

# Welcome to Ash Road Allotments



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The aim of this handbook is to help you get established on your new plot. In agreeing to take on a plot you will have signed a tenancy agreement which requires you to follow a few basic rules regarding your plot. We hope this handbook will make the rules clearer and easier to follow. Any committee member will be happy to discuss any queries with you, but please take the time to read through this handbook first as it answers a lot of questions.

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## General information about the site and our activities

We have about 200 plots on this site, both half and full plots. Although the site is owned by Leeds City Council, it is managed by a committee of volunteers who are elected every year at the November Annual General Meeting. This means most of the work maintaining the site, managing lettings, running the shop, ordering seeds etc. is done by fellow allotment holders. We then pay a proportion of rental income to Leeds City Council for the rental of the site.

We have **a shop** that sells basics such as compost, ground cover fabric, chicken pellets etc. at very reasonable prices. It is open every Sunday morning from around 10.30 to 12.00 or at other times if you can find a committee member.

Please make sure you lock the gate and scramble the lock whenever you enter or leave the site. The **gate code** is changed every year in November and this is provided to all paid-up plot holders.

Every Sunday morning we have free coffee for allotment members on the Green behind the hut – listen for the klaxon at 11 a.m. We have other events during the year, such as plant sales and a barbecue. There is also an Annual Show on the first 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in September. These events are great fun and we would like to encourage you to attend or to help out in whatever way you can.

We have regular work parties for maintenance round the site, which we also hope you will join.

All members will receive regular newsletters about the site by email, but a hard copy is also posted on the notice board at the hut. You may also find out about what's happening on site by viewing our Facebook page. You can find our Facebook page by logging onto Facebook.com, searching for 'Ash Road Allotments', which should open up the group page, and then clicking on 'Join'.

We often have supplies of manure and woodchip on site (usually located by one or both of the car parks). You must pay £1 per barrow-load for this. You can pay a committee member, pay at the Hut on Sunday morning, or leave the money and information on your plot number and what you have taken in the post box under the awning to the rear of the Hut.

### Your Lease

Your lease runs from October to the end of September, and your rent is due by the 1<sup>st</sup> October. You will receive a bill each September for the following year, which must be paid by the 15<sup>th</sup> November to ensure that you keep your plot.

The rent bill includes personal liability insurance for named plot holders, water rates and membership of the Leeds and District Gardeners Federation and the National Society for Allotment and Leisure Gardeners. Liability insurance is also available for Co-Plot Holders or other named persons working with you on the plot for an additional £3 per person. For any queries about rent please contact Janice at [janice.bairstow@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:janice.bairstow@hotmail.co.uk)

Under the terms of your lease, you are not allowed to sublet your plot or transfer your tenancy to anyone else.

If you decide to give up your plot, please let us know as soon as possible so that we can re-let it before it gets too overgrown, and if you change your address or email address please let us know so we can continue to contact you.

You can have a co-plot-holder, who should also sign an Allotment Agreement.

The committee undertake regular plot inspections to check that cultivation is in evidence, tenancy conditions and rules (including 'do's' and 'don'ts') set out in this handbook are being complied with and that there are no health and safety issues. Inspection visits can take place at any time, but generally occur throughout the growing season (March to October), but are weather dependent. Tenants not meeting the tenancy conditions and rules set out in this handbook will be sent a notice setting out what remedial action is required. Gross breaches of these conditions or rules, or failure repeatedly to comply with a notice from the committee will result in the termination of your lease. Allowance will be made where the tenant can demonstrate extenuating circumstances or where a tenant has recently taken a plot. Given that allotments in the city are a scarce resource (and there is a waiting list of people keen to take up an allotment and grow their own food) it is only fair that the Committee does make sure that

reasonable use is being made of that resource and our rules and conditions of use are being met.

### **Sheds, Greenhouses and Polytunnels**

You may be lucky enough to inherit a shed from a previous plot-holder, but if you wish to install one, you must ask the committee for permission (please email us). For a half plot, the maximum size of shed is 7x5 feet. For a full plot the maximum size is 8x6 feet. You may be permitted multiple structures (shed, polytunnel, greenhouse) but this is dependent on plot size, existing structures and size of structure proposed. In the situation where there is an existing structure and you wish to erect another, you **MUST** request permission from the committee.

