

Woodley Allotments Tenants Association at Reading Road

Welcome Pack

2025





A message from Woodley Town Council

Woodley Town Council (WTC) has managed the allotment plots at Reading Road over the past 50 plus years) and now stands at 386 tenanted allotment plots. We work very closely with the Woodley Allotments Tenants Association (WATA) Committee at Reading Road which meets regularly to discuss plot holder issues, promote Charities' plots, organise various projects including road/site repairs and an annual site clearance.

WTC also ask the WATA Committee to carry out regular plot inspections on our behalf throughout the year to check on plot activity and any irregularities with regards to the Tenancy Agreement that you have signed. Whilst there may be issues with some plots, many items can easily be resolved through early discussion with either the WATA Committee or direct to WTC. Contact details for both can be found in this Welcome Pack. There is some very good information in this Welcome Pack that WTC and the WATA Committee have put together that will help you see what is expected from you when taking on an allotment, as does the WATA Committee's official Website at www.woodley-allotments.org.uk and their own [Allotment Facebook Group Page](#). Both of which are fully supported by WTC.

Now that the formalities are over it's time to think about all that fresh outdoor air that we have all craved over the recent restrictions and of course all of that 'new' exercise that perhaps 'we' now need by producing some fresh produce with your own hands and a bit of luck.

Wishing everyone great success to all our allotment plot holders.

Kevin Murray - Town Clerk

Woodley Town Council

A message from the Chair of the WATA Committee

On behalf of the WATA Committee, I would like to welcome you to your new allotment plot. The WATA Committee are a team of fellow plot holders whose sole aim is to help you make a success of your chosen plot. Your contract with WTC will have set out the legal terms of the rental of your chosen plot including fees and various regulations governing your use of the allocated plot and your responsibilities that you have agreed with WTC.

We hope that the following pages will explain a bit more about the work needed to make your plot a success and, if this is your first time with an allotment, several suggestions about what to grow and how to organise your plot, along with numerous links to many online handy guides. We hope that you have great success with your new plot. However, if you find you have any questions, whether it is about how to grow various produce or you are finding it a bit difficult keeping up with working your plot (yes it can be a challenge sometimes!) then the WATA Committee members are here for you. The WATA Committee members' plot numbers are listed in this Welcome Pack. You can also contact me via email on chair@woodley-allotments.org.uk

We look forward to seeing you on your new plot.

Mike McNamara – Chair - WATA Committee

Woodley Allotments Tenants Association at Reading Road



Welcome to the Reading Road Allotments.

This brief guide outlines some of the basic rules and responsibilities contained in your Allotment Tenancy Agreement along with some helpful tips and information so you can begin to enjoy your allotment as soon as possible.

Article Link Advice – Whilst we have verified and checked all the current Internet links in this document as of its publication date, you should still exercise caution when clicking on any Internet link. If you discover any issue with any of the links provided in this article, please let us know via readingroadplots@woodley-allotment.org.uk as soon as possible.

Things you need to do for your Plot:

- An allotment is primarily for the growing of vegetables, fruit and flowers for you and your immediate family's enjoyment; any fruit trees you plant should be of the dwarf root stock variety. There are several suggestions later in this Welcome Pack about what to plant and how to manage your new allotment. After one year 70% of your plot should be cultivated, forming the basis for future plot surveys carried out by the Allotment Tenants Association. Intermediate plot inspections will be made during the first year and guidance passed back to plot holders as to their progress.
- How much of a plot is 'in' production is clearly dependent on the season. Over late Autumn/Winter/Late Winter, if no produce is being grown, we would expect that the plot should be covered with suitable material such as [Garden Weed Control Fabric](#) (available from many outlets, one example being this link to B & Q UK) which will help suppress weeds and let water through, unlike ordinary plastic sheeting. You must not use carpet for this, as it's not allowed under the WTC Tenancy Agreement rules
- 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.
- Please make sure that you understand what is not allowed to be brought onto your allotment plot. This includes items such as carpet, scrap metal, noxious chemicals, asbestos and excessive amounts of wood or plastic.
- You must display your allotment plot number clearly and prominently on the plot.
- You must not cause any disturbance or nuisance to other allotment holders.
- Please leave the onsite toilet clean and tidy.
- Please adhere to onsite Speed Limit of 5 mph; this is for everyone's safety.

Things the Council will do for your Plot:

- Work with the Allotment Tenants WATA Committee to address allotment issues, un-cultivated and poorly worked plots and allocation of vacant plots;
- Provide a water supply within reasonable distance of all plots;
- Provide material for road repairs and skips for clearance of certain items;
- Maintain the perimeter fencing and gates;
- Cut the grass in areas where there are no allotment plots;
- Maintain a waiting list.



