



Portsmouth
CITY COUNCIL

Portsmouth Allotments and Leisure Gardens Rules

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Portsmouth Allotments and Leisure Gardens Rules

Over recent years the demand for allotments has greatly increased and the waiting list is long, with waiting times over two years.

We do not have any surplus land in Portsmouth, so we have taken several measures to ensure we use the land we have as efficiently as we can. This has included creating more plots by subdividing large plots when they become vacant, and introducing a stricter regime of inspection and repossession when plots become neglected.

The following rules set out what is expected of tenants, and are for the benefit of all allotment holders. Failure to abide by the rules may result in the loss of your allotment plot.

Tenancy

A plot is let to an individual person (the tenant), and cannot be let as a joint tenancy.

No allotment plot may be sub-let.

Plots will be let only to people living in Portsmouth (PO1-PO6 postcodes). The one exception to this rule is the council's allotment site at Durrants Road, Rowland's Castle.

A tenant may register one co-worker on their plot. This registration must be in writing to the Parks Service. Once a co-worker has been registered for one year (three years at Milton allotments and Salisbury Road allotments), they will gain the right to take over the tenancy when the existing tenant surrenders the plot. Note this rule will not apply if the plot is repossessed for non-cultivation.

There will normally be no objection to the transfer of a tenancy to a family member, provided the plot has been held for one year (three years at Milton allotments and Salisbury Road allotments).

If a tenant is temporarily unable to tend their plot for any reason they should notify the Parks Service in writing, and make suitable arrangements for their plot to be looked after.

The Parks Service must be notified of any change to the tenant's address and email address (if they have one). The use of email for correspondence is encouraged as it saves money.

The tenant must not cause or permit a nuisance in their use of the allotment.

Cultivation

Plots must be kept in a tidy, safe, productive and cultivated state.

No more than 25% of a plot should be left uncultivated. Uncultivated areas might include lawns, paths, sheds, fallow areas or wildlife meadows.

Weeds must not be allowed to reach the stage of setting seed. It is the responsibility of the tenant to keep weeds under control on their plot.

Cultivation includes digging, mulching, pruning and weeding and should be for the production of vegetables, fruit, herbs, flowers or other ornamental plants. It is not sufficient simply to clear weeds without using the area to produce a crop.

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If you have a larger plot, and are finding it hard to maintain the whole area, please consider giving up a portion of your plot so that it could be made into a plot for someone else.

The Parks Service will carry out regular inspections of allotment plots; normally these will be joint inspections with the allotment associations.

If your plot is found to be uncultivated, we will write to you and will require you to cultivate your plot (a 'dirty plot letter'). If, after one month, your plot is still uncultivated the plot will be repossessed. You will be given seven days notice to remove your possessions ('notice to quit'), after which your tenancy will be terminated.

If your plot is found to be uncultivated again within 12 months of a dirty plot letter your plot will be repossessed. In these circumstances you will not be given one month to tidy your plot, you will be given seven days notice to remove your possessions, after which your tenancy will be terminated.

Structures

Tenants may erect one shed and one greenhouse on their plot.

In addition, tenants may erect a compost bin and a cold frame on their plot.

No additional structures (including poly-tunnels) may be erected without written permission of the Parks Service.

Sheds must be temporary in structure and should be of sectional design in timber or metal.

No permanent foundations are to be laid.

The maximum size of a shed or greenhouse is 8ft x 6ft (2.4m x 1.8m). Sheds or greenhouses should not exceed 7ft (2.1m) in height.

Greenhouses may be glazed with horticultural glass or rigid polycarbonate. For safety reasons we recommend the use of polycarbonate glazing rather than glass; it is also more resistant to accidental damage or vandalism.

All structures must be maintained in good condition. If a structure is found to be in a poor state of repair, or to be dangerous it must be repaired to the satisfaction of the Parks Service. Any dilapidated, dangerous or unauthorised structure may be removed by the Parks Service without notice and costs recovered.

Fences should not exceed 1m in height.

Disposal of waste

Waste items must not be abandoned, tipped or dumped anywhere on the allotment site.

Failure to abide by this rule may result in loss of your plot. In addition, you may be committing an offence contrary to Section 2 of the Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1978 and Section 33 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

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The accumulation of excessive amounts of waste, debris and items of no horticultural use on a plot may be considered to have breached the rules regarding cultivation of the plot, and as such may be subject to the dirty plot letter procedure as outlined above.

Portsmouth City Council will not remove any green waste. It is the responsibility of the tenant to compost all green waste on their plot or to arrange for its disposal. The use of compost bins on plots is encouraged.

Pernicious weeds

If pernicious weeds are not controlled they will spread and are often difficult to eradicate either by physical or chemical methods. The plants should be removed from the soil and disposed of.

The fact that many pernicious weeds are often not destroyed by composting, means that they are not suitable for adding to traditional compost bins or heaps.

Examples of pernicious weeds:

Bindweed

Dock

Mare's tail

Creeping thistle

Ground elder

Certain diseased plants should also be treated as pernicious, such as blighted tomatoes or potatoes.

How to dispose of pernicious weeds and blighted crops from allotment sites:

- either: store the plant material in black bags on the plot, and burn in November (your allotment association will need to apply for permission to have a fire)
- or remove the plant material from the allotment site and dispose of it at the local amenity tip

Bonfires

The lighting of fires is prohibited on allotment sites in Portsmouth. This includes bonfires and fires in braziers.

