



Allotments Handbook



Contents

Section 1 – Introduction.....	3
Section 2 – Applying for a Plot.....	4
1. Who Can Apply?.....	4
2. How to apply.....	4
3. Waiting List Policy.....	4
Section 3 – Conditions of your tenancy agreement.....	5
4. Allotment agreement.....	5
5. Change of circumstances	5
6. Subletting/sharing your plot	5
7. Membership Fee	5
8. Rent.....	5
9. Access to the allotment site	6
10. Caring for your allotment plot	6
11. Use of the plot.....	6
12. Vermin.....	6
13. Your belongings and welfare	7
The Rules	8
Section 4 – Giving up your plot.....	10
Section 5 – Site Management.....	10
14. The Role of the Allotment Association	10
15. Inspections	10
16. Issues, Concerns or Disputes	11
Section 6 – Tips for new plot holders.....	11

Section 1 – Introduction

This Handbook explains the rules of the Tenancy Agreement, and what can, and can't be done on our allotment site. It also explains how the allotment site is managed and who to contact if you have any problems. There are also some tips on allotment gardening. For those of you who are novices there is some basic advice on getting started, safety and composting. For those of you who are experts - you might not need that part of the handbook!

We would like to encourage as many people as possible to take up allotment gardening, so please tell your friends about the benefits of growing your own produce, the exercise, the fresh air and the satisfaction of eating fresh fruit and vegetables that you have grown.

The site now in use was formerly agricultural land which was converted for allotment use. There are currently 33 numbered plots and a stream which runs through the field. The allotments are accessed off Park Lane and day-to-day management is via an Allotment Association.

Section 2 – Applying for a Plot

1. Who Can Apply?

Anyone living in the Parish of Carhampton may apply for an allotment plot. The Parish Council may exceptionally accept applications from Withycombe Parish or any voluntary community groups for the tenancy of allotment(s), where the proposed use is beneficial to the residents of Carhampton Parish and provided there are vacancies, and it has the effect of increasing allotment use.

2. How to apply

To apply for a plot, contact the Allotment Association Secretary Hester on 01643 821768 or the Parish Clerk at clerk@carhamptonpc.gov.uk. You will be added to the waiting list if no plots are currently available. Once a plot becomes available the Allotments Association will arrange for you to look at the site and answer any questions you may have. If you decide to go ahead you will need to complete a Tenancy Agreement, provide proof of address, pay a one-off membership fee of £10 and the annual rent, or a pro rata sum if joining mid-year.

3. Waiting List Policy

If all plots are taken, a waiting list is maintained by the Allotments Association. Plots are offered to the person who has waited the longest or advertised if there is no one on the waiting list.

Section 3 – Conditions of your tenancy agreement

This part of the Handbook explains some of the most important aspects of your tenancy agreement. Please read this carefully.

4. Allotment agreement

The annual Tenancy Agreement is between Carhampton Parish Council and you, the tenant. When you sign the Agreement, you are agreeing to

- pay the rent
- take on the plot and look after it; and
- abide by the Tenancy Agreement and the conditions and rules explained in this handbook.

The ownership of the plot stays with the Parish Council throughout the period of the tenancy.

5. Change of circumstances

If your personal circumstances change (for example if you change address or leave the Parish) you must inform the Allotment Association and/or the Parish Council at clerk@carhamptonpc.gov.uk.

If your personal circumstances mean you cannot cultivate your plot (e.g., you are unwell, or go away temporarily) please tell the Allotment Association so this can be considered when inspections are carried out. If you are not cultivating the whole of your plot, you can cover part of it with cardboard or any suitable eco-friendly material to keep the weeds down. It is important to keep your plot tidy so that it does not interfere with the successful gardening of other tenants.

6. Subletting/sharing your plot

The plot can only be let to one person, and the tenancy agreement will be made out in the name of that person. You are not permitted to sub-let or share the plot.

7. Membership Fee

A one-off membership fee is payable at the start of all new tenancies.

8. Rent

The rent is payable annually on 1 January every year. New tenants who join part way through the year will pay a pro-rata'd sum.

An invoice will be sent to you, and this can be paid via electronic banking or by cheque through the post to the Treasurer of the Allotment Association. Please do not send cash through the post for security reasons. By paying the rent you agree that you accept the tenancy terms and conditions.

The rent is reviewed by the Allotment Association on an annual basis at the Annual General Meeting. Any increase in the rent will be set for the following year to provide tenants with ten months' notice of any change.

9. Access to the allotment site

Access to the site is via Park Lane. You must ensure the allotment gate is closed and locked when you enter or leave the site.

