



# ALLOTMENT TENANT'S HANDBOOK



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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Newport City Council has 24 allotment sites with over 1,000 plots under its jurisdiction.

The council aims to provide a facility which is attractive to the allottees (tenants) and the general public.

We are keen to make improvements to the allotment sites and the present initiative is to remove old sheds and buildings when plot holders give up their tenancies and allow only new structures within the council's guidelines.

We hope that this policy will transform sites into areas that are pleasing to the eye, and which, with ongoing improvements to fences, gates, pathways and increased water facilities, will benefit the whole community.

Tenants play a large part in the improvement of their sites, for example pathways between plots are the responsibility of tenants who are encouraged to maintain these areas.

Any signs of vandalism should be reported to either the site secretary or to the council on (01633) 656656.

If you or anyone you know would like to rent an allotment please telephone the council on (01633) 656656 and ask for the allotments officer or ask your local site secretary.

## **2. SELF-MANAGED SITES**

There are two self-managed sites in Newport.

The National Association of Allotment Gardeners is in favour of self-management and all sites are encouraged to consider taking this approach.

Self-management provides security of funding annually and more say within the committee and its members as to how the site is managed.

In return tenants are responsible for the water bill, managing the site, keeping records of expenditure and maintenance of the grass areas, lettings and the associated paperwork with copies to the council for records.

The Council will be responsible for Non cultivation letters and evictions.

For further information call (01633) 656656 and ask for the allotments officer.

## **3. APPLY FOR AN ALLOTMENT**

Call Newport City Council on (01633) 656656 and ask for contact details of your local allotment site secretary or for the allotment officer.

There are waiting lists in certain areas but every effort will be made to accommodate you in the nearest allotment to your home address.

## **4. RENTS**

As per tenancy agreement (section a)

## 5. FACILITIES

1. Water is supplied to most allotment sites using regulated troughs and only watering cans or buckets may be used for plant watering.
  - a. Fitting of taps is prohibited
  - b. Water is turned on in April and off in October
2. Tenants are responsible for pathways between plots which should be kept in a good state of repair to avoid people tripping. Any debris or arisings will be cleared by the tenant.

Any debris left on the main pathways by a tenant will be cleaned immediately, as these pathways remain the responsibility of the council.

3. Secure fencing and gates are in place at all allotment sites and each tenant has keys for access, which remain the property of Newport City Council and must be returned upon termination of agreement. Failure to comply will result in a charge being made for a replacement key.
4. Car parking facilities are available either on site or nearby.
5. Sheds or greenhouses no bigger than 8' x 6' and of an approved standard can be erected on the plots with the **written permission** of Newport City Council.
6. There are no toilet facilities on site.

## 6. HOW YOUR PLOT MAY BE USED

1. As per tenancy agreement section 2.5 (the tenant shall cultivate the land only as an allotment garden, and it is not to be used for business or trade or storage).
2. The allotment must be kept clean and maintained to a good standard of cultivation.
3. A duty of care must be observed for safe working practices in respect of yourself, neighbouring tenants, visitors and children.

### **You must not:**

- Use machinery (cultivators, strimmers, etc) between 7pm and 10am inclusive, Sunday to Saturday
- Use hosepipes or sprinklers
- Have bonfires, fires or any other activity that causes smoke and air pollution
- Use barbed wire on the plot
- Run a business or sublet your plot
- Use herbicides or pesticides that cause nuisance and potential damage to crops
- Keep livestock on the plot
- Leave gates open on entering or leaving the site
- Clean boots or implements in water troughs

- Erect metal sheets on the perimeter of plot
- Allow your plot to deteriorate because of non-cultivation
- Remove crops or other personal items from other plots without consent of the plot holder
- Use any form of heating in huts, sheds or greenhouses

## 7. ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

For the safety and well-being of all tenants, theft of produce or property, fly tipping, deliberate damage, racist, homophobic or other forms of discriminatory bullying, or violent, threatening or other anti-social behaviour are unacceptable and will lead to instant termination of the tenancy.

Other types of behaviour may, at the discretion of the council, instead receive a warning letter stating that a repeat of the action will lead to immediate termination of the tenancy.

