



Balsham Allotment Tenant's Handbook



balshamallotments

Second Edition 2021

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Welcome to the Balsham Allotments Handbook

This allotment handbook is an extension to your tenancy agreement. It provides you with information about some of the key terms and conditions of your 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 tenants, there is still plenty of important and useful information for those who have held an allotment tenancy for some time. We therefore ask all tenants, old and new, 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.

Allotments provide a range of benefits to tenants, communities together with the environment and wildlife. These benefits include providing tenants with an opportunity to grow their own unique produce along with health benefits such as physical activity, a sense of well-being, learning new skills and making new like minded friends.

We are also very lucky to have such a lovely, open space surrounded by fields teeming with wildlife such as butterflies, bees and critters supporting great growing conditions.

We would like to wish you every success with your allotment tenancy. Any problems or issues arising, please contact us via:

balshamallotments@gmail.com



Getting Started

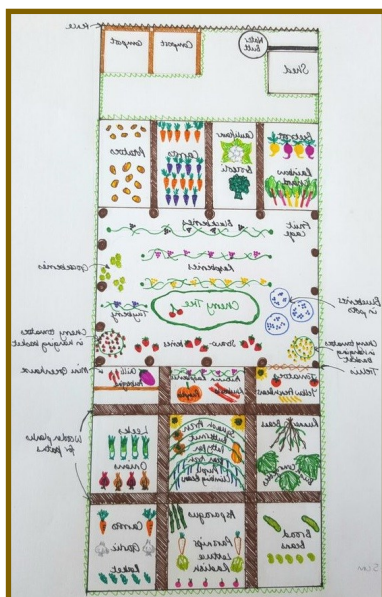
Successful allotment gardening is a lot about being prepared with lots of planning in advance.

Allotments must also be cared for and nurtured in order to get the best out of them.

Planning Your Allotment

Getting off to a good start using a planned approach with a little determination is all that you need. Planning an allotment is a personal thing. Draw up your plot and plan what you would like to grow and where you think it should grow bearing in mind crop rotation and structures. Don't worry if it changes over time as you will learn and develop with more experience. When drawing up a plan, you need to consider

- situation and light levels (north, south facing, full sun, shade)
- soil type, condition and drainage (sandy, loamy, clay, chalk, acidic or alkaline)
- ease of access for maintenance and watering
- space needed for plants to grow and flourish
- raised beds and crop rotation
- permanent planting areas (fruit, asparagus beds)
- permanent features such as sheds, greenhouse, polytunnels, etc.



Talking to your allotment neighbours is also a good place to start as they are a plethora of knowledge on the soil conditions and what grows well in the area.

Before you erect any structure, you must obtain written permission from the Parish Council via balshamallotments@gmail.com

Planting beds within your plot can be any shape or size, just remember to keep within your plot boundaries. Do consider access by means of small paths to ensure you can easily reach into the middle of the planting area. A recommended width for a raised bed is 120cm (4 feet) to enable you to reach the middle from both sides; remove weeds and dig over the soil. The prongs of your fork should eventually go easily into the bed to turn the soil. Don't forget to remove larger stones or other debris that could impede your plant growth. If you mark the edges of your planting area with wood or other materials from your plot, this will help to prevent accidental walking on the area and compaction of the soil.

- ✓ Take time to layout your plot
- ✓ Consider soil type, condition, wind direction, the way the sun hits the allotment, shaded areas, growing spaces will determine which plants will grow successfully.
- ✓ Think about ease of access, access to water and structures
- ✓ Keep within your plot boundaries
- ✓ Develop a yearly plan of what you want to grow
- ✓ Create narrow growing beds allowing free movement
- ✓ Use crop rotation to keep your soil fertile and in good condition
- ✓ Manure your plot regularly to maintain fertility
- ! Use gloves when handling manure and wash your hands afterwards
- ! Keep side paths clear of any hazards
- ! You don't need to do it all in one go, but keep on making regular progress
- ! And more importantly get to know your allotment neighbours

Crop Rotation

Crop rotation is highly recommended but does require some thought. It helps keep the soil in good condition thereby getting the best out of your plants. Plants take up nutrients out of the soil and if vegetables are grown in the same spot year after year, the soil will become exhausted and the plant will not grow to their full potential and also creates a build up of pests and diseases in the soil.