You may drive your vehicle on to the site, but you must lock the gate behind you each time. Please avoid parking in front of the bridge area. The Parish Council takes no responsibility for any damage caused to your vehicle on the site. Please exercise care and drive slowly bearing in mind that there may be children on site. You are advised to keep your vehicle locked at all times.

10. Caring for your allotment plot

Your most important responsibility as a tenant is to look after and maintain your plot. In your first year, you must ensure that 1/3 of the plot is cultivated within 5 months of taking over the plot and 2/3 within 12 months of taking over the plot. In second and successive years you must ensure most of the plot is cultivated throughout the growing season and adequately maintained during the fallow period.

You have a duty of care to make sure that your plot does not present health and safety hazards to anyone accessing the allotment site such as other tenants, visitors, or contractors. Please ensure that you always follow the rules on pages 8 and 9 of this Handbook.

Failure to follow the rules may result in a warning followed by the termination of the tenancy agreement.

11. Use of the plot

The sale of surplus produce from your plot is prohibited as the allotment should be used to cultivate produce for your own personal consumption. Running a business or trading from an allotment site is also prohibited.

12. Vermin

Overgrown plots and piles of rubbish will also attract rats, so it is important to keep your plot tidy. Where problems arise, tenants are advised to work with the Allotment Association to arrange appropriate trapping and limited baiting in a protected manner. Do not use poison yourself as this will affect wildlife within the gardens.

13. Your belongings and welfare

The Parish Council takes no responsibility for the loss of tenants' belongings through criminal activity.

If you put any structure up on your plot, you do so at your own risk. You are responsible for:

- Taking out your own insurance
- Taking reasonable precautions to keep your belongings safe, and that sharp tools and chemicals are stored securely
- Ensuring any structure on your plot is safe and sound
- Ensuring that you keep your tetanus injections up to date
- Observing basic hygiene rules when handling manure, soil and chemicals.
- Making sure that you tell someone where you are going and how long you expect to be there, for your own safety.

The Rules

Maintenance of your Plot

- | | |
|---|--|
| ✓ Your plot should be kept tidy and free of airborne seeded weeds throughout the year. | ✗ You must not plant hedges or erect fences to delineate your plot boundary. |
| ✓ Your plot will be marked out. You must maintain the boundaries of your plot and keep them free of obstructions, cutting a grass path around your plot on a regular basis. | ✗ You must not plant any trees on your plot. |
| ✓ Your plot must only be used for growing fruit, flowers and vegetables. | ✗ You must not keep chickens or cockerels, or any livestock on the plot. |
| | ✗ You must not keep bees on the plot. |

Behaviour on site

- | | |
|---|--|
| ✓ You must only visit the site during daylight hours. Monday to Saturday 8am to dusk, and Sundays and Bank holidays between the hours of 11am and 3pm. | ✗ You must not visit the site after dusk |
| ✓ Power tool usage is permitted Monday to Saturday from 8am to dusk, and Sundays and Bank holidays between the hours of 11am and 3pm. | ✗ You must not light bonfires or BBQ on your plot. |
| ✓ Communal fires are permitted with the approval of the Allotment Association, provided they are lit during accepted common practice times, kept under supervision and health & safety precautions are taken. | ✗ You must not cause a nuisance or annoyance to other tenants on the allotment site. Bullying or harassment will not be tolerated. |
| ✓ You may bring your dogs onto your plot, but you must keep them on a lead. Ensure that you clear up after your dog. | ✗ No radios (headphones only). |
| ✓ Your children may join you on site, but you must supervise them at all times. | |

Waste and compost

- | | |
|---|--|
| ✓ Green waste (grass cuttings, autumn leaves annual weeds, tea leaves and coffee grounds finely cut/chopped soft pruning and clippings) may be composted on site. | ✗ Do not compost fat or bones, coal, ash, paper, metal, glass or plastic, meat, cooked vegetables or woody material |
| ✓ Manure may be brought onto the site provided it is stored and used appropriately. You must always wear gloves when handling any type of manure. If taking delivery of manure, please ensure that you are on site to oversee the delivery and ensure that vehicles do not drive onto neighbouring plots. | ✗ All non-green waste must be removed. The nearest refuse disposal site to the allotments is at Mart Road, Minehead. |