A letter will be sent stating the date of the eviction and giving 28 days to remove any personal property from the site.

Newport City Council or any new tenant will not be responsible for goods or chattels left on the plot after this date.

Any tenant causing wilful or wanton damage to any fence, gate or main path, to any water pipe or tap, or any tool shed, hut or greenhouse or any property of Newport City Council will be required to put right the damage at cost to the tenant or the council will repair the damage and charge the tenant for the cost of the repair.

Any tenant evicted for theft, violence or threatening behaviour will only be able to enter the site to collect their belongings by appointment.

## 8. PLOT INSPECTION

1. All of the council's allotment sites will be regularly inspected by the allotment officer
2. Any recommendations about plot maintenance at the time of inspection will be addressed to the site secretary and, where necessary, a 14 day warning notice will be issued to the tenant if rules are broken, followed by an eviction notice if there is no improvement within the 14 days.
3. Warning notices will be issued in accordance with the handbook, however if three warning notices are issued in **any 12 month period** to the same tenant on the same site, this will now be automatically followed by an eviction notice.

There will at this final stage be no appeal.

Infringements of the tenancy agreement will be controlled in fairness to other tenants and people waiting for a plot.

4. Any officer of Newport City Council shall be entitled at any time to enter and inspect the plot, shed or greenhouse

## 9. RUBBISH REMOVAL

The tenant is responsible for any rubbish or unwanted plant material which must be disposed of in a responsible manner.

No such material should be stored on site unless in an organised compost area - removal to the civic amenity site is advised.

Skips are no longer available for use. Tenants are encouraged to chip, shred, compost and recycle on site to prevent excess rubbish accumulating.

See your Site Secretary regarding items in (3)

Do not deposit any waste in or around the allotments, this may be a breach of the Environment Protection Act 1990 and a maximum fine of £20,000 or 6 months imprisonment may be enforced.

It is the responsibility of tenants on all Newport allotment sites to bring to site only what can be used on the allotment to help grow plants.

All non-compostable waste must be removed from site.

A charge may be implemented for clearing non-compostable waste from plots.

## 10. COMPOSTING

Composting is encouraged on allotment sites to reduce the amount of waste. A good compost heap properly maintained will produce nutrients for the plot for the whole season.

- **Recycling of nutrients** - the minerals gathered by the plant during its growing life can be returned to the soil by using compost. The variety of plant material usually put on compost heaps should ensure these plant foods are in well-balanced proportions and will be available over a long period as the compost breaks down slowly in the soil.
- **Improvement of soil structure** - improved soil structure will create air spaces for roots to grow, improve drainage while still retaining moisture and produce warmer soil.
- **Improved moisture and nutrient holding capacity** - water retention in allotment plots is encouraged to save this precious commodity. The water holding capacity of light soils can be considerably improved by the addition of compost. Organic matter has the ability to reduce the amount of plant foods washed out of the soil by the rain.
- **Enhanced biological activity** – the use of compost will increase the number of beneficial micro-organisms, earthworms and predatory insects. Given time and suitable conditions, all animal and vegetation waste will decay and release their plant foods. Almost all such material can be composted, but it is better to exclude some materials due to practical reasons or because of contamination.

If larger woodier materials are shredded first, they will break down more quickly during the composting process.

### Compost may be made up of:

1. *Soft, wet material, e.g. grass cuttings, tea leaves, weeds, fruit, vegetable peelings, greens of brassica crops, greens of root crops, rhubarb leaves etc.*

2. *Stemmy materials containing less moisture, e.g.* hedge clippings, summer pruning of fruit tree material, sweet corn stems, leaves, sunflower stems, brassica stems etc. These materials are better shredded before composting to assist breakdown.

Well-rotted manure is very good, however straw and hay unless very well-rotted will leach nitrogen from the soil while breaking down and should not be used in this condition.

3. *Smaller material, e.g.* plastic, metal, plants suffering from disease such as club root, plants that produce thorns, vacuum cleaner dust, coloured paper etc.

