

3) Prohibition on barbed wire

* It is a legal requirement not to use barbed or razor wire against any paths or roads set out by the Council for the benefit of all plot holders; but on Charlton Kings allotments, the use of all such materials is entirely prohibited.

Section 1c Tenants' obligations to neighbours

1) Avoidance of nuisance or damage to neighbours' interests

* Allotments are places of retreat where like-minded people come together to indulge their passion for growing. There are matters of social politeness that we sometimes need to remind ourselves about: when you light a bonfire, if you play a radio, how children and your visitors behave, and the sanctity of other people's plots and produce, are all things which can detract from or add to the enjoyment an allotment brings. You must keep your activities within the boundaries of your own plot and neither you nor your visitors are allowed to go onto, or take anything from, anyone else's plot unless you have their permission. Show courtesy too, in not obstructing or damaging grass paths between plots or Council roadways. A similar level of courtesy and consideration should be shown to nearby neighbours in their houses and gardens.

2) Bonfires

* As long as you avoid causing a 'nuisance' to neighbouring properties, and smoke getting onto a road (check wind direction first), bonfires are legal on our allotments. It is best practice to burn only dry, combustible material, on a cool, dull day, when others are less likely to be inconvenienced, but if you are asked to put a smoking bonfire out, please do so. If you light a fire, you must be there while it is burning and ensure that it is out before you go home. Do not burn green waste, plastics or any other waste materials.

Bonfires continue to cause serious problems with our neighbours and are the subject of more complaints than any other issue. They contribute to poor air quality and to climate change emissions, so wherever possible, allotment waste should be composted or sent to landfill.

3) Dogs

A dog can be a good companion when you are working your plot, but if you do take a dog onto your allotment, you must keep it on a lead and ensure that it can only walk on your plot.

4) Resolution of disputes

It is inevitable that from time to time, there will be unresolvable differences between tenants. Most disagreements are minor and capable of being resolved without the intervention of anyone else. However, in the case of a serious, unresolvable dispute, it should be referred to the Parish Clerk for consideration by the Allotments Committee whose decision will be final and binding.

Section 1 d Tenant's obligations to maintain the allotment in good condition

1) The purpose of an allotment

This section sets out the basic responsibilities associated with being a Council allotment tenant. There are always new people who want to take on an allotment but who have to wait until one becomes available, so it is fair and proper that tenants make the best use of the land that they have been allotted. The other clauses in this section set out what is expected.

2) New tenancies – showing commitment

Although the Council's intention is that, wherever possible, allotments will be offered to new tenants in a good condition and without major weed cover, this does not always prove to be possible when existing tenants are given reasonable opportunities to keep their plots.

A new tenant must show that they are actively managing their plot and they have a two-month period within which to show that they are starting to bring their plot into cultivation. New tenants are treated more leniently than existing tenants during plot condition inspections, and will, normally, be given a year in which to bring a plot into 'good condition'.

3) Cutting grass and preventing seeding

Although plots are required to be kept "reasonably free of weeds", there may be times when some weed cover is inevitable, but it should not be allowed to grow up, set seed and spread. The same is true on grass paths between plots: it is each tenant's responsibility to mow to the mid-point of any path around their plot, but who does what can be agreed in detail between neighbours. Do not use weedkiller on paths. The Council will cut the grass on main thoroughfares through allotment sites to give every plot access over a cut path to a water standpipe.

4) Maintaining allotment boundaries

The Council retains responsibility for all fences, hedges and other boundary features and will ensure that any necessary work is programmed and completed. Tenants must ensure that a 2ft (0.6m) minimum width of grass path is retained between their allotments (where the upkeep is the tenant's responsibility).

5) Composting

Composting of vegetable waste derived from the allotment is an essential part of allotment gardening. Each plot should have an area set aside for composting, preferably using well made wooden or bought plastic compost bins. Advice on composting is readily available and useful references are given in the reference section of these guidelines.

6) Watering plants

In recent years, both the unit-cost and total metered volume of water have increased very significantly. £1 now buys just 150 gallons (650 litres) of water, so using a 50ft (15m) hose for just 30 minutes costs £1. We have 250 tenants so, particularly in a dry season, the bills soon mount up. The fairest way to charge for water is to relate it directly to the area of the plot, so in