Structures, water and chemicals

- ✓ If you have written permission from the Allotment Association you can put a single shed measuring 8' x 6' with a covered rainwater recovery system on your plot or a polycarbonate greenhouse measuring 6' x 4' and a proprietary polytunnel not more than 3m wide x 2m high x 3m high.
- ✓ These must be sited where they will not shade neighbouring plots.
- ✓ You may install your own water collection systems provided it is made of stout materials, covered and positioned high enough to be out of reach of small children.
- ✓ You must comply with the law about use of pesticides and chemicals and only use chemicals where necessary
- ✗ You must not begin construction of a shed, greenhouse or polytunnel until you have permission in writing from the Allotment Association.
- ✗ Asbestos and Glass must not be brought on to the allotment site.
- ✗ The use of tyres, carpets and underlay is not permitted, A used tyre left outside in sunshine and rain will weather and eventually leach chemicals into the soil.
- ✗ You must not pump water from the stream.
- ✗ You must discard any stagnant water as it poses a health risk and is not beneficial to plants.
- ✗ No chemicals, pesticides or herbicides may be stored anywhere **on** site

Section 4 – Giving up your plot

If you decide you no longer want your plot you need to inform the Allotment Association or the Parish Clerk in writing at clerk@carhamptonpc.gov.uk or by post to 7 North Street, Williton TA4 4SL.

Before leaving, you are responsible for clearing the plot and leaving it ready for the next tenant. This includes removal of rubbish and dismantling of unsafe structures.

We will make every effort to have your plot taken over as soon as possible so that it does not become overgrown. However, the Parish Council is unable to refund any rent which has already been paid.

Section 5 – Site Management

14. The Role of the Allotment Association

Day-to-day site management is carried out by the Allotment Association, with oversight from the Parish Council. Larger maintenance projects must be approved by the Parish Council and may be undertaken by a contractor or arranged and overseen by the Allotment Association and/or the Parish Council as appropriate. Plot holders are encouraged to join in and help in some way at any maintenance sessions organised during the year.

The Parish Council relies on tenants keeping the Council and/or the Allotment Association informed if there are any problems. If you see a damaged fence, or any other problem on the site please report it to the Allotment Association or the Parish Clerk as soon as possible so that repairs can be carried out promptly. The stream and pond area should be kept clear of plant growth and debris, and desilted when required to keep it flowing freely.

If you are unhappy about any aspect of the way the site is being managed or if you have a complaint about the way you have been treated you should put your complaint in writing and address it to the Parish Clerk at clerk@carhamptonpc.gov.uk or by post to 7 North Street, Williton TA4 4SL. All complaints will initially be referred to the Allotments Association and you will be kept informed about the way your complaint is being handled. In the unlikely and unfortunate event of any disagreements or disputes between tenants, the matter must be referred to the Parish Council whose decision shall be final.

15. Inspections

Councillors and employees of the Parish Council have the right to enter the allotment site to inspect and carry out work without notice. The allotment plots are inspected regularly to ensure that all tenants are complying with the terms of the Tenancy Agreement.

If your plot is not cultivated, tidy and free from weeds and rubbish, you will receive a verbal warning in the first instance reminding you of your responsibilities under the Tenancy Agreement.

The Parish Council does not want to serve notice to quit on any tenant and will always try to find ways to resolve any problems before taking this drastic step. However, it is unfair on those tenants who do adhere to the terms of their tenancy agreement to allow others to let their plots become overgrown, neglected and untidy.

16. Issues, Concerns or Disputes

If you are worried about any aspect of site security, please contact the Parish Council immediately. Report any security incidents to the Parish Clerk and most importantly to the Police. For crimes in progress ring 999 for less urgent matters ring the local Police on 101.

Any business relating to the Allotments can be included at Parish Council meetings. There is a public open session during the meeting when you may speak to the Council, you may also observe the remainder of the meeting.

Section 6 - Tips for new plot holders

Plan your plot. A well-planned plot is more likely to be successful. Good gardens don't just happen. Decide what you want to grow. Grow what you enjoy eating, what your children enjoy eating - getting children involved at a young age is a great way of promoting healthy eating. Do not be afraid to ask if you need help or advice. As a rule, gardeners are friendly and helpful, so ask the person who seems to have the best plot or the most successful one. It is worth remembering that the two plots are not necessarily the same.

Do not try to do too much at once. Do a bit at a time. A little done well will likely be more successful than a lot done hurriedly. Patience is definitely a virtue in the garden. Be prepared to accept failure. It happens to EVERYONE! Try to have the right tools for the job and look after them, as it will make life easier. Enjoy your plot. If you enjoy it you will look after it. If you look after it, your chances of success are likely to be higher. If you allow your plot to become a chore, then you can almost guarantee to fail.

Good luck and good gardening!