



PARISH COUNCIL OF EYNSFORD

ALLOTMENT TENANT'S HANDBOOK

This Handbook is provided for anyone who rents an allotment garden from Eynsford Parish Council and should be read in combination with your allotment tenancy agreement.

Whilst this Handbook explains your obligations under the formal allotment agreement that is made between a tenant and Eynsford Parish Council, it is not intended to be an authoritative interpretation of all applicable allotment laws.

Council employees and representatives will do their best to answer any additional questions you may have and contact details are provided at the end of this Handbook.

Please note that as our ongoing commitment to ensuring that allotment holders and tenants can continue to fully enjoy all the benefits that allotment gardens bring, we reserve the right to update this Handbook from time-to-time. You will be able to download a copy of the Handbook from the parish council website, or request a copy via email, or obtain a copy from the parish office.

The success of an allotment site is dependent on co-operation between allotment garden tenants and those responsible for the management of the allotment site as a whole.

1. Allotment Holders' Charter

We (the council) promise that we will:-

- Undertake the administration of allotment sites and provide access through the allotments
- Handle allotment holders' or tenants queries or complaints within a timely manner
- Inspect the condition of gardens and maintain suitable standards of care, issuing warnings and notices to quit as appropriate
- Work closely with allotment tenants to ensure the provision of an appropriate and satisfactory allotment service

FAQs

What is an allotment?

An allotment garden is a piece of land, which has been provided by the council for rent. Allotments vary in size and are used for growing fruit and vegetables for you and your family.

Why would I want an allotment?

It is recognised by the council that allotment gardening can be a very rewarding pastime and can make a valuable contribution to the quality and health of people's lives. They are also important as recreational assets and gardening is considered a social activity.

Who can have an allotment?

Anyone who lives within the Eynsford parish (or within one mile of Eynsford) can apply for an allotment garden. You can apply online through the council's website at <http://www.eynsfordparishcouncil.org.uk/> or email on info@eynsfordparishcouncil.org.uk to be added to the waiting list.

Why is there a waiting list?

Due to the limited number of allotment gardens available to rent within the parish and the long notice periods, the parish has decided that the fairest way to manage the allocation is have a waiting list. Therefore, when an allotment garden becomes available, we will offer it to the person who has been waiting the longest.

What could I grow?

Allotment gardeners may grow vegetables, flowers and fruit on their garden.

Can I keep animals on the allotment?

Regrettably it is not possible to keep animals on the allotment garden.

Who maintains fences and paths?

The council is responsible for maintaining the perimeter fence and internal footpaths. Maintenance of internal fencing is the allotment holder's responsibility.

2. Respecting Other Allotment Holders and Visitors

There are approximately 42 allotment gardens within the allotment site. Every allotment holder will have a different style of gardening and it is up to individuals how they choose to work their garden, as long as it is maintained to a reasonably acceptable standard.

Traditional allotment gardeners may want to cultivate the entire garden and plant rows of vegetables and flowers. Whichever method you use, we encourage gardeners to cultivate allotment gardens and enjoy their gardening.

We ask that all allotment holders and tenants respect each other and remember you have a duty of care to each other and also visitors to the allotment site.

3. Allotment Safety

As the allotment holder or tenant, it is your responsibility to pay due care and attention to your health and safety and the health and safety of visitors, friends and family. To prevent accidents, all visitors to the site must be accompanied by the tenant. Please be aware that other tenants and gardeners may keep sharp or hazardous tools and equipment, pesticides, weed killers or other chemicals on site that may be harmful to humans and animals.

Whilst this list is not exhaustive, we ask as a precaution that all allotment holders and tenants be vigilant as follows:

- Always ensure that visitors and children are never left unattended, at any time on the allotment site, particular care should be taken around the water troughs to prevent drowning or children drinking dirty water
- Wherever possible, please store hazardous tools or chemicals away safely
- Please keep pesticides, weed killers and chemicals in their original bottles
- Never leave tools, equipment or other items where they may cause others to trip or fall
- Never leave a bonfire unattended

- Please do not use the allotment to dump rubbish, including but not limited to; sharp objects, objects that could cause suffocation to children or animals, corrosive materials or pollutants
- Do not store excessive amounts of timber, paper or packaging on the allotment that could ignite
- Please keep gas cylinders, canisters locked away when not in use

4. Emergency Action Plan

In case of fire or serious accident, phone 999 on a mobile phone if available.

And in the case of fire, allotment holders and visitors should leave the allotment site immediately, and gather at the main gate by the Parish Office.

Allotment holders should ensure that all people working on their allotment garden are accounted for. Allotment holders are encouraged to look out for other gardeners or visitors on adjoining allotment gardens to ensure their safety.

In the case of fire or serious accident the allotment holder must inform the parish council.

5. Your Allotment Agreement

The agreement is between Eynsford Parish Council and you, the tenant. When you sign your agreement you are agreeing to take on a tenancy and to look after your allotment garden. You are also agreeing to abide by the conditions in the agreement, therefore please read your agreement carefully and make sure you understand your obligations before signing.

