

HWPC

Stray Road Allotments

Allotment Tenants Handbook

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Heworth Without Parish Council

Gayle Enion-Farrington (Clerk to Parish Council)

1 Allington Drive, Appletree Village, Heworth, York YO310NL

Tel: 07422961495

E-mail: clerk.hwpc@gmail.com

www.heworthwithout.org.uk

Abbreviations

HWPC = Heworth Without Parish Council; CYC = City of York Council

Welcome to your new allotment!

We hope that you will enjoy your allotment for many years to come. This allotment handbook provides you with information about some of the key terms and conditions of your tenancy agreement. We hope that it also contains lots of other useful information as well as important safety advice. Whilst parts of this handbook are aimed at new allotment tenants, there is still plenty of important and useful information for those who have held an allotment tenancy for some time. For consistency, it is incredibly similar to other tenancy agreements across the city. We therefore ask all tenants, new and old, to make use of this handbook. It is very important that you read this handbook carefully and that you keep hold of it for future reference. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to get in touch. Email: clerk.HWPC@gmail.com
Telephone: 07422961495.

Tenancy Agreement

Your tenancy agreement is the legal agreement between you and Heworth Without Parish Council. Please ensure that you have signed and returned one copy of the agreement to the clerk of HWPC

On their receipt of this signed legal agreement you are free to start gardening.

Facilities

As you are aware our site is small with no facilities, other than the plot itself. However, Hempland Lane Allotments, is only 500 metres away across the little footbridge. If you join their allotment association you will be able to use their facilities, including a composting toilet, allotment shop open Feb – Oct on Sundays 10am-12noon and currently an outdoor honesty shop 27/4 for plants and seedlings.

If you need water for your plants, you need to bring it with you, harvest rain water and or safely gather it from the beck (without leaving any tripping hazards for the general public passing by). There are ways however to completely reduce the need to bring water onto the site and more information on this can be provided by HWPC. Another great link is the The National Allotment Society, of which the Parish is a member (<https://thenas.org.uk/>).

Sharing and Co-working

You may wish to be assisted on your plot by someone else. If you would like the person you are assisted by to have rights with regards to the tenancy agreement then you must register them with HWPC as a co-worker. This must be done in writing or via email. You may add a co-worker at any time during your tenancy. Any nominated co-worker must have been added for one year before they are eligible to take over as the

main tenant. You cannot sub-let your plot (charge others a rent for using it) and any tenant found to be doing this will have their tenancy terminated.

Getting Started

Once you get your allotment plot it can be tempting to jump in immediately but a little bit of planning will help you in the long run and make sure you can keep up your momentum.

- Take time to plan the layout of your plot for ease of use
- Develop a yearly plan of what you will grow
- Think about shade, ease of access, growing space, watering, etc.
- Create narrow planting beds to allow easy access to the soil
- Use crop rotation to keep your soil healthy
- Manure your plot regularly to maintain soil fertility
- Ensure you have good paths and keep paths clear of hazards
- Do not do too much in one go but maintain steady and regular progress Cultivation

We require the majority of a plot to be under cultivation. You must demonstrate that you are maintaining your plot in a cultivable state. This means that you are:

- making every effort to control weed growth
- preparing the soil for sowing or planting
- planting out new crops during the growing season or maintaining perennials such as fruit bearing shrubs or trees
- maintaining any ground around fruit trees and bushes to minimise weeds
- keeping the plot in a neat and tidy state

The use of weed suppressant covering is permitted in the following circumstances:

- to prepare an overgrown plot for cultivation (weed suppressant coverings should not normally be in place for more than 12 months)
- on a temporary basis for small areas of the plot (not exceeding 50% of the total area) not currently being used for growing
- in the event of a prolonged absence, either due to illness or circumstances beyond the plot holders control, larger proportions of covering are permitted providing the tenant makes arrangements for HWPC to be notified.

After 3 months it would be expected to see parts of the plot cleared and dug over.

After 6 months we would expect to see some crops in place (depending on the time of year) and the plot substantially dug, or uncultivated areas covered with weed fabric or other weed suppressant materials.

By the end of the first year of your tenancy we would expect to see the whole plot in a good state of cultivation. If you have difficulty achieving this please make contact with us. If you know that you are going to be unable to garden for some time please let us know and where possible cover your plot in advance to minimise weed growth to avoid causing problems for your neighbours.