4. *Weeds, e.g.* many gardeners recommend that perennial weeds or those that with seeded heads should be destroyed by burning - this is not essential. Weeds can be recycled through the compost heap, and the fact that bonfires are no longer allowed means composting is the best way to eradicate these weeds. A number of factors influence whether or not live weed seeds and roots appear in compost.

5. *Heat* – there is a better chance of killing roots and seeds by placing the seeds in the centre of the heap. A compost heap built from fresh animal manure is an ideal place to kill weed seeds, weeds and roots.

6. *Exclusion of light* - a light-proof compost container will help to prevent the manufacture of food for perennial weeds and will eventually eradicate them. Food within root systems may take a little longer due to the food storage within the root system. Bindweed and couch grass should be kept away from the compost area.

## Compost containers

There are many styles available, whatever you choose it should be fit for purpose, weather-proof, allowing air-flow and strong enough to withstand continuous wet conditions. You may wish to consider these features:

- *A lid to retain heat* - retaining the considerable amount of heat generated by a good compost heap will ensure speedy decomposition and help to destroy weed seeds and perennials.
- *Access to compost* - mature compost can be heavy so a container designed for ease of removal of compost will save a lot of hard work.
- *Resistance to rotting* - some materials used in the construction of compost containers are attacked by the micro-organisms present in the heap. The life expectancy of a particular material should be taken into consideration.
- *Air flow* – good air flow should be available within the layers of vegetation of the compost, and regular turning of the compost will accelerate the rotting process.

Vermin can be present in compost heaps and care should be taken.

Hedgehogs and other hibernating animals also use these areas for winter warmth so special care needs to be taken when removing compost for use.

## Compost ingredients

Activators ('hotter rotters') e.g. comfrey leaves, young weeds, grass cuttings, chicken manure, pigeon manure.

You can also compost wood ash, cardboard, paper towels, cardboard tubes, egg boxes. A balanced diet for your compost would include fruit and vegetable scraps, tea bags, coffee grounds, old flowers, vegetable plants, soft prunings, gerbil, hamster, rabbit bedding.

Some materials will rot more slowly, including autumn leaves, mature hedge cuttings, sawdust, wood shavings.

Do not use the following materials in your compost: meat, fish, cooked food, coal or coke ash, cat litter, dog faeces, disposable nappies, glossy magazines, diseased materials.

### **When is it ready?**

Compost can be made in 6 – 8 weeks, or can take a year or more. In general, the more effort you put in, the quicker you will get compost.

When the ingredients you have put in your container have turned into a dark brown, earthy-smelling material, the composting process is complete.

It is then best left for a month or two to mature before it is used.

Don't worry if your compost is not fine and crumbly, even if it is lumpy, sticky, or stringy with bits of twigs and eggshell still obvious, it is quite usable.

## **11. CROP ROTATION ON THE ALLOTMENT**

Make sure that the same crop is **not** grown in the same section of ground year after year, but is rotated to other areas of the plot. Ideally crop rotation takes place over a four year period, for example:

### ***Year one***

- Section A Brassica crops (cabbage etc)
- Section B Root crops (carrots etc)
- Section C Salad crops (lettuce etc)
- Section D Legume crops (runner beans etc)

### ***Year two***

- Section A Salad crops
- Section B Legume crops
- Section C Brassica crops
- Section D Root crops

### ***Year three***

- Section A Root crops
- Section B Salad crops



Section C Legume crops

Section D Brassica crops

***Year four***

Section A Legume crops

Section B Brassica crops

Section C Root crops

Section D Salad crops

## **12. PEST AND DISEASE CONTROL**

Crop rotation will mean that the build-up of pests and diseases in your allotment soil will be significantly reduced and the brassicas family (cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli etc) will particularly benefit when grown in different positions each year.

## **13. DOGS**

Dogs are allowed on site under these conditions:

1. They remain the responsibility of the tenant
2. They are tethered on the tenant's plot
3. They cause no nuisance to neighbouring tenants
4. Any fouling must be cleaned up by the owner before leaving site

If these conditions are broken consent for dogs on site will be removed.

Newport City Council  
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