Crop rotation involves dividing your crops into groups based on their preferred growing conditions and similar nutritional needs. The idea is to never grow the same crop in the same piece of soil for four years. Each plant group is planted in a separate bed and each year these groups are moved to a different bed. Point to remember, the way you cultivate some crops can make the soil perfect the following year for another type of crop as some crops make natural nutrients for the following crop to grow in.

For example: brassicas should follow legumes as they produce nodules where a chemical reaction takes place and nitrogen is fixed in the soil ready for the brassicas to absorb.

Example Crop Rotation Plan:

	Bed 1	Bed 2	Bed 3	Bed 4	Bed 5
Year 1	A	B	C	D	E
Year 2	B	C	D	E	A
Year 3	C	D	E	A	B
Year 4	D	E	A	B	C

A: Legumes (peas and beans)

B: Brassicas (cabbage, kale, cauliflowers, broccoli, radish, oriental veg, swede)

C: Onion family (onions, shallots, leeks, garlic)

D: Potato family (potatoes, tomatoes, aubergines)

E: Umbellifers (carrots, parsnips, celery, fennel)

Raised Beds

Raised beds are generally made out of wood. They are great if you have poor drainage or if you want to grow something that does not grow well in your current soil type and you need to bring in different soil. Raised beds reduce soil compaction from not stepping on the planting areas and the soil also warms up quicker in the spring meaning plants sowed will be ahead of those sown at ground level. Another advantage is they can help with organising and planning your plot.

Paths Between Allotment Boundaries

Paths should be kept clear of vegetation and potential hazards. Maintaining good paths can also help make it more difficult for some weeds to spread from one plot to another. Paths between plots should be level and wide enough for a wheelbarrow or lawnmower to pass over.

Tools & Equipment

To start with you might only need a few basic tools but you will quickly find that a wide variety are available, many for specific tasks. Essentials include a spade, fork, hoe, rake, hand trowel/fork and gloves. You may also want to invest in secateurs, a pruning saw, shears or loppers, dibber, watering can, wheelbarrow or maybe a rotavator... the list is endless!

To help cut costs of purchasing new tools, look into purchasing second hand tools from Ebay, Gumtree, Preloved or even selling pages on Facebook.

- ✓ Save money and buy good quality second hand tools
- ✓ Keep your tools clean and sharp and use them safely
- ✓ Store your expensive tools away from the plot or leave in a sturdy, padlocked shed
- ! Be careful when using power tools and use protective clothing including safety goggles

It is a requirement of your tenancy agreement that you keep your plot fertile and in a good state of cultivation. This means that tenants must use their plot only to grow vegetables and fruit.

Where to Begin?

If you have not grown fruit and vegetables before you are likely to learn as you go along. There is a lot of advice available from books and websites as well as talking to your allotment neighbours.

What Can I Grow?

The world is your oyster, grow anything you like. To start with you could grow easy vegetables that you know your family will like such as potatoes (good at breaking up the soil) peas, runner beans, French beans, broccoli, salads, herbs, onion sets, garlic, beetroot, courgettes and squashes.

Soil Testing

Find out the type of soil you have before you start.

Clay soil - (typical Balsham soil) sticky to handle when wet and can be compressed into a ball. It is difficult to dig. Hard cracks appear on its surface in the summer. Can be too heavy to work when wet. Warming up is slower in the spring resulting in later sowings. On a positive note, this kind of soil contains plenty of nutrients and once treated with organic matter, it will retain moisture producing fantastic yields.

Sandy Soil - will be gritty, sandy to feel, drains like a colander and won't compress into a ball. This soil will never water log and plants will dry out quickly. It also loses its nutrients quickly so bulking up and watering will be a never ending job.