6. Subletting and Garden Sharing

The allotment agreement can only be held in one person's name. And although you may have a private arrangement to share your garden with a friend, you will still be the tenant. As the tenant you will be responsible for maintenance of the allotment garden even if you choose to share.

Should you decide to give up your garden, you must not pass it on to your friend or sharer directly. You must let the council know that you intend to give up your garden, and your allotment will be offered to the next person on the waiting list.

Under certain circumstances the council may consider transferring the agreement to another name, although this will be entirely at the council's discretion.

7. Your Rent and Deposits

You are a tenant of Eynsford Parish Council and agree by signing the Allotment Agreement to pay the yearly rent in advance at the rate set by the council. Rent and other charges are payable by the tenants on 1 April each year.

Allotment Tenants will be required to pay a £30 deposit, which will be returned on termination of the tenancy, provided that the allotment garden is returned in a reasonable condition.

8. How to Pay

You can pay your rent in cash at any the parish office and also by cheque made payable to EYNSFORD PARISH COUNCIL, or via internet banking. For security reasons please do not send cash through the post.

Should you wish to pay via internet banking, please use the following bank details. You should quote the allotment holder or tenants name as the payment reference:

Account Name: Eynsford Parish Council
Account Number: 61001064
Sort Code: 08-90-36

9. Giving Notice

When you decide you no longer want your allotment garden, you can inform us that you wish to end your agreement, by giving (at least 2 month's) notice in writing. By letting us know your intentions as early as possible, we are able to arrange to have your garden taken over as soon as you stop working it, thereby getting the new gardener off to a flying start and making sure the garden is not overgrown.

Please send your written notice directly to the parish office or via email to info@eynsfordparishcouncil.org.uk. Please remember to state clearly in the notice the following information:

- The full name of the allotment holder or tenant
- Confirmation that you wish to terminate your allotment agreement
- The date on which you wish to hand back the allotment to the parish council
- Forwarding contact details

10. Handover of Allotments

All tenants should hand back their allotment garden at the end of the tenancy in a reasonable condition, and ensure that any rubbish, litter and buildings are removed prior to handing back an allotment garden. Where an allotment is not returned in a reasonable condition, the council may utilise any deposit taken to cover the cost of returning the allotment garden to a reasonable condition, including the removal of rubbish, litter and buildings.

11. Contact Details

As the allotment tenant, it is your responsibility to notify the parish council if you move house, so we can update your records. This is important as we will continue to write to you at your last known address. If for example your rent invoice does not reach you and we do not receive payment, we will assume you have given up your allotment garden.

Wherever possible, we do ask that allotment tenants provide the council with a contact email address, so that updates, rent invoices and other communications can be sent to you. This not only saves time, but enables the council to save costs, which benefits the wider community.

12. Allotment Care

The main requirement of your agreement is to keep your garden or gardens cultivated and tidy by removing litter and rubbish, and controlling weeds regularly so they do not seed and cause problems for other gardeners.

If you cannot manage to cultivate your entire garden, it is acceptable, as a temporary measure to mulch part of it with polythene sheeting or organic mulch to keep the weeds down. We ask that you avoid the use of rubber backed carpet, as the backing may rot down releasing harmful chemicals into the soil and causing pollution.

Please do not stockpile timber, sheeting, newspapers or other materials as they may become a hazard and also a breeding ground for rodents.

13. Problem Trees and Maintenance

Allotment holders and tenants are not permitted to remove perimeter trees, bushes, shrubs or hedges under any circumstances. If a perimeter tree is causing you difficulty, please contact the parish council, who will arrange to inspect the tree that is causing you difficulty and make arrangements to deal with the issue where possible. Written permission to prune back perimeter trees must be obtained before carrying out any works.

As the allotment tenant, you are responsible for maintaining and pruning trees within the allotment garden itself, which includes removing tree saplings to prevent them from becoming established. Allotment tenants are also responsible for maintaining any shrubs, bushes, trees or other plants along the boundaries between allotments.

14. Boundaries and Borders

Either the council or private landowners in neighbouring properties may own the boundary fences, trees, shrubs or bushes of the allotment site. You must not move or allow to be moved or damaged any fences, trees, shrubs or bushes.

In particular, please do not damage or remove parts of fences, trees, shrubs or bushes within the boundary in order to gain access to neighbouring land or property. In addition, please do not pile rubbish against fences, trees, shrubs or bushes as this can cause them to lean and rot.

Individual allotment gardens may with written permission from the council be fenced. However, you must use suitable materials that are open weave, or panelled to allow wildlife to move freely between allotment gardens, and be within the height restriction. And in particular, you must not use barbed wire or anything which may leave sharp edges. Please also avoid brightly coloured materials and take care not to obstruct pathways.