Helpful Information:

Water

- Water troughs are provided by the Council. These should be used with care and any problems reported direct to the Council via the Allotments WATA Committee. Mechanical/electric pumps that extract water from water troughs are banned as per the WTC Tenancy agreement that you have signed.
- Water butts on your own plot can be used to collect and store your own supply e.g. run off from a shed roof
- Hosepipes are not allowed, except when connected to your own water butt on your own plot.

Toilet

- There are two onsite toilets located at either end of the allotment site.. Tenants are responsible for keeping the toilet clean, so please leave it as you would wish to find it. You may find it helpful to provide your own toilet paper.

Bonfires

- Bonfires are only permitted on your plot after 4pm between 1st October & 30th April the following year inclusive. However, you should try and compost as much as possible which will of course help your allotment and the environment.

Carpets

- Carpets are not allowed and should not be brought onto the allotment site in any circumstances. If you discover carpet on your new allotment as you begin to use it, put it to one side to be disposed of at a local council tip.

Sheds, Greenhouses & Polytunnels

- Sheds, Greenhouses and Polytunnels are permitted on your plot. However, you must seek permission from WTC before erecting any structure.

Security

- You will be issued with a key for the gate which should be kept locked at all times.
- Any suspicious behaviour should be reported to the Council or WATA Committee by contacting any of the WATA Committee members on their plots (see next page) or by email to readingroadplots@woodley-allotments.org.uk.
- CCTV is in operation to improve the security of the site.

All

- Essential tools that you will find helpful - Spade, fork, hoe, rake, trowel & watering can
- Short & regular visits to the allotment plot are better than long and infrequent visits
- Neglected plots can be dealt with as follows:
 - Cut down weeds including persistent ones such as couch grass, bind weed, mares tail and blackberry (unless you want to keep this last one) all of which should be burnt (when allowed) and any long grass. You may prefer to spray all or part of the plot with an environmentally safe/organic weed killer and it leave to die back. If you do spray, ensure it does not drift on to an adjacent plot.
 - Please cover uncultivated ground with black garden fabric such as [Garden Weed Control Fabric](#).
 - Mark out your plot with paths and beds.



- Begin using your plot by digging and planting an initial area that is manageable by you. Don't forget to hoe regularly: removing weeds when they are young is much easier and helps prevent the spread of weed seeds.
- When this initial area is under control, you can then move on to dig and plant another area on your plot.
- You should resist using a rotavator on an uncultivated plot as this may cut-up persistent weeds and cause a longer term problem for you.

Allotment Rent Charges - As from January 2025 – these charges will be updated every year.

Poles		Rent	Water	Total		Rent	Water	Total
10	Woodley Resident	£61.30	£5.00	£66.30	Retired Woodley Resident	£46.00	£5.00	£51.00
	Non Woodley Resident	£92.00	£5.00	£97.00	Retired Non Woodley Resident	£69.00	£5.00	£74.00
5	Woodley Resident	£30.65	£2.50	£33.15	Retired Woodley Resident	£23.00	£2.50	£25.50
	Non Woodley Resident	£46.00	£2.50	£48.50	Retired Non Woodley Resident	£34.50	£2.50	£37.00

We hope you enjoy your new allotment. As we have mentioned above don't forget to contact us using the contact details below if you have any questions.

Useful Contacts:

- WATA Email is readingroadplots@woodley-allotments.org.uk
- WATA Committee – we have now introduced the notion of Row Reps. Please see the list below for your Row-Rep. They will address any plot issues that you have and will look to try to resolve the issue either via the Committee or via WTC.
 - Chair – Mike McNamara (F12) – Rows G/H - mike.mcnamara@woodley-allotments.org.uk
 - Vice Chair - Teresa Buley - (E18) – Rows L/M - teresa.buley@woodley-allotments.org.uk
 - Treasurer - TBC
 - Secretary - Wendy Wilkinson (J23) – Rows C/D - wendy.wilkinson@woodley-allotments.org.uk
 - Peter Buley- (E18) – Rows E/F - peter.buley@woodley-allotments.org.uk
 - Caroline Chaytor(K25a) – Rows J/K - caroline.petal@woodley-allotments.org.uk
 - Debbie Ballard - (K25a) – Rows A/B - deb.ballard@woodley-allotments.org.uk
- Our own Woodley Allotment Association Website [Contact Page](#)
- Our WTC sanctioned [Facebook Group Page](#)
- Woodley Town Council – Kieran on 0118 969 0356 or allotments@woodley.gov.uk.