Don't keep valuable items in your shed, such as electrical equipment. We recommend that you leave your shed unlocked.

All sheds (and greenhouses and polytunnels where practicable) must have guttering and a water butt.

### **Water**

Water is supplied in baths fed from the mains. The water is switched off all winter due to risk of freezing, but is on from Easter to around October. Our water is metered, so please don't waste it. Don't use it to fill ponds, which must rely on rainwater. The use of hoses to water your plot is not permitted, neither is the use of a hose to syphon water to a water butt or other storage container without specific authorisation of the Committee in the case of plots that are at some distance from the nearest supply and the plot-holder has specific needs due to disability or age.

Help to maintain the water system by keeping the baths clean, and don't attach anything to the ballcocks that control the water level in the baths. Report any suspected leaks to a committee member as soon as possible (or email the committee) as major water leaks can be very expensive.

### **Toilets**

There are two compost toilets available. One is on plot 100 (near the St Anne's Rd. car park), and one on the Easy Access plot 29 near the top car park. These are maintained by volunteers so please follow the instructions inside and supervise your children.

### **Paths**

The main named paths are maintained by the committee, but you are responsible for maintaining the paths on the long, eastern (usually downhill) side of your plot and also the shorter northern side of your plot (where you have one that is not a main named path mown by the committee). You are required to keep the grass mown on these paths, remove any obstacles and cut back overhanging trees or brambles. Don't dig up or narrow the paths between plots.

### **Cultivating your plot**

If you inherit an overgrown plot, tackle it a bit at a time. Little and often is usually more effective than a mammoth dig every few weeks. Locate your surrounding paths and work in from the edges. Regular strimming will keep the weeds down and stop them spreading to surrounding plots in the meantime.



At least 70% of your plot should be cultivated. You can grow flowers as well as fruit and vegetables. Fruit trees must be on a dwarf rootstock, must be pruned appropriately and must not overhang your neighbours' plots or paths. It is the responsibility of the plot-holder to ensure that any trees are kept to a reasonable size so that fruit can be harvested and that neighbouring plots are not unduly shadowed. Areas around trees and bushes must be maintained and weeds kept down. The planting of trees which produce non-edible fruit is not permitted, neither are trees that are fast-growing (such as willow etc).

Up to 30% of your plot may be used for storage or recreation, including a small, well-mown lawn area.

We hope that all plot-holders would work their plot in a way that is beneficial to wildlife, but allowing areas of your plot to become wild and neglected is not the same thing!

Ponds are only allowed on very strict conditions – that any pond is located well away from 'public' pathways (or otherwise protected by a barrier or fence to avoid the risk of someone falling in). All pond edges must be kept clearly visible for safety reasons. Ponds should be no larger than 1x1 metre and 30cm deep and should have a liner, be filled only naturally from the rain or rainwater collected in a butt and under no account filled from the site water supply.

### **Kings Seeds**

Twice a year (September and December) we take orders for vegetable and flower seeds, onions and seed potatoes. Look out for the brochures under the hut awning in September.

### **Bonfires**

You can have bonfires at any time in the winter, provided they do not cause a nuisance to others (please think about smoke drift). In summer (May – October) bonfires are permitted only after 5 p.m. Make sure your fire is out before you leave the site, and only burn dry, non-compostable materials from your plot. All other rubbish or waste should be taken away with you since we do not have a rubbish collection service on the site.

### **Site safety and security**

Children are welcome on the site but they must always be in your sight for their own safety and not permitted to stray onto other plots. Dogs should be kept on a lead.

Get to know other people on the surrounding plots – you can swap seedlings or surplus veg. You can also get ideas for planting and cultivation.

Sadly, thefts from plots do periodically occur. If you see people behaving suspiciously, climbing fences, looking in huts etc. report it immediately to a committee member in order for it to be monitored.

If a crime has been committed such as theft, damage or violence, please report it to the police, get a crime number and pass it on to a committee member. **Ring 101 the non-emergency police number**

<http://www.westyorkshire.police.uk/contact-us/report-crime>

Always lock the gate and scramble the number, even if you are only making a brief visit. Lock your car when parked in the car parks.