Silty soil - usually despoised by rivers, these soils are silky to the touch and are great for growing vegetables. This type of soil contains more nutrients than sandy soils and drain better than clay.

Peaty soil - is darker in colour, holds loads of water and be bone dry in the summer. Lots of acidity due to the high peat content. Does warm up quickly.

Chalky soil - will need a lot of water during the summer months. Barrow loads of organic matter may help but the chalk will remain.

Loamy soil - this is the Holy Grail of all gardeners. This soil holds moisture, never becomes water logged; holds nutrients, easy to work with, light and easy to dig, and warms up quickly in the spring. Achieving loamy soil will take tonnes of muck and compost and hours of digging, but the results are worth it.

The common type of soil we have in Balsham is **heavy clay** so plots do require a lot of work with incorporating lots of organic matter which can be delivered to your plot. Once you have incorporated lots of organic matter, the need for watering will reduce and there will be less weeds.

Soil pH

Knowing your soil pH level (measure of how acidic or alkaline your soil is) will determine how much specific nutrients from the soil is available for your plants. Certain pH's lock up nutrients which means plants will look hungry or ill. It is worthwhile getting to know your soil pH.

Soil testing kits are widely available and are cheap. Some will check your Nitrogen (n) Potassium (k) and Phosphate (p) levels. Just take a sample soil, add a drop or two of water along with the enclosed capsule, shake it then wait. Compare the colour with the result chart provided in your pack.

You can also purchase 3 in 1 meters which measure your soils pH, moisture content and light intensity.



Useful tip:

Only work your soil when it's the right condition. If it sticks to your boots, it is too wet to work and compaction may damage the soil.

Love Your Soil

Vegetables are hungry plants and need good soil to grow in. You may be lucky to inherit good soil on your plot or have done a lot of work to get it into decent shape. With all gardening, things never stand still so it is important to keep looking after it to get the best results.

Digging

Some gardeners love to dig and find it therapeutic. A good time to dig over your plot is in late autumn or early winter while the soil is slightly damp and not water logged. As the land here is heavy, it is best to leave the clods to over-winter. Come spring the soil will be soft and crumbly making it easy to remove weeds and to work the soil and turn it into a fine tilth ready for sowing.

Advantages to digging

- ✓ good exercise, therapeutic
- ✓ improves the structure of the soil as it reduces soil compaction and improves soil aeration making more oxygen available to the plant roots
- ✓ late autumn digging exposes large clods to the worst or the best of the winter frosts breaking it up making it more workable
- ✓ turns up unwanted bugs and pests for hungry birds
- ✓ water drainage is improved
- ✓ allows plant roots to penetrate and 'reach out' further into the soil.
- ✓ effective way of removing weed roots such as horsetail, couch grass and bindweed
- ✓ use long handle spades which will make the job much easier

Your delivery of manure usually arrives around October so it is good to incorporate it into your digging.

Some use large rotavators to turn over their soil. These can be a strain to control and can take a while to get use to. They do just chop roots of the weeds so unless used regularly, are ineffective.

The "No Dig" Method

Recently, there has been a lot of talk about the "no dig" method. It has the same principle of encouraging soil life, it is the technique that is different. No dig entails using covers such as cardboard or weed mat then mulching over the top rather than digging over the plot at the end of every growing season. Do not use black polythene as a cover as it will prevent water entering the soil.

With this method it is about prevention. Healthy soil using mulches and covers along with timely sowings can help to reduce problems.

Advantages to "no dig"

- ✓ weeds germinate less as the organic matter is on the surface suppressing weeds
- ✓ undisturbed soil, seeds are not exposed to light when cultivating
- ✓ Mycorrhizal fungi stay intact helping plants to find more nutrients and extract more moisture
- ✓ easier to re-sow or replant at any time of the year with no soil preparation needed
- ✓ soil structure is not broken by tools making it less muddy when wet as the water runs through the soil and the moisture is retained
- ✓ warmth is retained during the winter
- ✓ carbon stays in the soil rather than being converted into carbon dioxide by oxidation after cultivation.

