN COUNCIL

## Management Procedures & Information for Allotments

### Introduction

These Management Procedures have been drawn up for the guidance of all those who hire an allotment on any ground that is owned by Haslemere Town Council. The Town Council have agreed that these management procedures have been written for the guidance of Haslemere Town Council Officers and for the information of both the Allotment Holders and Town Councillors.

### Administration and Control

All the allotment sites in Haslemere are controlled and managed on behalf of Haslemere Town Council by the Amenities Committee. The everyday administration of all the allotments is carried out by the Deputy Town Clerk **Projects and Amenities Officer** of Haslemere Town Council.

### Procedure - The Offer of an Allotment Plot

Due to a lengthy waiting list as from 1 January 2018 each household will only be entitled to one plot.

When an allotment plot becomes available it will be offered to any plotholder on the site for exchange, who has maintained an existing plot for one year or more. They have a period of one week to accept before the plot is offered to the waiting list.

If nobody chooses to exchange, an email offering the plot will be sent to the ~~entire~~ **top 5** on the waiting list for the site, including anyone who is happy for a plot at any site. Everyone has seven days to express their interest in the plot and, at the end of that time, it will be offered to the person highest on the list who has responded.

If anyone fails to respond to the email offer it will still be deemed to be the first offer of two before they are moved to the bottom of the waiting list.

The following documents are sent to the new allotment holder:

- a. **The HTC Management Procedures & Information for Allotments** (this document is retained by the Allotment Holder), and
- b. **The Haslemere Town Council Allotment Tenancy Agreement**

**One copy of the agreement must be fully completed and returned to the Deputy Town Clerk at the Town Hall and one copy is retained by the plotholder.**

### Town Council Responsibilities

The Town Council's aim is to successfully liaise with the Allotment Associations on each site as they become established, as well as each individual plotholder by supporting and encouraging them in their wish to successfully cultivate their individual plots. In order to help the plot-holders achieve successful cultivation of their plots the Town Council are responsible for ensuring that:

- a. Each site is protected around its boundaries by Deer Fencing.
- b. Fresh water is provided during the months of March through to the end of October.
- c. Dangerous trees and overgrown hedgerows that prevent light entering the site are where possible removed.

- d. Injurious and illegal weed plants such as Ragwort and Spear Thistle are removed and notifiable plants such as Japanese Knotweed are reported and where possible eliminated.
- e. Assistance may be provided on a case by case basis for the control of vermin e.g. rabbits, rats, moles and wasps.

### **Allotment Associations**

- a. There are three allotment sites; Sturt Road, Collards Lane and Clammer Hill. Each site is strongly encouraged to establish its own Allotment Association in order that the collective views of all plotholders on that site can be forwarded on to the Town Council Amenities Committee for their consideration and recommendation to the Town Council.
- b. Each Allotment Association should have a proper constitution and an allotment management committee.
- c. Any Allotment Association subscription that may be set by an Association is a matter for the Association only and nothing to do with the Town Council. Such subscriptions are collected by the Associations and not the Town Council.

### **General Information**

- a. All plots come "as seen" with whatever is on site - **on the first day of the tenancy agreement** – unless a deposit sum has been lodged with HTC to reinstate the plot. Please note that up to this date the previous tenant may have left items on site.
- b. Any cultivation will need to be carried out by the plotholder - HTC will not normally arrange any pre possession cultivation.
- c. Some plots can be affected by excess standing water.
- d. The Town Council are not responsible for providing toilets on site.
- e. There are no toilet facilities on any site and it is not intended to provide any.
- f. All plots shall be kept in good condition and must not be allowed to become overgrown. Plots will be inspected and notices will be issued if plots are not maintained. If action is not taken to rectify the condition of the plot, the plotholder risks the termination of the tenancy agreement.

### **Cultivation and Weed Control**

- A section of the plot can be left fallow (unused), but this must be managed and free of weeds.

### **What Counts as "Cultivation"**

- The cultivated area includes land used for growing herbs, flowers, vegetables, or fruits.
- Shrubs and trees that don't bear fruit don't count.
- To be considered cultivated, 75% of your plot must be actively used – this includes digging, weeding, pruning, mulching, and planting green manures.
- Structures like compost bins, greenhouses, water butts, poly-tunnels, and fruit cages are also part of the cultivated area.

### **Plot Maintenance**

- At least 75% of your plot must be cultivated during Spring, Summer and Autumn.
- Simply clearing weeds without planting anything still counts as "uncultivated."
- All areas, even those used for leisure, must be tidy, safe, and weed-free.

### **Leaving a Section Fallow**

- You may leave up to 25% of your plot fallow in any year.
- This area must still be maintained and not cause problems for your neighbours.

