

Swan Lake Allotments Handbook

Welcome to the handbook for the Swan Lake Allotment Site. The information set out below is there for the benefit of all those who use and visit the site and aims to provide a clear and concise set of rules and regulations which are fair to all.

Site Information.

The site is located off Darby Green Lane on the Swan Lake Park Public Open Space. The car park is for use by all users of the park. Plot holders will be issued with a key for the gate to the site. The site is owned by Yateley Town Council who can be contacted by email at office@yateley-tc.gov.uk or phone **01252 872198**.

The Tenancy

1. Plots will be let to one Tenant who must live within the Civil Parish of Yateley and be over the age of 18.
2. The Tenant shall sign a tenancy agreement and pay a yearly rent in advance no more than 30 days after the issue date of the invoice. For new tenants a proportionate rent for the remaining months payable within 14 days of the invoice.
3. The rent will be subject to annual review by the council and will normally be subject to an inflationary rise.
4. The Tenant will notify the council of any changes in contact information, by email or writing.
5. The Tenant may terminate the tenancy by providing written notice to the Council at any time. Please note that no rent refund will be issued. After notifying the Council, the Tenant has 14 calendar days to remove all belongings from the site. If the belongings are not removed within this 14-day period, the Council will dispose of any items that remain.
6. The Council will terminate the tenancy.
 - i) On the death of the Tenant (if no plot sharer is nominated)
 - ii) If the rent is in arrears for 30 calendar days or more
 - iii) If the Tenant fails to abide by the conditions, rules and regulations set out in the tenancy agreement and this handbook. They will receive one warning letter detailing the problem and a suggested course of action. A **Notice to Quit** will be subsequently issued if the plot holder does not satisfactorily address the situation.

7. **Notice to Quit-** When issued with a Notice to Quit tenants will be given 14 calendar days to remove any belongings from site after which the council will dispose of any items left. The plot will then be deemed vacant and re-let.
8. **Sub-letting-** Tenants may not sub-let their plot or any part of it.
9. **Plot Sharers** - Tenants can formally nominate **ONE** plot sharer who **MUST** be actively involved with the upkeep of the plot and **MAY** be offered the tenancy if the existing tenant dies or terminates their tenancy (BUT NOT IF ISSUED WITH A NOTICE TO QUIT). The Council will keep a register of plot sharers and **ONLY** this person may be offered the tenancy, in writing at the address and/or email address held by the Council. If he/she chooses not to take on the tenancy or fails to respond within 14 calendar days, the plot will be deemed vacant and re-let. It is the Tenants responsibility to keep the Council updated on any change of details.

The Site and Plots

10. **Use of the Plot-** The plot should be used as an allotment garden only and for no other purpose. This is to grow vegetables, fruit and flowers and other harvestable plants (such as herbs) for use by the Tenant. Plants should be contained within the cultivating area and not be allowed to overgrow pathways.
11. **Cultivation-** the plot should be kept in a good state of cultivation and plots will be inspected periodically. A '*good state of cultivation*' is taken to mean that the plot is either in readiness for growing, well stocked with growing produce or in the process of being prepared for following crops or seasons.

Plots will be inspected periodically and those plot holders who fail to reach a satisfactory level will be advised in writing that they will be expected to make lasting improvements within a specified period of time. **Tenants in difficulty should discuss this with the Council at the earliest opportunity.**
12. **Non-cultivation-** Tenants who are finding it difficult to maintain their plot, for whatever reason, can elect to terminate their tenancy whilst the plot is still in a reasonable state of cultivation and be placed at the top of the waiting list until such time as they feel able to take on a plot or ask for their name to be removed from the waiting list. **Tenants cannot elect to do this once issued with a Notice to Quit.**
13. **Weeds-** Tenants should aim to keep their plots as free from weeds as possible, to achieve this.
 - Weed seed-heads should be removed before the seed has set.
 - Pernicious weeds, such as those spread through the extension of roots should be controlled.
 - Long grass and detritus should be removed.
14. **Paths-** Tenants should keep paths trimmed and free of hazards and obstructions allowing unimpeded access at all times.

15. **Waste-** No refuse, garden waste or other items should be brought on to or stored anywhere on site. All green waste arising from the site should be either composted or removed from the site by the Tenant. The Tenant shall not allow there to be a build-up of superfluous items on the plot.

16. **Trees/shrubs/hedges-**

- No fruit trees are permitted except dwarf varieties in containers.
- Shrubs such as Lavender and other herbs which can be harvested are permitted but please be mindful that they will need to be kept at a manageable size and not allowed to grow over pathways etc.
- No hedging is permitted.