Growing Organically

Growing organically is growing in popularity with more people moving towards this approach to gardening. This may mean not using slug pellets and other pesticides, herbicides or chemical fertilisers. Others may only use natural products and materials and buy organic seed. This approach to vegetable growing is very much welcomed.

Wherever you fall into the organic spectrum, we advise all allotment holders to try to minimise the use of their pesticides and herbicides. We encourage you to consider a more organic approach to benefit the local wildlife and the wider environment. However, there are times when it is necessary to use herbicides.

There is plenty of expert advice on organic growing readily available.

Here are two links to get you started:

Royal Horticultural Society: www.rhs.org.uk
Garden Organic www.gardenorganic.co.uk

Companion Planting

Companion planting is growing two or more different plants together for the beneficial effect they will have on your crops. Companion planting is also used to control pests, attract pollinating insects encouraging strong, healthy plants.

Nasturtiums for example are sacrificial plants that will attract cabbage white butterflies, black fly and other pests away from your crops. **Chives** and **Chervil** keeps aphids away **Coriander** will stop aphid attacks. **Calendula**, **French marigolds**, **poached egg plant**, **thyme**, **sage** and **borage** will also attract pollinating insects such as hoverflies, bees as well as ladybirds.

Interesting Fact:

Borage flowers refill with nectar every two minutes. This makes it a very beneficial plant for wildlife.

Pesticides, Herbicides and Chemical Fertilisers

Pesticides, herbicides and inorganic fertilisers can be helpful when clearing and cultivating an allotment, however they can also be hazardous and have wildlife and environmental implications. We recommend trying to minimise the use of pesticides, herbicides and inorganic fertilisers, or reduce the levels of use over time. If you do use them, remember they are not a quick fix and should only be used in specific situations - try to keep use to a minimum and always be mindful of the following important safety advice:

- Always keep products in their original containers
- Follow the instructions for use carefully
- Do not estimate amounts - measure carefully
- Use personal protective clothing and gloves
- Wash hands after use and wash off any splashes immediately
- Store out of the reach of children and locked away securely
- Ensure you are not contaminating your neighbours' plots or local watercourses
- Consider the potential harm to wildlife, pets and children before use
- Check old products to ensure they have not been banned
- Contact your local waste management and recycling centre for advice

- ✓ Organic methods can benefit your plot, the environment and wildlife
- ✓ Improve and maintain soil fertility
- ✓ Companion planting can repel pests and encourage beneficial insects
- ✓ Minimise the use of pesticides
- ! If using pesticides, herbicides and chemical fertilisers please follow the advice given

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 hard. 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 wooden pallets or reclaimed timber to make a bottomless box. Covering will also help to retain moisture. Just heaping all your organic matter into a big pile in a corner of your plot looks less attractive, can suffer from a lack of firmness and can lose the heat generated internally unless covered. The key to rapid and successful composting is a good balance of green and brown materials. Aim for between 25% to 50% soft green, nitrogen rich materials such as grass clippings, veg peelings. 50% to 75% slow rotting brown material such as woody growth or cardboard. Turning your compost occasionally will help to speed up the process.

Manure/Green Manures

Cow manure can be delivered to your plot.

Contact the Parish Council for more information.

Green manures are fast maturing crops that cover the ground and are dug back in to improve the soil structure, control weeds and maintain nutrients. Just after two weeks of sowing, the ground will be covered with small seedlings. After six weeks, chop and fold them into the soil. The ground can then be used once again a few weeks later.

Soil Conditioner

You can collect from Amey Waste Treatment and Collection Services at Waterbeach. Turn up with a spade and bags and help yourself. Details: <https://wasteservices.amey.co.uk/where-we-work/cambridgeshire/waterbeach-waste-management-park/composting/>

Leaf Mulch (leaf mould)

Creating leaf mulch is completely free and can help to improve your soil texture, suppress weeds and reduce the need for watering and is considered to be a top quality soil conditioner. To create leaf mulch gather up autumn leaves (not evergreen) and place into a bin made of four posts and chicken wire. This set up allows the air to circulate around them. It takes two years for leaves to fully breakdown. Digging over occasionally will speed up the process.