Practical Tips for your new Allotment

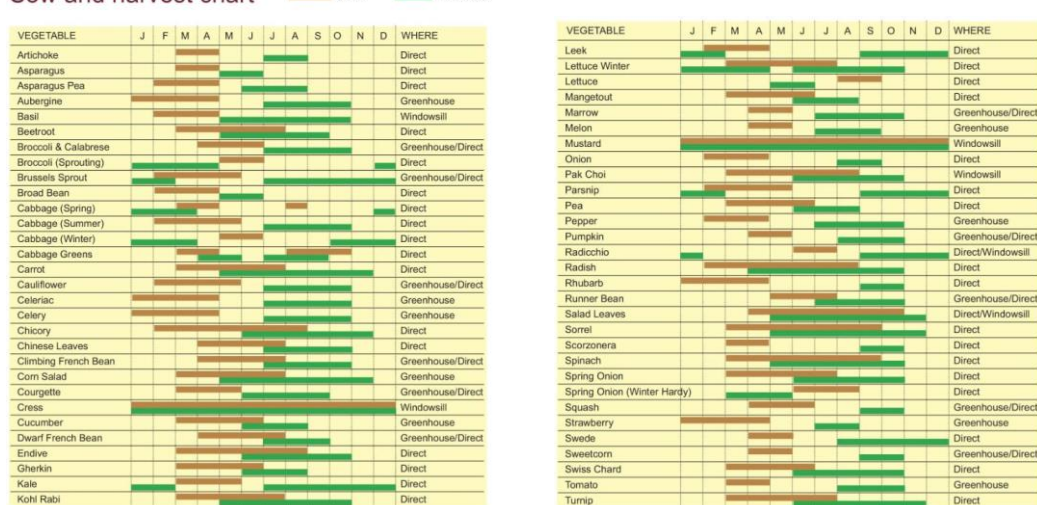
Starting with your new allotment

Depending on the state your allotment when you took it over will define how much work is needed. In most cases it is always better to start on a small section of your allotment than to try and tackle it all at once. If you have a lot of weeds you will need to get rid of them. Here's a link one website with some [handy hints](#). In most cases, jumping straight in with a rotavator on a new plot can cause more problems as you will end up chopping up the weed roots 'sowing' a problem for later on. It's always best to dig the weeds out first.

What to grow?

Vegetables, Fruit, Flowers? Take a look at the charts below (*clicking on them will get you a larger version*) to give you a good idea of what vegetables you could grow and when they require sowing/ harvesting. Of course, some of this depends on what the soil is like on your plot, making a [soil test](#) will help you understand that. You can also ask other tenants what grows best.

Sow and harvest chart



Crop Rotation

The [RHS](#) defines this as 'The principle of crop rotation is to grow specific groups of vegetables on a different part of the vegetable plot each year. This helps to reduce a build-up of crop-specific pest and disease problems and it organises groups of crops according to their cultivation needs.'

There is an amazing amount of online information about this subject – *our newsletter editor works on a four year rotation plan* – but you can also have a three year plan. Here's some more information about the subject.

- [Crop Rotation for Growing Vegetables](#) from GrowVeg
- [Planting plan and crop rotation](#) from Gardeners World
- [The Three Year Crop Rotation Plan](#) from Allotments & Gardens
- [The Four Year Crop Rotation Plan](#) from Allotments & Gardens.



Building Up Your Soil

If you have taken over a plot that has not been used for quite a while it may need some work done on it to get it back in shape. One of those things that will help is adding organic matter. It will take a bit of time to build up your own [compost heap](#), so what to use in the meantime?

Again, a wide variety of information is online, here's a few (*in no particular order*) that may help...

- [Adding Organic Matter in the autumn](#) – from the Compost Shop
- [Ten Ways to Improve your Soil](#) – from Quickcrop Blog
- [9 Ways to Improve Garden Soil](#) – from Gardenista.

A word about Fruit and Flowers

Dwarf fruit trees and bushes are perfectly acceptable as long as they are maintained and do not cast a shadow on neighbouring plots. However, we would recommend that you uproot and dispose of any self-germinated Oak and Sycamore seedlings as these can grow very large if left and cause problems for allotment plots

Here's some handy links about Fruit Trees that may help you decide which to plant or if you already have any, how to look after them.

- From the RHS - [Fruit trees: choosing the best](#)
- From Allotments & Gardens - [Fruit Plants, Fruit Trees, Fruit Bushes](#)
- From Oriental Trees - [Tree Ideas for Allotments](#).

To Dig or Not to Dig? Some tips for the 'No-Dig' fans.

- [The No-Dig Method](#) – From Garden Organic
- [Fewer weeds, save time](#) - No Dig Advice from Charles Dowding
- [No-Dig Gardening vs. Digging](#) – From Allotment Garden Diary

When Things Go Wrong

- Potato Blight – [What to do when this happens](#) – RHS
- Tomato Blight – [How to Avoid](#) – Gardeners World
- [Onion Diseases and Dealing with them](#) – Allotments & Gardens
- An All-round look at [Diseases in the Vegetable Garden](#) – Quick Crop Blog
- ... and finally – [5 Reasons to pause and reflect on the allotment garden](#) – from Sharpen Your Spades.



