

A-Z of Allotment Policies and Procedures – Solihull Council Managed Sites

Allotment garden:

- Defined as ‘*wholly or mainly cultivated by the occupier for the production of vegetable and fruit crops for consumption by ‘himself or his family’* Allotments Act 1922.

Bees:

- You can keep bees on your allotment plot, but you must obtain permission from the council first.
- Fellow plot holders will be consulted to check for known severe allergies which may impact the placement of a hive within the allotment site.
- Measurements and a drawing must be provided in advance for the proposed size and location of the hives.
- Those keeping bees within the allotment must follow the [British Beekeepers Association](#) (BBKA) Guidance, who recommend that you obtain Public Liability Insurance. This can be obtained through the BBKA.
- BBKA Leaflet: [Allotment Beekeeping | British Beekeepers Association](#)

Bonfires:

- Please refer to Solihull Council’s [Bonfire Code of Conduct](#)
- Due to the environmental impact as well as the potential nuisance to neighbouring residents, tenants fires should be kept to a minimum.
- The bonfire should be contained and attention should be paid to wind direction to avoid spread in direction of neighbouring residencies
- No fire should be left unattended.
- The bonfire should be examined for wildlife prior to lighting
- All materials should be dried, not painted and only consist of waste from the tenants plot

Composting:

- Each plot should seek to compost their waste as appropriate.
- Communal composting is not permitted.
- Composting areas should be contained to your plot and not near water ways to avoid run-off.

Contact details:

- All plot holders are required to inform Solihull Council of any changes to their contact details.
- All enquiries regarding Solihull Council allotments (except applications to join the allotment waiting list) should be directed to our [Connect Services](#).
- For details on allotment waiting lists please see ‘Waiting Lists’.
- Please be aware that should a tenant move outside of Solihull and not within one mile of their allotment site their tenancy may be terminated.

Cultivation Standards:

- Within the first year of tenancy 50% of the plot must be cultivated

- Following the first year of tenancy two-thirds of your plot must be continuously under cultivation either planted or ready for planting outside of the growing season.
- Multiple crops should be grown on each plot.
- The planting of willow or bamboo is not permitted.
- The use of carpet as a weed suppressant is not permitted due to the potential of chemicals leaching into the soil.

Hen keeping:

- Hens can be kept on the plot, but permission must be obtained from the council first.
- Measurements must be provided in advance for the proposed size of the coop and run.
- If keeping hens on their plot or within the allotment site, the tenant / owner are responsible for ensuring all hens are registered with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and follow DEFRA guidance at all times. The allotment officer may ask for proof of registration.

Inspections:

- While allotment sites may be monitored over the course of the year, formal inspections will be undertaken twice yearly. Site representative, where in place, will be notified when an inspection is upcoming.
- Tenants are encouraged to inform the council of any reasons why they may not have been able to maintain their plot up to standards i.e. due to illness or injury etc so that this can be taken into account when undertaking inspections.
- Where plots do not meet the terms of the tenancy agreement or expected standards as outlined in the Policies and Procedures, photographs will be taken and tenants will be contacted. Failed plot inspections may lead to termination of your tenancy. Please respond to any communications received regarding a failed inspection as soon as possible.

Rent:

- Rent will be charged annually with invoices being issued April-July.
- Failure to pay rent within a timely manner may result in termination of tenancy.
- Those tenants that have not paid their previous year's rent in full by March 31st will have their tenancy terminated.

Site Representatives:

- Site Representatives are plot holders that have volunteered to support the effective management of the allotment site.
- Duties include:
 - Allocating plots as they become available, this includes contacting applicants on the waiting list for their site.
 - Liaising with Solihull Council's allotment officer.
 - Supporting the allotment officer with site and plot inspections.

Structures:

- Tenants may keep one shed and / or greenhouse on their plot providing they comply with term 'k' of the Tenancy Agreement:

(k) Not to erect any shed or greenhouse on the said Allotment exceeding eight feet (2.44m) in length by six feet (1.80m) in width and eight feet (2.44m) in height. A maximum of one shed and one greenhouse per allotment is permitted and no other building, fence, wall or structure (excluding compost bins) shall be erected without prior written consent from the Council. No building to be used for the purpose of human habitation.

Termination:

- Due to high demand, it is important that we ensure plots are managed against the terms of the tenancy agreement and the termination process is upheld both fairly and efficiently.

Those plot holders that are found to be not adhering to the terms of the tenancy agreement may receive one of two warning notifications:

- Failed Plot Inspection
 - Allotment Warning Letter
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- Failed plot inspection process:
 1. Notification will be sent to the plot holder who will be advised of the failed plot inspection, outlining the terms of the tenancy agreement breached and the actions required to rectify. Plot holders will be advised of when a follow up inspection will be undertaken, usually 4 weeks from notification, and be asked to contact us as soon as able to notify us of their future plans for the plot. This may include:
 - Notification that they no longer wish to keep their plot
 - Request to reduce the size of their plot. This will be dependent on availability, also we are unable reduce the size of a ¼ plot.
 - Provide an action plan to address the concerns raised prior to re-inspection
 2. Should the plot fail reinspection plot holders will be notified in writing of Termination of your Tenancy and will be provided with 14 days to remove their items from the plots before they are relet.
 3. If the plot passes reinspection however there are further reoccurrence of the breaches outlined this may also lead to termination of tenancy.
 - Allotment Warning Letter:
 1. Notification will be sent to the plot holder who will be advised of the terms of the tenancy agreement breached and any actions required to rectify. If a follow up inspection is required plot holders will be notified of when this will be.
 2. Should the required actions not be undertaken reinspection plot holders will be notified in writing of Termination of your Tenancy and will be provided with 14 days to remove their items from the plots before they are relet.
 3. Should there be further reoccurrence of the breaches outlined this may also lead to termination of tenancy.
 - The council has the right to claim compensation if the plot is left in a poorer condition than how it was provided.

Trees:

- Only fruit trees on dwarf root stock are permitted to be planted.

Water:

- Those sites with onsite taps will not be available for use between Nov-March, this is to avoid damage to pipework over the winter months as well as support the safe management of water on site.
- Allotment holders should consider sustainable methods of capturing rainwater on their plots. The capturing of rainwater in communal areas is not permitted.
- Please refrain from using sprinklers and the use of hosepipes should be kept to a minimum.

Waiting Lists:

- Solihull Council managed sites now operating capped waiting lists. Please be aware that once added to a waiting list it can take 2-3 years to be offered a plot although may take longer.
- Plots will be offered to those at the top of the waiting list as soon as they become available.
- Those on the waiting lists will be contacted annually to determine whether they wish to remain on the waiting list.
- To apply for a plot you must live in the Borough or within one mile of the site you are applying for to qualify for a plot.
- Contact details will be shared with Site Representatives where it has been agreed that the site rep will manage the allocation of plots.

Tenancy Agreement:

- The Tenancy Agreement is legally binding, setting out the rights and responsibilities of the plot holders and Solihull Council as landlord.
- All tenants will be required to complete and agree to the Tenancy Agreement as well as the terms set out in the A-Z of Allotment Policies and Procedures.