Use the mulch, spread a thick layer on top of the soil around your plants to suppress weeds.

- ✓ Composting is highly recommended
- ✓ It will help to: save money, improve your soil and water retention, grow strong plants, good to the environment
- ✓ Compost 25% to 50% soft green material and 75% to 50% woody brown material
- ✓ Making your own leaf mulch will improve soil structure and hold water
- ! If composting perennial weeds, make sure the roots/plants are dead and seed heads removed first
- ! Do not compost cooked food or animal products
- ! Always wear gloves and wash your hands

Removing Weeds

When taking on a new plot there are likely to be plenty of weeds with horsetail (mare's tail) couch grass and thistles causing some of the biggest problems. Be prepared for lots of hard work to clear the plot properly, but remember it is a job worth doing. Careful weed removal and preparation of the soil at this stage will reap future benefits!

Digging over the ground and removing roots is the only really effective organic way to remove weeds.

Regular Weeding

To keep on top of weeds you need to make frequent visits to your plot, especially during the main growing season. Make weeding a regular task. Investing in a hoe is a great way of keeping the weeds at bay which does not require as much effort as digging. If done on a dry, windy day the weeds will die on the surface of the soil.

Weed Killers (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.

- ✓ Keep your plot free from weeds
- ✓ Don't let the weeds set seed
- ✓ Annual weeds and vegetation can be composted
- ✓ Be sure to remove all roots of perennial weeds as much as possible
- ✓ Cover areas with weed matting securely until you are ready to work them
- ! When strimming overgrown areas, be aware of hazards such as bricks, glass and rubbish - wear protective gear

Systemic weed killers, 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 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.

Weed Matting

Weed matting is relative inexpensive and can be really useful under paths and as a temporary cover to suppress weeds until an area can be worked. This needs to be tightly secured.

It is also possible to grow some crops (sweetcorn, courgettes) through holes in the matting. Carpet is best avoided as some types can leach chemicals into the soil and they are difficult to dispose of once past their useful life on a plot.

Mulches

Mulches can be compost and leaf mould, all of which need to be applied in a layer 50 - 75mm (2-3 inches) thick. Placed on top of the soil, surrounding your plants or over weed matting, these will act as an effective weed suppressor.

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. Drying them out in the hot sun works. Only burn vegetation (at the appropriate times) and only if absolutely necessary.



Access to Water

There are water stand pipes at two of the allotment sites. Two at the Woodhall Lane site and one at the Hawthorns. These can be used to fill watering cans or to fill water butts via a hose connection. The water from the taps should be used sparingly. Hoses must not be used to water plants directly. The use of sprinklers or other water spraying devices is also not allowed.

It is highly recommended that all tenants collect and store water on their plot. Water butts and connectors are available from your local DIY store.

If you are recycling an old container to collect water ensure you know where it has come from and that it did not previously contain any harmful substances.

Efficient Water Use

Attach guttering to garden sheds and greenhouses to collect rain water in water butts. Keep them covered and ensure that they are located on stable ground.

Organic matter can be dug into the ground and a thick layer of mulch placed around established plants to help retain moisture in the soil.

- ✓ use water mains sparingly
- ✓ you may connect a hose to the tap but only for filling water butts
- ✓ do not use hoses to water your plants direct
- ✓ do not use sprinklers and other water spraying devices
- ✓ if you have a shed or greenhouse, use a rain water collection system
- ✓ water containers should on stable ground and be covered to prevent evaporation
- ! check what was previously contained in recycled water containers

Water your allotment early morning or late evening to reduce risk of evaporation or scorching. Give plants a thorough soaking to encourage deep rooting. Also, remember that over-watering can be just as unproductive as under-watering!

A standing water charge is payable annually for each plot where a mains water supply is available on site

Holiday Watering

July and August is the time when the plot is starting to flourish and it is the time for when we go on holiday for a week or two. Here are some tips for when you go away on your summer holidays.