## The Committee

<u>Responsibilities:</u>		<u>Plot No.</u>
Chairman and Newsletter Editor	Chris Martin	59
Treasurer	Janice Bairstow	78
Vice Chairman and Stock	Adrian Luke	34
Stock	Colin Wood-Robinson	44S
Show Secretary	Lynne Snowden	74S
Tenancy Secretary	Kate Evans	102S
Kings Seeds, Minutes	Susan Frost	91
<u>Ordinary Members:</u>		
Andy Smithson		98
Val Johnson		22N
John Pickles		86E
Paul Hudson		5
Victoria Burley		94S
Rosa Dunton		109
Darren Turnor		78
Claire Fenwick		26S

Committee meetings are held monthly on the first or second Wednesday at 7.30pm, at the New Headingley Club, in an informal atmosphere. Anyone is welcome to attend and new committee members are always welcome to put themselves forward at the AGM in November.

## Basic Rules of Tenancy

### Do's

1. You can plant herbs and flowers as well as fruit and vegetables.
2. Always lock the site gates behind you, and scramble the lock.
3. You can bring your dog on site as long as it's kept on a lead.
4. You must erect a clearly visible number board on your plot.
5. You must cultivate at least 70% of your plot, and keep it weed-free. Up to 30% can be used as a lawned leisure area (provided it is kept well-mown) or for storage or paths etc.
6. You must maintain the narrow paths around your plot by keeping the grass short and the edges clear. Please see the section on paths for more information, or ask if you are unsure which paths are your responsibility.
7. You can have a bonfire to dispose of dry, non-compostable items from your plot, but between 1st May and 30th September bonfires may be lit only after 5.00pm. All fires must be extinguished before leaving the site
8. If you have a shed or greenhouse on your plot you must maintain it in sound condition. All sheds to include a water butt
9. You must ask permission to erect a shed, polytunnel or greenhouse from the committee. See the section on sheds for more detail.

10. You must pay your allotment rent within 40 days of receiving an invoice and no later than 15th November, otherwise your tenancy is automatically terminated
11. Always inform the Allotment Committee if you change address/ phone no/ email. Do this by email to the committee email address or in writing by posting a letter in the post box under the awning to the rear of the Hut.
12. Use the post box under the awning to correspond with the allotment committee, or send an email.
13. If you vacate your plot you MUST remove all belongings within two weeks.
14. Do try to find time to join a working party (where we ask people to volunteer some time to take part in a communal task to help maintain or improve the site) and please come to support our social events. All are advertised in our monthly newsletter and on our Facebook page.

## **Don'ts**

1. You are not allowed to sublet your plot or transfer your tenancy.
2. You are not allowed to use your plot for any trade or business.
3. You are not to bring onto or use carpets on allotment plots as weed suppressants as they can break up and leach chemicals into the soil and become embedded with weeds.
4. You are not allowed to bring rubbish onto the site or deposit home waste into our skips - you may be charged for its removal.
5. Please don't block communal pathways, or let bushes or trees overhang them, especially blackberries and other prickly plants.
6. You are not allowed to use barbed wire or any other fencing on the boundaries of a plot that may cause harm to other plot-holders.
7. Please don't wash crops or tools in water troughs or otherwise damage the water baths.
8. You are not allowed to have smoky bonfires that cause a nuisance, or leave fires unattended - please be considerate to other plot holders and local residents. See the page on fires for further information.
9. You are not allowed to cause a nuisance to other plot holders or neighbouring householders, this includes bad language, getting drunk, playing loud music, racist language etc.
10. You are not allowed to go onto other people's plots unless they have given permission.
11. You are not allowed to harvest from any plot other than your own, even if it appears to be unattended.
12. You are responsible for the safety and behaviour of any children or other visitors brought to the site.
13. You are not allowed to dig up paths between plots.
14. You are not allowed to give the gate combination number to other people or allow them to visit your plot unsupervised, unless they are listed as a co-plot-holder or you have informed the Committee and listed them on your tenancy form under the category 'other person working on the plot'.