17. **Storage/Sheds-** One shed no bigger than 122cmx183cm (6x4 ft) is permitted per plot. It is to be used exclusively for storage purposes and must be situated on the fence end of the plot. For smaller plots, smaller 'garden stores' or 'sentry boxes' will be more suitable. The only colours permitted are brown and green. They should be kept in a good state of repair. No solid concrete bases are permitted, slabs are permitted.

18. **Items Stored- Only** items connected with the use of the plot should be stored by the tenant. We strongly recommend that tenants don't bring their best tools and equipment as this is likely to encourage thefts from sheds.

19. **Chemicals** – Due to the proximity to the river, the Environment Agency places restrictions on the use of herbicides and pesticides. The use of these chemicals must be restricted to small handheld spray bottles with the spray targeting individual plants. **NO** backpack sprays or any other method that sprays indiscriminately. No chemicals should be stored onsite. It would be preferable if tenants use organic pesticides. **NO** vermin poison must be used or kept onsite.

20. **Structures-** Plots may have;

- Up to two compost bins plastic or wooden, green, brown, or black in colour. No uncontained compost heaps
- Up to two water butts **with lids** for the harvesting of rain water. Green, brown or black in colour. Tenants must ensure that water butts are secured and stable at all times to reduce the risk of them toppling.
- Standard fruit cages which are securely fastened to the ground.
- Timber or plastic raised beds, planters up to 61cm (2ft) in height. Green or brown in colour.
- Timber, metal, or plastic cold frames/propagators (NO GLASS) up to 61cm (2ft) in height.
- Pots and tubs designed for that purpose, no old bathtubs, tyres or other unsuitable items.
- Cloches up to 61cm (2ft) in height.
- **NO greenhouses or poly tunnels.**

- **NO Walls or Paving.** Slabs may be used under structures like sheds or water butts to provide a stable base.
- **No Ponds.**

21. **Dogs-** Tenants may bring their own dog on site but should restrict them to their own plots, clear up any mess and keep them under control at all times. They must not be allowed to cause nuisance to other tenants. **Breaches of this rule may result in dogs being permanently banned from the site.**

22. **Livestock-** **NO** livestock is permitted.

23. **Bonfires-** **NO** bonfires or incinerators.

24. **Visitors and Children on site-** Visitors are welcome on site, but must always be accompanied by the Tenant or plot sharer. Children are at a greater risk from potential hazards and must be supervised by the tenant at all times.

25. **Personal Conduct-** All users and visitors of the site must conduct themselves in an orderly and considerate manner at all times. They must not cause or permit any nuisance or annoyance to any other user or visitor. Any deliberate interference or damage to another plot will result in the termination of their tenancy.

26. **Trading-** The Tenant may not carry out any trade or business from the allotment site.

Other

27. **Health and Safety-**

- The Council will hold the relevant third-party insurance cover for the Site. This will not cover individual plot holder's belongings or produce.
- The Council will conduct a risk assessment of the site which will be reviewed regularly; any changes will be communicated to plot holders.
- The safety of all users will depend to a great extent on the conduct of others. This will mean adhering to the rules and regulations as set out in this handbook and any changes made to them and being mindful of others when carrying out any activity on site.
- Tenants are asked to report defects to Yateley Town Council, including sightings of rats.
- Tenants must use gardening equipment according to manufacturer's instructions and store it appropriately.
- The fence must be kept free of obstructions and no items should be stored against or lent on the fence.
- The site will be inspected by the council for defects and to ensure compliance with the rules and regulations.
- To reduce the risk of legionella (a waterborne bacteria which is spread by aerosolised water droplets) it is advised tenants familiarise themselves with the risks associated with the use of water butts and hose pipes. The council

will shut the water off from the beginning of October to the end of March annually to avoid water becoming stagnant in pipes due to infrequent use over these months.

28. **Use of Peat-** The council discourages the use of peat-based compost and other products due to its negative environmental impact.

29. **Waiting list-** The Council will maintain a chronological waiting list of prospective tenants. When a plot becomes vacant it will be offered to the person at the top of the waiting list. The individual will be written to at the address and /or email address held by the council and will be expected to respond within 14 calendar days. If no response is received the individual will be removed from the waiting list and the plot offered to the next person on the list.

Applicants who choose not to take on a plot, when offered, and have provided a satisfactory explanation can keep their place on the waiting list.

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