- ✓ prepare in advance and mulch well in the winter/spring
- ✓ plan your sowing to avoid crops maturing on your holidays
- ✓ water well giving the plants a deep watering and then cover the surrounding area around the base of the plant with mulch such as rotted manure, compost, grass clippings or shredded paper
- ✓ check plant over for signs of pest attack and pick/clear away diseased or ill looking leaves
- ✓ net everything that might be attacked
- ✓ ensure all structures are secure
- ✓ pick any crops, even if they are immature before you go
- ✓ ask a neighbour or friend to water for you

Despite having your neighbours to water, sadly, it is likely you will need to weed upon your return.

Bonfires, Storing Materials and Waste Disposal

When to Have A Bonfire

Burning must be kept to a minimum and composting should be used wherever possible. Although bonfires can be a good way of disposing of some materials, smoke nuisance from bonfires can be seen as anti-social, causing rifts between tenants and residents generating a number of complaints.

If a bonfire is necessary, we encourage tenants to burn mid autumn and to minimise burning during the summer months. No bonfires should be lit at weekends and bank holidays.

Green waste should be composted where possible. Non-green/non-biodegradable waste, such as carpet or plastic, should never be burned, disposal should be through your nearest Household Waste Recycling Centre. Recycle materials whenever practical.

If you do need to have a bonfire, you must follow the precautions and guidance below.

- ✓ Be considerate to your allotment and residential neighbours before lighting
- ✓ Only have a bonfire if absolutely necessary
- ✓ Bonfires are only encouraged when the wind is coming from the north blowing towards the water tower (Woodhall and Hawthorn sites)
- ✓ All waste should either be composted or removed from the Princes Close site. If you need to have a bonfire, burn in the evenings to avoid any potential conflicts
- ✓ Keep fires small and under control
- ! Never leave a fire unattended
- ! Never dispose garden chemicals on a fire
- ! Do not bring any materials on site to burn
- ! Do not burn anything that could produce toxic or noxious fumes such as batteries, rubber, plastic, paint, carpet, aerosols, etc

Waste Disposal

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 local 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.

- ✓ Please take extra care with certain materials such as wood with protruding nails and glass
- ✓ Wear gloves, protective clothing and sturdy footwear, while disposing waste
- ! Storing of excess materials can pose a hazard to you and others and you may be asked to remove any offending items
- ! Do not dump any material outside your plot boundaries
- ! Materials must be stored correctly and safely

Storing Materials on Site

Allotments must not be used for storing materials. Having excessive quantities of materials on plots reduces the area available for cultivation and can pose a hazard to yourself and others. Please only bring materials onto your plot if you intend to use them immediately and, if necessary, store them safely and tidily.

Excessive Amounts of Material

We will write to tenants who are storing excessive amounts of materials on their plot. By law we can recover the cost of removing excessive waste materials from a plot either during or at the end of a tenancy. Remember you must not bring rubbish on site.



Assessing Risk

Health and safety on allotments is everyone's responsibility and as a tenant you need to make sure that your plot is as safe as possible for everyone. Tenants have a duty of care to anyone on their plot, regardless of whether they have given permission for them to be there.

The Parish Council may also enforce action to remove health and safety concerns. When thinking about hazards you need to look at the potential risks to: yourself, your family, visitors to your plot, children and wildlife.

Hazards

To assess dangers on your plot you first need to identify hazards that have the potential to cause harm. We have listed some common hazards here but you may also have others on your plot. Common allotment hazards include: buildings, fire, hazardous materials (fuel, combustibles, refuse, scrap metal, glass, chemicals, manure, compost, etc.) trees, vegetation (overgrown, irritant or poisonous), tools, water, fences and vermin.

Reducing Risk

Once you have a list of hazards you need to look at potential risks. If you have a high risk hazard on your plot you feel you are unable to deal with please contact us to deal with please contact us.

