

WOODLEY ALLOTMENT TENANTS ASSOCIATION

SPECIAL BULLETIN – 29



Plot Inspections – What are the Criteria?

With all the annual *Allotment Tenancy Agreements* due for renewal shortly, your committee thought it would be helpful to all plot holders if we put out a handy guide to help people understand a bit more about some of the requirements of working an allotment as well as a guide to following Woodley Town Councils *Allotment Tenancy Agreement* and it's criteria for Plot Inspections.

What are the expectations?

Some of the requirements set out by Woodley Town Council include:

- *An allotment is primarily for the growing of vegetables, fruit and flowers for you and your immediate family enjoyment*
- *After one year, 70% of each plot should be cultivated, forming the basis for future plot surveys carried out by the allotment association*
- *Keep your allotment well maintained and in a proper state of cultivation at all times and keep the allotment paths and surroundings immediately adjoining your plot clean and free from weeds.*

More general information can be found online at: www.woodley.gov.uk/parks-facilities/allotments

In addition, Woodley Town Council *Tenancy Agreement for Allotments Holders* states that...

- *Para. 4.5] the Tenant shall use the plot as an allotment garden as defined by the Allotment Act 1922, wholly or mainly for the production of vegetables, fruit and flower crops for consumption or enjoyment by the Tenant and his family and no other purpose*
- *Para. 4.6] the Tenant shall have at least 50% of the allotment garden under cultivation of crops and 70% worked after 12 months and thereafter.*
- *Para. 4.7] the Tenant shall keep the allotment well maintained, free from weeds, noxious plants and any hazards such as broken glass and scrap.*
- *Para. 4.3] the Tenant shall keep paths and surroundings on and immediately adjoining his plot well maintained.*

We have carried out some research and found that the majority of councils in the UK have very similar requirements and in many cases, have much stricter criteria than Woodley Town Council. We have included more background information [at the end](#) of this Bulletin.

Clearly the different seasons will influence how an Allotment Plot looks throughout the year, also other extenuating circumstances (Health etc.) may also affect what work is carried out on plots. However, we hope that the following examples will provide a way that Plot holders can see what is expected of their allotment tenancy.

The following images we have used are not from our Allotment Site, but simply examples to explain various aspects of the criteria.

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Uncultivated Allotments – What might one look like?

This is where the tenant has abandoned their plot and would seem to have no intention of cultivating anything. Questions that would be asked during a plot inspection might include:

- Has plot been cultivated at all?
- Is it free of seeding weeds?
- Grass may not be cut because of bad weather!
- Is there anything potentially dangerous on the plot?



Fig. 1 – Uncultivated Plot



Fig. 2 – Uncultivated Plot

These are good examples of uncultivated plots, taken in the late Autumn/Winter; they show little indication of any work being carried out in recent months.

Spring Season on a Cultivated Allotment Plot



Fig. 4 - SPRING_50%



Fig. 5 - SPRING_50%

Questions that would be asked during a Spring plot inspection might include:

- Has cultivation started yet? Bearing in mind bad weather around the time of inspection.

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- If so, what percentage has been cultivated?
- Are grass paths being cut/strimmed?
- Are plot numbers clearly visible?

Summer Season on a Cultivated Allotment Plot



Fig. 8 -SUMMER_50%



Fig. 9 - SUMMER_50%

Questions that would be asked during a Summer plot inspection might include:

- Is plot still being cultivated? If so, what percentage has been cultivated?
- Are any fruit trees within any size limits?
- Are grass paths being cut?
- Is there anything potentially dangerous on the plot?

Autumn Season on a Cultivated Allotment Plot



Fig. 12 -AUTUMN_50%



Fig. 13 -AUTUMN_50%

Questions that would be asked during an Autumn plot inspection might include:

- Has plot been cultivated at all? If so, what percentage has been cultivated?

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- Is it free of seeding weeds?
- Are grass paths being cut/strimmed?
- Is there anything potentially dangerous on the plot?

Winter Season on a Cultivated Allotment Plot



Fig. 16 -WINTER_50%



Fig. 17 -WINTER_50%

Questions that would be asked during a Winter plot inspection might include:

- Has plot been cultivated at all? If so, what percentage has been cultivated?
- Has the ground been dug over?
- Is the ground covered over for the winter?
- Grass may not be cut because of bad weather!
- Is there anything potentially dangerous on the plot?

Winter Season on a Cultivated Allotment Plot – But completely covered for winter



Fig. 20 -WINTER_COVERED



Fig. 22 -WINTER_COVERED

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Other General Allotment Plot Information

Allotment Act 1950 and other researched UK Council Agreements summary of Plot Holder requirements

- *Allotment law stipulates that there should be evidence of at least 25% of the plot worked within the first three months, and at least 75% of the plot should be worked in the first year, and thereafter*
- *The 75% of each plot available for open cultivation should be fully cultivated within a complete growing season and produce at least one crop*
- *Greenhouses, poly tunnels, raised beds and compost heaps count as cultivated areas, sheds will come under the 25% allowance that is not cultivated*
- *Paths allowing plot access and between beds are counted as cultivated land. These paths may be grass, bark chippings, paving, stones or bricks. They should not be more than three feet wide. Paths on and between plots are to be maintained by the tenants and kept free of any obstruction.*

Full cultivation is taken to mean one or more of the following:

- *The plot is ready for growing*
- *The plot is well stocked with growing produce relevant to the time of year*
- *The plot is being prepared for the following crops or following season.*

Allowable crops include:

- *Vegetables*
- *Fruit*
- *Flowers*
- *Herbs*
- *Dwarf fruit trees and bushes are acceptable as long as they are maintained and do not cast a shadow on neighbouring plots*

Other General information

- *It is the tenants' responsibility to keep the plot free of weeds that cause a nuisance to adjoining tenants*
- *Weed seed heads should be removed before the seed has set*
- *Pernicious and invasive weeds e.g. couch grass, mares tail, brambles and bindweed are to be kept under control*
- *Long grass or other detritus that may harbour pests, e.g. Mice, rats, slugs and snails, should be removed*
- *An uncultivated area left to go wild is not a managed wild life area.*
- *Areas left to go fallow as part of crop rotation must be strimmed to avoid seed spreading.*

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We hope this easy to follow guide will be helpful to all Allotment Plot holders in understanding what is required with regards to their Tenancy Agreement so that they are well prepared for the next set of Plot Inspections by Woodley Town Council in 2019.

If you are having any problems keeping up with your plot, don't hesitate to contact the committee and we will see how we can help you. We have already helped a few tenants move to smaller plots when they found that they could no longer utilise their entire exiting plot. We're here to help.

Many thanks
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