15. Compost and Manure

Gardeners may bring green waste such as hedge clippings, grass clippings and weeds onto their garden for making into compost for use on their garden. Similarly gardeners can arrange for deliveries of manure. However, you must not bring onto site more material than you can use during the year. Please cover fresh manure and compost heaps with a tarpaulin or plastic sheeting to help lessen the problems of strong smells and flies.

Delivered manure should be moved on to your allotment garden within 24 hours of delivery.

16. Watering Crops and Plants

Water is a precious commodity, please use it sparingly and consider other allotment gardeners when watering your garden. Follow these simple guidelines to sensible watering:

- Please do not siphon water from communal watering troughs to stockpile in containers within your own allotment garden.
- If a communal water trough is located within the boundary of your allotment garden, please ensure that other allotment holders' and tenants can access the water trough at all times.
- Please do not use the communal water troughs to dispose of pesticides, weed killers or other chemicals, or use them to wash gardening tools that may be contaminated with pesticides, weed killers or other chemicals.

17. Sheds, Storage Boxes and Greenhouses

Allotments holders and tenants cannot build or erect sheds, storage boxes and greenhouses unless written permission has been obtained from the parish council. Once permission has been given, buildings must be contained within your allotment garden boundary and not obstruct paths between gardens.

Only one building is permitted per allotment garden, and must be kept neutral in colour, such as; green, brown and natural wood. All buildings are restricted in size to 6 x 4 (feet).

Sheds, storage boxes and greenhouses should be removed by the tenant at the end of the tenancy; they may only be left if you agree with the incoming tenant, that it is okay to do so. Should the shed, storage box or greenhouse remain on the site longer than seven (7) days from the end of the tenancy it will be deemed that the building has been abandoned and will become the property of the parish council.

18. Soil and Minerals

You must not take away or sell soil, earth, sand and gravel from the allotment site.

19. Disposal of Rubbish

We would ask each allotment gardener to consider composting or recycling as an alternative to disposal. You must not deposit or allow anyone else to deposit rubbish anywhere on the allotment site. This includes the hedges and ditches around the allotment site, within the treeline that borders between the allotment site and neighbouring properties or land, and unused allotment gardens.

20. Bonfires

It is not illegal to have a bonfire but creating smoke that causes a nuisance is an offence under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Allowing smoke to drift over nearby roads may also lead to prosecution under the Highways (Amendment) Act 1986 if it endangers traffic.

Please remember that smoke from bonfires can be annoying to neighbours, ruining their enjoyment of their gardens and preventing them from opening windows and hanging out their washing. Bonfires or burning should be limited to burning diseased plants and dry material that will burn without smoke. You must not burn green or damp materials or household rubbish that will cause smoke.

Always ensure to pick a time when it is not likely to inconvenience neighbours and never under any circumstances leave a fire unattended!

If you have a problem with smoke from a neighbouring allotment garden, please report it in the first instance to the parish council, who will take steps to inform the offending allotment holder or tenant of the nuisance.

For persistent offences by the same allotment holder or tenant, it might be appropriate to notify the relevant authority, who may impose a heavy fine.

21. Inspections

Your allotment garden will be inspected from time to time, but no less than twice a year. If the allotment garden appears to be uncultivated, or we believe there is a breach of the agreement we will write to you and ask you to bring the plot up to the required standard

within a reasonable timescale. If you don't bring your garden up to standard within the timescale stated your tenancy may be terminated.

If you are experiencing temporary problems, that is preventing you from maintaining or cultivating your allotment garden, please let the parish council know at the earliest opportunity.

22. Right of Entry

Employees or representatives of the parish council may enter, inspect and carry out maintenance work on your allotment garden, without prior notice. For example if there is a burst water pipe, or a perimeter tree requires urgent attention.

23. Reporting Issues

If you require assistance for any repairs or maintenance to your allotment site i.e. perimeter fencing or water supplies, please contact the parish council. When calling please provide the following information:-

- Name of allotment site
- Nature of repair
- Contact name and telephone number

24. Site Meetings

In some situations, an employee or a representative of the council, can take part in discussions about how we run the allotments, help identify the concerns of gardeners on their allotment garden and decide how we can tackle problems together.

25. Security

Allotment holders and tenants, store gardening tools and equipment on the allotment at their own risk. The council cannot accept liability for any items lost, damaged or stolen. Should you be affected by theft or damage, please report the incident to the police in the first instance, and notify the parish council, who will alert other allotment owners of the potential threat.

26. Statutory Notices

Notices issued by Eynsford Parish Council, will be deemed served if they are issued to you, in writing by writing to you at the last address you have given to us.

27. Contacting Us

If you need information or have an enquiry about allotments gardens, you can contact us as follows:

Parish Clerk, Eynsford Parish Council, The Parish Office, Priory Lane, Eynsford, DA4 0AY

Tel: 01322 865320

Email: info@eynsfordparishcouncil.org.uk

28. Further Information

For more information on the services provided by the council, please visit:

Website: <http://www.eynsfordparishcouncil.org.uk/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Eynsford-Parish-Council/156186511116274>