The one exception to this rule occurs on or around 5th November. Allotment associations may apply to Portsmouth City Council events department for permission to hold an annual bonfire. Provided the association meets the requirements of the event application with regards to risk assessment and public liability insurance, they may light a communal bonfire at a suitable place in the allotment site. It is strongly recommended that associations make their application well in advance, and that the Fire and Rescue Service are informed.

Water

Mains water is normally turned off between October and March.

The use of sprinklers is prohibited. Hosepipes may be used provided they are not left unattended.

Any leaks from water pipes or unexplained flooding must be reported to the Parks Service (see contact details below).

Trees and hedges

Trees and hedges in the vicinity of the allotments shall be preserved as far as possible in their present condition.

Hedges on the perimeter of plots must not exceed 1m in height.

Trees and hedges must not be allowed to obstruct or encroach on paths and roadways.

Animals

No fowl or animals may be kept on an allotment plot, except as provided by the Allotments Act 1950 or any statutory modification thereof.

The keeping of bees on allotment plots is prohibited with the exception of those plots supervised and maintained by Portsmouth and District Bee Keepers Association.

Dogs must be kept on a lead and any dog excrement must be picked up and removed from the allotment site.

Security

No unauthorised persons are allowed on allotment sites.

Tenants must take responsibility for the security of the allotment sites and ensure that gates are kept locked at all times.

Keys are issued by the allotment associations. A charge is made for keys.

The council is not liable for loss by accident, fire, theft or damage of any structures, tools or other possessions kept on allotment sites. Tenants are advised not to store any items of value on their plot. Tenants should report incidents of theft and vandalism to the police.

Paths and roadways

Paths between plots are the shared responsibility of the adjacent plots and should be kept clear, and grass neatly cut.

Paths should be kept wide enough to allow easy pedestrian access to neighbouring plots.

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Roadways are for access only. Cars should not be parked so as to obstruct the roadway, and should be moved once loading and unloading is finished.

Plot numbering

Tenants must ensure that their plot is correctly identified by clearly displaying the plot's number so as to be visible from the main path or roadway.

This is essential to ensure that plot inspections can take place properly, and to avoid dirty plot letters being sent to the wrong tenant.

Removal of soil

No soil, mineral, gravel, sand or clay may be taken away without the permission of the Parks Service.

Charges

Tenancies last for 1 year only, and must be renewed annually at the start of the letting year.

Starting in November 2011 the letting year will run from 1 November to 31 October.

Tenants will be invoiced for 12 months in advance in October / November.

The cost of renting an allotment plot will be set and published 12 months before the payment is due. Charges are based on the size of plots, and are the same across all Portsmouth City Council allotment sites.

If a tenant takes on a plot part way through a letting year, they may qualify for a reduced rate for the remainder of the year as follows:

Tenancy starts	Reduction
1 Nov - 29 Feb	no reduction
1 Mar - 31 Jun	33% reduction
1 Jul - 31 Oct	67% reduction

Tenants who do not pay when invoiced will be sent a reminder, but if payment is not received within 6 weeks of the original invoice, the tenancy will be terminated and the plot re-let to a new tenant.

Tenants whose plots are repossessed for non-cultivation will not receive a refund for the remainder of the letting year.

Tenants who give up their plot voluntarily and terminate their tenancy will not normally receive a refund for the remainder of the letting year.

Concessions

People aged 60 or older qualify for a reduced rate (currently a 37% reduction).

Tenants must be 60 or older on 1st November to qualify for a reduction in any given letting year.

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People who have a Portsmouth leisure card qualify for a reduced rate (currently a 40% reduction)

You must quote your leisure card number when applying for a reduced rate.

Tenants may only receive one concession. If you are 60 or over and hold a Leisure Card you will receive the greater reduction (currently 40%).

Huts

Council owned huts in communal areas are available at the following sites:

- Longmeadow allotments
- Milton allotments
- Moneyfields allotments
- North Harbour allotments
- Salisbury Road allotments

Charges depend on the size and type of the hut, and tenancies run for 1 year in the same way as for allotment plots. Concessions apply to hut rental in the same way as allotment rental.

If a tenant takes on a hut part way through a letting year, they may qualify for a reduced rate for the remainder of the year as follows:

Tenancy starts	Reduction
1 Nov - 29 Feb	no reduction
1 Mar - 31 Jun	33% reduction
1 Jul - 31 Oct	67% reduction

Tenants are responsible for the security of their huts.

At North Harbour allotments, some plots have a council owned hut situated on the plot itself. The plot and the hut are let together as one tenancy, and an additional charge for the hut is made on top of that for the allotment.

Huts will only be let to people with an allotment plot at the same site.

Other rules

The council's officers may enter a plot at any time.

Tenants must abide by all reasonable directions of the Parks Service.

How to contact us:

By Post:

Directorate of Culture,
Leisure and Regulatory Services
Core 3, Floor 5
Civic Offices
Portsmouth
PO1 2AD

Telephone: 023 9268 8070

Email: allotments@portsmouthcc.gov.uk



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You can get this
Portsmouth City
Council information
in large print, Braille,
audio or in another
language by calling
023 9268 8070.



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