- ✓ Be a good neighbour, respect tenants and other members of the public on the allotments
- ✓ Tenants have a duty of care to everyone on their plot regardless if they have permission to be there
- ✓ Assessing risk is an ongoing process and high risks must be removed immediately
- ✓ Always bear in mind your health and physical ability

Children

The health and safety of children on an allotment plot must be considered carefully as allotments can pose particular risks to children. Children should never be left unsupervised on an allotment site. If there is an issue with unsupervised children on the allotment please contact the Parish Council.

Personal Health

Tetanus is a very serious illness caused by bacteria in the soil and in manure which can enter the body through the tiniest of abrasions, scratch, puncture or cut. It maybe days or weeks before the illness appears so visit your doctor for a vaccination or if you feel start to feel unwell.

Wash hands and use gloves as there is a risk of illness from bacteria. E.coli can be present in animal manure and even home made compost. Please wash your hands regularly and always wear protective gloves when handling harmful substances.

First Aid kit is good to have at the allotment. Keep it fully stocked with plasters, antiseptic wipes, sting cream, pair of tweezers, gauze or lint pad for compressing to stop bleeding.

Sun Protection is needed if you spend a lot of time at the allotment. Wear adequate protection and limit you exposure to strong sunshine. Keep hydrated and avoid heavy exercise during the hottest part of the day.

Exercise gardening provides you with a lot of exercise. Do not over do it, having a allotment is hard work. Brake up large jobs into small ones and take breaks between them.

- ! Dogs to be kept on a lead at all times
- ! Do not visit, remove items or dump debris on other allotments
- ! **Remember!** Be kind and considerate to your neighbours

Security on Allotments

All of us find that time on allotments is both tranquil and enjoyable. Allotment gardeners 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 you suffer from incidents of theft, vandalism or anti-social behaviour.

Due to the isolation of the plots it is extremely difficult to protect them from thieves and vandals.

On occasions, you may be a victim of crime, with theft of your things probably the worst of all incidents. It is recommended you keep your expensive tools off-site, shed unlocked and windows clear. This will prevent repeat occurrences as the criminals will know there is nothing to take.

Should you be a victim, please report it to the Police on 101 to obtain a crime number and inform the Parish Council.

Respect

As an tenant you are expected to be courteous and respectful to other users of the site and neighbouring properties. Everyone is entitled to enjoy their plot.

Nuisance

A tenant must not cause or permit any nuisance to any other plot holder or to the owners or occupiers of any adjoining or neighbouring property. Grass trimmers, rotavators and lawn mowers create a noise nuisance and should only be used with consideration for the neighbours and other plot holders. The tenant must not obstruct or encroach onto any path or roadway used or set out by the Parish Council or used by the owners or occupiers of any adjoining or neighbouring property.

Dogs

If you bring your dog to your plot, they must be kept on a short lead at all times and must never be left unattended. Dogs must not cause a nuisance. Dog fouling must be cleared up by the dog owner and disposed of responsibly off site.

Dogs must not be kept on an allotment site.

- ! Please do not leave valuable equipment on site, even if your shed is padlocked. Leaving expensive equipment is at your own risk. Your insurance company will not cover you and you will be out of pocket
- ! Keep your shed unlocked and windows clear to prevent any unwanted criminal damage to your shed
- ! If you wish to secure your shed use a good quality shackle padlock
- ! Consider lining your shed with plywood sheeting which makes it difficult for a criminal to break through
- ! Consider security marking your tools.
- ! Keep all gates closed and locked at all times
- ! Respect your neighbours
- ! Get to know your neighbour and look out for each other
- ! Challenge strangers, ask "Can I help you?"
- ! If working on your own be aware of personal safety and where possible let someone know where you are and have a mobile phone
- ! Barbed wire or any type of fence is not allowed
- ! Do not visit other plots without permission
- ! Don't use or keep combustible or dangerous materials on your plot
- ! Dogs are to be kept on a lead at all times
- ! Report all incidents to the Parish Council.
- ! All serious incidents should be reported to the police for a crime number



The Allotment Tenancy Allotment Agreements is subject to legislation. It is therefore important that you read your tenancy agreement carefully and follow the rules set out in it. To help you we have included some basic dos and don'ts throughout this booklet. Remember that your tenancy agreement is a legally binding document and if you do not adhere to the rules you may lose your tenancy.