### **Weed Control**

- You are responsible for keeping weeds under control to avoid affecting other tenants.
- If your plot has a weed problem, you'll receive a letter giving you four weeks to fix it.
- A follow-up inspection will happen within eight weeks after the notice period. If there's no improvement, your tenancy may be ended.

### **New Tenants**

- If you take over an overgrown plot, there is flexibility:
    - Year 1: At least 30% cultivated
    - Year 2: At least 60% cultivated
    - Year 3: At least 75% cultivated (the full standard)
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  - However, overgrown areas are not acceptable. Weeds/grass must be always kept under control.
- Each plotholder is responsible for the removal of their own rubbish e.g. (metal, broken glass, wire, old wood, plastic bags, broken plastic chairs, and any rubbish normally sent to land-fill sites)
  - Parking is restricted on all sites and plotholders must be prepared to move parked vehicles to allow access and egress by other plotholders.
  - It is recommended that Tenants indemnify themselves and the Council against any possible claims that may arise as a result of the tenant's action or inaction.
  - It is the Tenants responsibility to identify any weeds they wish to remove and wear protective clothing when doing so in order to reduce the risk of harm, and dispose of them on a bonfire.

### **Allotment Fees**

- The current Allotment fee is 40p per square metre [January 2020]. The fees are based on historical measurements of the plot size.
- A plotholder must not extend cultivation beyond their allotted plot area, without the explicit approval of the Town Council who reserve the right to recalculate the plot size and adjust the allotment plot fees accordingly. The verge areas have been left for a reason and if cultivated, the plotholder does so acknowledging the risk of damage to any cultivation if heavy plant machinery requires access to repair infrastructure items such as water pipes etc.

### **Water Supplies:**

- Metered water supplies are provided to all sites but plotholders have to use their own hose/buckets etc. to convey water to individual plots.
- Water supplies will be shut off at the beginning of November and reconnected at the beginning of March. The Council will review this ruling should any significant seasonal climate variations occur.
- Plotholders are not permitted to use sprinklers at any time.

- d. If a water restriction is imposed by the Water Authority, banning the use of hosepipes, then all allotment plottolders must abide by such a restriction. Failure to do so, could lead to the imposition by the Water Authority of a fine of up to £1000.
- e. Plottolders are encouraged to use water butts for conserving water. These must be no more than 4ft in height and of either green or black plastic.

### **Grass and pathways**

- a. Access paths are mainly grass. These paths are similar to rural cross country footpaths and plottolders should note that care must be taken when using them as they can be wet and slippery or have surface deformations.
- b. Grass paths between allotment plots or down the middle of a site are the responsibility of all allotment plottolders. The Town Council will not undertake any grass cutting of paths.

### **Plot Inspections**

As the landowner, Haslemere Town Council reserves the right to inspect the whole allotment site or any individual plot at any time. As a guide, site inspections will generally take place once every quarter. The Chairman of the Allotment Association or in his absence a member of the allotment association committee will be informed of the date. All Plottolders are welcome to be present.

### **Hen Keeping**

If a plot holder wishes to keep hens, they must ask Haslemere Town Council permission to do so and a separate contract will be drafted for them to sign.

### **Application for a Small Grant**

Should an Allotment Association require a small grant from Haslemere Town Council to assist them with the administration of a site, then they are requested to make an application in writing to the Council by completing a Small Grant Application form [available from the Town Hall], for consideration by the Grants Committee. When considering any application the Council requires a copy of the Allotment Association's Annual Accounts, and applications are considered on a matched funding basis.

### **Availability of Allotment Plots**

- a. As an allotment plot becomes available, it will initially be offered to existing plottolders on the site who may wish to upsize or downsize their plot. An advertisement of the vacancy will be notified to existing plottolders by email or post giving them one week to contact the Council and exchange. After this period the plot will be offered to the next person on the waiting list.
- b. If two plottolders within a site wish to exchange plots because they require a smaller or larger plot, then permission must be obtained from the Town Council before such exchange takes place so that the Allotment Register can be updated. No change in allotment rental will apply until the next allotment year.

### **Termination of the Allotment Tenancy Agreement**

In the tenancy Agreement the Town Council have stated that the tenancy is subject to the allotment Acts 1908 to 1950 and also to a number of relevant conditions.

- a. The Tenant shall keep the allotment garden clean and in good state of cultivation and fertility and in good condition throughout the year.
- b. Any member or officer of the Council shall be entitled at any time directed by the Council to enter and inspect the allotment gardens.

- c. The Tenancy Agreement may be terminated by the Council after one month's notice:-
  - i. If the rent is in arrear for not less than 40 days; or
  - ii. If the Tenant is not duly observing the rules affecting Allotment Garden(s), or any other term or condition of this tenancy, or if the tenant becomes bankrupt or compounds with his creditors.

**Site specific appendices may be added in the future.**