

Uffington Parish Council

Allotment Gardens

Code of Conduct and Plot Inspections - for Allotment Tenants

This document introduces a simple and straightforward Code of Conduct coupled with a policy of inspecting all plots on a regular basis.

The Allotment Gardens site is owned by Uffington Parish Council ('the Council') and plots are let on an annual renewable tenancy agreement, a sample of which can be viewed on the Council website, here: <https://www.uffington.net/parish-council/services-we-offer/allotments/>

The rent is reviewed annually by the Council prior to the renewal of all agreements.

In the event of any conflict with the Tenancy Agreement, the terms of the Agreement shall take priority.

Code of Conduct

1. Introduction

This Code of Conduct covers matters not included in the tenancy agreement and should be read in conjunction with the Tenancy Agreement.

2. Uffington Allotment Tenants Association

All tenants automatically become members of the Uffington Allotment Tenants Association ('the Association'), which is responsible to the Council for the administration of the allotments. The Association's officers are:

Chair

Vice Chair

A member of the Council (who may be the Chair or Vice Chair)

Secretary / Treasurer.

The Officers of the Association will comprise of volunteers from amongst the tenants, with the exception of the member of the Council and Secretary / Treasurer, who will be the Clerk to the Council. Should there be more than one candidate for the other posts, the Clerk will conduct a secret ballot by e-mail. Should there be any queries about the result, the matter will be referred to the Chair of the Council, (or the Vice Chair if the Chair is an allotment tenant), whose decision will be final.

The Parish Council does not hold any specific funds for expenditure on the allotments. The rent covers only the basic upkeep of the communal areas and the insurance premiums (see below). The Association may raise their own funds and/or bid for grants from the Council as described in the [Council's Grants Policy](#) using the Council's Grant Application Form.

3. Plot Inspections

All plots are liable for inspection twice yearly in late March to early April and early to mid-September, or as required if the plot appears to be neglected, in accordance with the Allotment Gardens Plot Inspections Policy at Annex A. Inspections will take place in order to check that tenants are fulfilling the basic requirements of cultivation and maintenance set out in the Tenancy Agreement and a checklist will be used which matches these

Uffington Parish Council

requirements. Inspections will be carried out by any two of the Association's officers or another volunteer from amongst the tenants.

4. Safety on the allotments. All tenants are reminded:

- a) To carry a mobile phone with them when on the allotments, so that help may be summoned in the event of an accident or injury.
- b) That the nearest defibrillator is in the telephone box opposite the church.
- c) To ensure that all water containers have a cover, such that it is not possible for a child to gain access.
- d) That fires (see below) must not be left unattended.
- e) Children should be kept under close supervision and not allowed to roam off the plot of the tenant concerned or ride bicycles in the Allotment Gardens
- f) Dogs are only permitted in the Allotment Gardens when walking through on the footpath, and must be kept on leads.

5. Insurance

The Council holds public liability insurance for the common areas (paths and borders) of the allotments area and any un-let plots. The insurance provided by the Association for all tenants is described in the tenancy agreement. The membership fee for the National Allotments Society (NSALG) is paid by the Council, from the annual rent paid by tenants.

6. Parking

Tenants may park on the small parking area adjacent to the footbridge at their own risk. If there is insufficient space, you are advised to park elsewhere, safely. Access to the footbridge must not be blocked as it is a public right of way (footpath). The parking area may be closed off in the winter months or periods of heavy rain, to prevent damage.

7. Security

When entering and leaving the allotments, please ensure that the gates are secured. All tools and equipment should be kept on the tenant's plot and when not in use should be stored in such a way that they do not present a hazard to other users.

8. Rubbish

Rubbish is not to be brought to or dumped anywhere on the Allotment Gardens site or on adjoining land. Tenants are encouraged to develop small composting areas on their own plots for vegetable rubbish. If that is inadequate, vegetable matter (only) may be placed on Plot 28, which has been set aside for this purpose. No rubbish of any sort may be placed on the banks of the stream. Any non-vegetable rubbish should be removed from the Allotment Gardens and disposed of properly.

9. Bonfires

Fires shall be limited to burning small amounts of dry organic material from the allotments only and should only be lit on Plot 28 (the compost plot). Material should not be brought to the Allotments Gardens for the sole purpose of being incinerated. Tenants may not burn material that gives off noxious fumes, pollutes the soil or annoys other tenants or local inhabitants. Tenants must not leave fires unattended, must extinguish the fire if a nuisance arises or at the request of another tenant, and must make it safe before leaving the Allotment Gardens.