Non Cultivation

If you are sent a letter for non-cultivation you will be allowed 21 or 28 days to make significant improvements (depending upon the severity of the issues). If you fail to reply or improve the state of cultivation, you will be sent a further letter and your tenancy may be terminated. If there are extenuating circumstances for why you are unable to cultivate your plot you must let us know so that these can be taken into consideration.

Livestock

You need permission to be able to keep livestock on your allotment. You must contact the clerk and wait for permission to be granted before bringing any livestock on site. Currently only hens are permitted, limited to a maximum of 6, which must have appropriate care and housing and possibly Bees. Any small to medium sized livestock will be considered by the Parish.

Structures

You must get permission to erect a shed, greenhouse, chicken coop or other structure on your allotment. You should first discuss this with the clerk of the Parish. The final consent is via the Parish Councillors.

Recreational and Play Equipment

Allotments are primarily intended for horticultural use. Although they have a recreational role, this is subsidiary to their main purpose. It is recognised that for some plot holders, especially those with children, some availability of recreational and play equipment is important. HWPC therefore wishes to be flexible in allowing some recreational and play equipment on plots providing it is: proportionate in size and space occupied to the size of the plot (i.e. taking up only a small area of the plot).

Bonfires

Allowing a bonfire to cause a nuisance to neighbouring residents or other allotment tenants contravenes your allotment tenancy. It may also be an offence under environmental protection law. If the Council's Environmental Protection Unit receive a complaint they issue an official warning. After a warning, further nuisance could lead to a court appearance and a fine of up to £5,000. Please note the following rules for trouble free bonfires:

- Don't light a bonfire on a warm, dry day, when neighbouring residents may be sitting out in their garden or drying their washing
- Don't light a fire between Easter & October unless the weather is cold and grey
- Don't burn your weeds – most can be composted to improve the soil
- Don't bring rubbish from home to burn on your plot
- Only burn dry, woody garden waste
- Choose a still, cool evening for your fire

- Make sure the fire is out before you leave it

Do not burn plastics or other non-plant material. Dispose of these offsite as per CYC rules and guidance.

Hedges and Shared Paths

If your plot boundary includes a hedge, maintaining this is your responsibility. If you are unable to take on such work please discuss this with the clerk of the Parish and an alternative plot can be sought for you. Remember, it is an offence to disturb nesting birds so please check your hedges before cutting and only cut at appropriate times of year. Hedges and fences should not exceed 1.5 metres. All shared paths between the Allotment Garden and any neighbouring allotment garden shall be kept cut and clipped up to half their width by the Tenant unless otherwise expressly provided for by the Council. The tenant is also responsible for implementing and / or maintaining pathways to each plot, to enable each plot to be accessible.

Regular Weeding

To keep on top of weeds you need to make frequent visits to your plot, especially during the main growing season, and make weeding a regular task. Digging over the ground and removing roots is the only really effective organic way to remove weeds but other methods can help.

Weedkillers (Herbicides)

These generally fall into two types: contact and systemic. Contact herbicides can be useful for large areas of annual weeds and usually work on contact with foliage. They have minimal impact on perennial weeds, such as nettles or brambles, and are best avoided on allotments. Save your money and use a hoe instead! Systemic weedkillers, such as glyphosate, destroy plants from within, including their roots, usually following a spray application to the foliage. They are therefore useful for controlling perennial weeds such as bindweed, couch grass, ground elder and bramble. We advise restricting their use to the initial clearance of plots, after which any regrowth can be tackled by hand weeding. It is important that you check any old products you may have been stored in your shed. Many commonly used products have now been withdrawn from sale due to their adverse impact on the environment and their use is now banned. If you continue to use such products you will be breaking the law and causing unnecessary damage to our one planet.

Disposing of Weeds

You can compost annual weeds (avoid seed heads) but roots of perennial weeds will grow again if they are composted before they are killed. (Try drowning them in a bucket of water.) Use the internet or a good gardening book to help you identify common annual and perennial weeds. Do not burn weeds as this can make a bonfire very smoky.