The Tenancy Agreement

The application will be the main user of the allotment plot and will be the named plot holder on the Tenancy Agreement. All plot holders will be required to sign up to the latest Tenancy Agreement this is a condition of tenancy.

If a tenant or person for whom the tenant is responsible, fails to comply with the terms of the Tenancy Agreement, or if a tenant is constantly in arrears, the tenant will be given one month's notice to leave their plot and the contract will be terminated.

Deposit

A £50 deposit is required for all new tenancy agreements. This deposit is refunded when the tenancy terminates their contract with the Parish Council and has left it in a good working order ready for the next tenant.

Rent

Allotment rents must be paid before the end of September each year. An note will be sent out to all tenants after the beginning of September. Tenants are encouraged to make payment as early as possible. Instructions of how to pay are included on the note. If you are forty days or more in arrears, the Parish Council will give you one month's notice to vacate your plot.

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 the Parish Council as a helper. You can not sublet your plot (charge others a rent for using it) and any tenant found to be doing this will have their tenancy terminated.

Transfers

Transfer of a tenancy agreement to another plot is permitted only if you leave your current plot in a re-lettable state and there is not waiting list.

Transfers of a tenancy to another person, whether friend or family is **not** permitted. Please contact the Parish Council if you wish to discuss further.

Sub-letting of Plots

The tenant shall not enter into an agreement, verbal or written, to sub-let or reassign an allotment plot or any part of it to any party under any circumstances.

Trading

You cannot use your plot to sell produce for any trade or business.

Changing Your Details

If any of your personal details change please notify the Parish Council in writing (including email) as soon as possible.

Leaving a Plot

When a plot holder leaves a plot, it should be in good condition. The Parish Council will clear plots that are not in an acceptable condition and will use the deposit or recharge the departing tenant. The Parish Council will not be held responsible for any losses in produce or materials arising from this

Tenancy Guidance

Terminating Your Tenancy Agreement

You must contact us in writing or by email informing us of your impending termination of your tenancy. Please remove any of your property at the end of your tenancy. Anything left on your plot after the end date will become the property of the next tenant. Should Balsham Parish Council need to clear the plot for the next tenant then the cost incurred will be recharged.

Inspections

Are carried out regularly. If your plot is not well maintained you will be given three warnings and failing that you may be asked to give up your tenancy with one month's notice. It is therefore important that you develop a regular cultivation routine. You are required to maintain visibility into your plot or allow access for inspections to occur. Although you are given time to cultivate a new plot the Parish Council will want to see continual progress towards full cultivation.

Non-Cultivation

If you are given a letter for non-cultivation, you will be allowed a specified time to make significant improvements. If you fail to do so you will be sent a further letter giving you one month's notice.

Problems

Any problems that arise on your plot or allotment site during your tenancy should be reported to the Parish Council via:
balshamallotments@gmail.com
clerk@balsham.net 01223 894462

Antisocial behaviour and vandalism must be reported to the Police on 101 as well as the Parish Council.



- ! Rents and water due end of September
- ! Be courteous at all times to everyone
- ! Keep your plot well maintained and in a fertile, well cultivated state
- ! Keep your plot secure. Tenants have a responsibility for maintaining their own site
- ! Keep all gates closed and locked at all times
- ! Permission is needed for structures
- ! Keep allotment boundary paths clear and well maintained at all times
- ! Composting is highly recommended
- ! Dispose non-biodegradable rubbish appropriately
- ! Do not bring and store materials on-site
- ! Only have a bonfire when the right weather permits and not on weekends or bank holidays
- ! Don't leave any valuables on site
- ! Be aware of personal safety
- ! Tenancy agreements may be terminated after two warning letters, giving one month's notice.
- ! Report all incidents to the Parish Council
- ! Serious incidents should be reported to the police