Uffington Parish Council

10. Grass Paths

The Council is responsible for mowing the area of grass between the fence on the south side and the allotments (including the footpath). The Association is responsible for ensuring that the grass paths around and within the allotment site are kept mowed during the main growing season (April – September), but tenants are responsible jointly with tenants of adjacent plots for keeping path edges in good order.

11. Water Supply

Tenants are encouraged to install water butts for water capture / retention, and to use the water supply from the large plastic water tanks provided by the Parish Council responsibly and with due consideration for other tenants. The use of watering cans is preferred. Water butts may be filled from time to time due to the goodwill of tenants, but the Council has no liability for the provision of water to the Allotments Gardens.

Annex A: Plot Inspections

Date of last review: July 2024

Adopted by Uffington Parish Council on: 8 July 2024

Plot Inspections

Introduction

The Council expects all its tenants to do their part by maintaining their plots in good shape. The minimum standard required of our tenants is set out in the Tenancy Agreement which all tenants sign on acceptance of a plot, accompanied by the Code of Conduct (above) which helps tenants to better understand what is required of them. The Inspections Policy assists the Council in maintaining the Allotment Gardens to the highest possible standards for the benefit of all allotment tenants and the village as a whole. The plot inspections process will not be rushed, as the intention is to provide help and assistance to tenants, where practical and when requested. The process is based around two annual inspections that take place when plots should be under cultivation.

The plot inspection process

1. **Timing of inspections.** All plots are liable for inspection in late March to early April and early to mid-September by any two of the Association's officers, or another volunteer from amongst the tenants. The inspections are carried out in order to check that tenants are fulfilling the basic requirements of cultivation and maintenance set out in the Tenancy Agreement and the inspectors will use a checklist which matches these requirements.
2. **What happens when faults are identified.** When the inspection identifies a specific fault or faults on a plot, one of two courses of action will follow:
 - a) For minor faults the Chair or Vice Chair of the Association will contact the tenant in person or via email to explain what action is required.
or
 - b) Where the problem is more serious the tenant will be sent a Notice to Remedy letter which sets out what action is required and a date by which this must be completed. A follow-up inspection will be carried out after four weeks to check that any tenant issued with a Notice to Remedy has commenced or carried out the necessary action/s.
 - c) The Tenant shall not be permitted to apply for a new tenancy of that or any other plot nor shall the Parish Council accept or process any such application until the action has been satisfactorily completed.

After the follow-up re-inspection the tenant will either receive:

- d) A Confirmation Letter that the plot is up to standard;
or
- e) A Letter confirming an extension period to the Notice to Remedy, allowing further time for the tenant to bring the plot up to standard;
or
- f) A Notice to Quit at the end of the next four-week period if no significant improvement is seen.

Uffington Parish Council

- 3. Putting things right.** Tenants who receive a Notice to Remedy letter are usually given up to eight weeks to address the problem/s. In exceptional cases (e.g. illness, disability, working away from home), a tenant may request further time to an agreed deadline. This should be done by contacting an officer of the Association.
- 4. Repeat offenders.** Any tenant who receives three Notices to Remedy within a three-year period, regardless of the problems identified, and then continues to fail to maintain their plot to the required standard will automatically be issued with a Notice to Quit.
- 5. Eviction.** Tenants who fail to act on a Notice to Remedy without good reason, will be issued with a Notice to Quit, after the process described above. This applies especially to those tenants who have a history of repeatedly neglecting their plots (see 4). Also, in cases where it is clear that the tenant concerned has made little or no effort to keep the plot in good order – preparation, cultivation and general maintenance being the main benchmarks. The notice period is one month. This eviction will be in accordance with the Tenancy Agreement and this Code of Conduct.
- 6. Recovery costs.** In cases where a tenant either resigns or is served notice to quit and the plot concerned is left in a state of severe neglect, the Council may levy a charge. The tenant will be notified in writing of the amount to be charged.
- 7. Appeals.** Any tenant who feels that s/he has been treated in an unfair manner during the plot inspection process may appeal by contacting the Chair of the Council by letter or email, who will then arrange for an independent arbitration to be carried out, as follows:
 - A full audit trail of the process and all communications between the Association and the tenant will be supplied to the Parish Clerk/Chair of the Council for use in the event of any challenge to the process.
 - Although any inspection will by nature be subjective, a scoring mechanism is in place that is intended to make the process as transparent and fair as possible and allows areas of concern and improvements required to be presented to the plot holder.
 - Further to this at each stage of the process the tenant is provided with an opportunity to discuss problems or issues with the Parish Clerk/Chair of the Parish Council.