Plot Inspections – What are the Criteria?

Your *Allotment Tenancy Agreement* is renewed annually in January. Woodley Town Council (WTC) and the Association WATA Committee have put together this handy guide to help you understand a bit more about some of the requirements of working your allotment. It should also act as a guide for you to follow WTC's *Allotment Tenancy Agreement* and its criteria for Plot Inspections which are carried out by the WATA Committee on behalf of WTC at various times during the year.

What are the expectations?

Some of the requirements set out by WTC include:

- *An allotment is primarily for the growing of vegetables, fruit and flowers for you and your immediate family's enjoyment.*
- *A steady progress of cultivation of crops over the first year of tenancy and thereafter i.e., growing produce or being readied for further production. Clearly this does not suddenly happen 'one day' before the initial 12 months are up! It takes time to bring an unused plot back into production and it is this steady work that the Plot Inspection Team looks at over the year during the various inspections it performs for WTC. Of course, how much can be done also depends on the season in which you took over the plot, which is also taken into consideration when carrying out plot inspections.*
- *Keeping the allotment, including surrounding paths on or immediately adjoined to their plot, tidy and well maintained. See Para. 4.5.3. of the Tenancy Agreement for full details.*

In addition, the WTC Tenancy Agreement for Allotments Holders states that...

- *Para. 4. 4) 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*
- *Paras. 4. 5.1.1., 4.5.1.2., 4.5.1.3.) The Tenant shall have at least 25% of the allotment garden under cultivation within three months of the start of first year of the tenancy, 50% of the allotment garden under cultivation of crops within 6 months of the start of the first year of the tenancy, and 70% of the allotment garden under cultivation of crops after 12 months of the start of the first year of the tenancy and thereafter. Plot inspections will be carried out on a regular basis to measure adherence to these requirements.*

We continue to carry out research and still find that most councils in the UK have very similar requirements and in many cases, still have much stricter criteria than WTC.

Clearly the different seasons will influence how an allotment plot looks throughout the year, Also other extenuating circumstances (a change in Health circumstances, employment etc.) may affect what work is carried out on plots, again this is taken into consideration during plot inspections, providing that the WATA Committee has been informed.

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 the Reading Road Allotment Site but are simply examples to explain various aspects of the criteria.



Uncultivated Allotments – What might one look like?

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

- Has the plot been cultivated at all?
- Is it free of seeding weeds?
- Grass may not be cut because of harsh weather!
- Are there piles of rubbish/plastic/rubble collecting or anything else 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 the previous months or an intention to prepare for the next growing season.

Spring Season on a Cultivated Allotment Plot



Fig. 3 – SPRING 50%



Fig. 4 – SPRING 50%

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

- Has cultivation started yet? Are there signs of progress, bearing in mind weather at the time of inspection?
- 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. 5 – SUMMER 50%



Fig. 6 – SUMMER 50%

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

- Is the plot still being cultivated? Are there signs of progress? If so, what percentage has been cultivated?
- Are any new fruit trees being grown on dwarf root stock? The WATA Committee would advise plot holders against letting seedling trees such as Oak or Sycamore take hold on their plots.
- Are grass paths being cut?
- Is there anything potentially dangerous on the plot?

Autumn Season on a Cultivated Allotment Plot



Fig. 7 – AUTUMN 50%



Fig. 8 – AUTUMN 50%

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

- Has the plot been cultivated at all? Are there signs of progress? If so, what percentage has been cultivated?
- 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. 9 – WINTER 50%



Fig. 10 – WINTER 50%

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

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

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



Fig. 11 – WINTER COVERED



Fig. 12 – WINTER COVERED

Other General Allotment Plot Information

- *The 70% of each plot available for open cultivation should be fully cultivated within a complete growing season and produce at least one crop meaning that:*
 - *The plot has been readied for growing*
 - *The plot is well stocked with growing produce relevant to the time of year*
 - *The plot is being prepared for following crops or the following season*



- *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.*
- *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 wildlife area.*
- *Areas left to go fallow as part of crop rotation must be strimmed or covered with [Garden Weed Control Fabric](#) to avoid seed spreading.*

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 Plot Inspections.

Lastly, I would like to reiterate that if you are having any problems whatsoever keeping up with your plot, don't hesitate to contact the WATA Committee on their own plots or on my email below 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. Don't forget, we're here to help.

Many thanks

Mike McNamara

Chair – WATA Committee

chair@woodley-allotments.org.uk