Invasive Species Please inform HWPC clerk immediately (Email: clerk.HWPC@gmail.com Telephone: 07422961495) if you have any invasive species on your plot as you may need specialist advice to remove them. A complete list can be found in the Health and Advice section on the following website: -

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/invasive-non-native-alien-plant-species-rules-in-england-and-wales>

Ones to watch out for on allotments include: Japanese Knotweed, Himalayan Balsam and Giant Hogweed.

Composting Why Compost?

Compost is a natural, nutrient-rich, soil-like medium of decayed organic matter. It is a product of the natural breakdown of dead plants and other organic matter such as fruit and vegetable peelings. With time and a little bit of care and attention, this organic matter decomposes with the assistance of micro-organisms and earthworms to produce a valuable source of compost. This can improve and enrich the soil, helping to feed your plants and to encourage them to grow strong and healthy.

Making Compost

Making compost is not especially difficult. The easiest method is to purchase a compost bin specially designed for the purpose. If you prefer the DIY approach, you can build your own compost bin. To do this you may want to contain the heap using reclaimed timber and four wooden posts to make a bottomless box; covering will also help to retain moisture. Alternatively, just heap all your organic matter into a big pile in a corner of your plot. However, this method looks less attractive, can suffer from a lack of firmness and can lose the heat generated internally unless covered. Digging or 'turning' your compost occasionally will help to speed up the process and will discourage rats and other vermin from nesting in these areas.

Safe Composting

Always use gloves when handling compost or manure and wash your hands afterwards. Do not compost cooked food or animal products as these can attract vermin and possibly contain harmful bacteria or disease.

Rubbish

When you take on a plot you may find rubbish and other debris, which we ask you to remove and dispose of carefully. Many materials can easily be transported off-site for recycling or safe disposal at one of the Council's waste recycling facilities. Materials such as wood or bricks can be reused on the plot, saving the need to send materials to landfill. If you come across material on your plot that is difficult to dispose of, we ask you to try to remove as much as possible safely before contacting us for further assistance. HWPC is unable to provide skips due to its location, so think carefully about what you bring on to your plot and how it will be disposed of in the future. In exceptional circumstances HWPC may be able to assist you with the removal of large or bulky waste, such as clearing an old shed or a pile of landfill waste left on a plot by a previous tenant. Please discuss this with the clerk when taking on the plot.

Wildlife

Allotments provide a range of habitats for birds, small mammals, amphibians and insects, to name but a few. Many animals are beneficial to gardeners as they prey on pests such as aphids, slugs and snails. As far as possible, tenants should look to share their allotments with local wildlife.

Birds can be encouraged with nest boxes and feeders placed in trees. Remember to check for nesting birds before cutting your hedges.

Bees can be encouraged with wildflowers.

Unwelcome Wildlife

Rats are attracted by uncultivated areas, spaces under sheds, piles of debris and open compost heaps as well as available food, such as unharvested crops and excess livestock feed (especially being close to water). Keeping your plot tidy and well cultivated helps deter them. If further action is required, products for dealing with rats are available from DIY stores but only use in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. HWPC will only take action if there is a severe infestation which cannot be contained by the above measures and which impacts on the wider community.

Pigeons can be a problem, particularly on sites located close to woodland/or agricultural land. The only way to ensure protection for crops is to cover them with netting. Please be mindful to secure nets properly so that birds do not become trapped in loose netting. It is advisable to check netting after heavy snowfall or strong winds which may cause it to collapse. Enviromesh is very good.

Foxes generally do not cause too many problems and the main issue is unwanted digging, particularly if animal-based fertilisers such as blood, fish and bone are used. The best way to avoid this is to minimise the use of such products and to cover areas of freshly-dug soil. If you keep chickens on your plot, make sure their housing is sturdy enough to withstand potential attacks by foxes.

Personal Health

- Tetanus -Tetanus is an illness caused by bacteria present in soil and manure, which can enter the body through the tiniest abrasion, scratch, thorn, puncture or cut. Your GP may be able to offer a vaccination.
- First Aid - A first aid kit is always a wise addition to the tools kept in the garden shed. A small selection of adhesive plasters, antiseptic wipes to clean wounds, sting cream, a pair of tweezers for removing thorns and splinters and a gauze or lint pad to use as a compress to stop bleeding if you are badly cut are useful contents.
- Exercise - Having an allotment can be hard work so please be mindful of your own capabilities and physical limitations and build up slowly, particularly if you are not used to it! If you have a known medical condition you may want to seek medical advice before starting work on your plot. Thrive is an organisation to help people who have ill health or a disability to garden and more tips and advice can be found on their website at: www.thrive.org.uk
- Wash Hands and Use Gloves - There is a risk of illness from bacteria (such as *E.coli*) which can be present in animal manure and even home-made compost. Please wash your hands regularly and always wear protective gloves when handling potentially harmful substances. **Antibacterial hand gels and wipes are not a substitute for washing hands but can reduce the risk of infection transmission.**
- Sun Protection - If you are spending long periods on your plot then please ensure you have adequate sun protection and limit your exposure to strong sunshine. Also, keep yourself hydrated by regularly drinking water or other soft drinks and avoid physical exertion during the hottest part of the day.
- COVID19 – Ensure gloves are worn to open the entrance gates and any tool that may be shared outside of your household. Regular use of sanitiser and washing your hands when getting home is recommended.

Security on Allotments

Most find that time on allotments is both tranquil and enjoyable. Plot holders spend a considerable amount of time on their plots and put in a lot of effort, keeping their plot well maintained and productive. It can therefore be very distressing if your site suffers from incidents of vandalism or anti-social behaviour. The tips on the following page are aimed at increasing plot security and reducing vandalism and anti-social behaviour. Respect - as an allotment holder you are expected to be courteous and respectful to other users of the site and neighbouring Everyone is entitled to enjoy their plot.

- ✧ Consider security at all times - all tenants have a responsibility for maintaining security on their site
- ✧ Please respect other tenants, neighbours and their properties (this is a condition of your tenancy), and other members of the public on your site
- ✧ Report any incidents to the police (using 101 for non-emergencies or 999 for emergencies)
- ✧ Please make HWPC aware of any incidents (Email: clerk.HWPC@gmail.com Telephone: 07422961495). HWPC cannot report to the police on your behalf.
- ✧ Please keep dogs on a lead or ensure your plot is able to contain your dog, but not higher than 1.2 metres high
- ✧ Please clean up after your dog and use the CYC bins.
- ✧ Do not visit other plots without permission or cause a nuisance to your neighbours

Nuisance

A plot holder must not cause or permit any nuisance to any other plot holder or to the owners or occupiers of any adjoining or neighbouring property. HWPC will not tolerate any threatening, violent or intimidating behaviour by plot holders under any circumstances. Any plot holder found guilty in a court of law of offences involving an allotment plot or other plot holders will be given immediate notice to terminate.

Security Checklist

- ✧ Keep your plot well maintained. A well-tended plot is a lot less likely to attract vandals than one that looks uncared for.
- ✧ Don't leave any valuables on site. If possible take all tools with you when you leave. Any tools left on your plot should be security marked (your local police can assist this this).
- ✧ Don't use or keep combustible or dangerous materials on your plot.
- ✧ Dispose of rubbish appropriately. A site that is well presented and looks used and cared for can help to reduce anti-social behaviour such as fly-tipping.
- ✧ Keep your site and your plot secure. If your site has fencing keep the gates locked at all times.
- ✧ Razor wire or similar are not allowed under any circumstances.

✧ Be a good neighbour. Looking out for one another will help make your site feel safer.

✧ Be aware of personal safety when working on your own. Always let someone know where you are and, if possible, have a means of contact such as a mobile phone.

✧ Report all incidents. The police target resources at areas where crime is most often reported. Please report all incidents using the 101 number (or 999 if someone is at risk or it is an emergency).

Please let HWPC know of any incidents but please note we are not able to report them to the police on your behalf.

Sale of Produce

You are not permitted to run your allotment plot as a business. You may only sell genuine surplus produce from your plot – or give it away.

Feedback

HWPC welcome compliments, comments and complaints from anyone using or visiting the allotments. The clerk will identify any complaints and record them. All complaints will be referred to relevant HWPC meetings. If a crime or incident of anti-social behaviour has occurred on your allotment please report all such incidents to the police. The police target resources at areas where crime is most often reported. Please report all incidents using the 101 number (or 999 if someone is at risk or it is an emergency).

Please let HWPC know of any incidents but please note we are not able to report them to the police on your behalf (Email: clerk.HWPC@gmail.com Telephone: 07422961495).

Happy Gardening!