



ALLOTMENT HANDBOOK

ORIGINAL TEXT BY CATHY FEWLASS
REVISED 2018 BY THE LAA COMMITTEE

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Name

Plot Number

Plot size

Annual rent

Contact numbers

Town Council Admin team 01568 611734

Site Manager 01568 611734 or 07587 969691

Please make sure that you advise the Town Council and Allotment Association (if you are a member) of any change of address, phone number(s) or e-mail, so that you can be updated about allotment business.

INTRODUCTION

A warm welcome! We hope that you will enjoy growing and harvesting your vegetables, fruit and flowers on this beautiful allotment site.

This handbook has been written by members of the Leominster Allotment Association (LAA) and offers tenants useful advice about allotment life as well as information about key terms and conditions of our allotment tenancy.

The Town Council is our landlord and is represented by the Town Clerk who

- Formulates the tenancy agreement
- Sets the rental charges
- Manages the allotment budget
- Arranges insurance the allotment boundaries, trackways, pathways, perimeter gates, community shed and composting toilet
- Provides a venue for allotment meetings
- Has responsibility for the Site Manager (Environmental Services Manager) and the Town Council admin team.

The Site Manager (Environmental Services Manager) is accountable to the Town Clerk and is responsible for the operational management of the allotment site and its tenants.

The Site Manager:

- Advises new tenants on plot availability, plot sizes and offers general information about the allotment site
- Ensures that the admin team carries out the following tasks



- Invoicing and receiving rental dues
- Collecting LAA membership fees and issuing membership cards
- Signing of tenancies
- Distributing this Handbook
- Allocating allotment gate keys and receipt of deposit/ and return at end of tenancy
- Maintaining and updating Town Council's allotment database, observing data protection regulations
- Updating of Allotment section on the Town Council website
- Offers and allocates mentors to new tenants
- Monitors the allotment site monthly (with the Chair of the LAA and a representative of the Town Council)
- Co-ordinates the help scheme
- Ensures that vacated plots are cleared and in good order for re-letting
- Provides an interface between the Town Council and the Allotment Association
- Represents the Town Council at allotment meetings
- Liaises with service providers (e.g. groundsmen, water and power companies, landowner)
- Organises the annual awards and supper evening.
- Answers and helps resolve any problems which tenants present
- Produces the Allotment Newsletter
- Passes appropriate communications to the LAA

The site manager has information on the following special areas

- Rootstock For Fruit Trees
- Keeping Chickens on the Allotment
- Bee-Keeping on the Allotment
- Leominster Allotment Association Constitution

The Leominster Allotment Association (LAA) has an elected committee working with and on behalf of its members.

The LAA:

- Provides an interface between the tenants and the Town Council
- Affiliates LAA members to the National Allotment Society (NAS)
- Represents LAA members at regional meetings of the NAS
- Insures the allotments of LAA members for Public Liability for injuries sustained by any persons on their plots
- Insures the allotment site for Public Liability when holding any social events
- Organises annual seed orders from KINGS SEEDS LTD
- Has negotiated discounts of 5% from Philpotts and Hintons for all allotment gardeners showing valid allotment membership cards
- Organises allotment events / allotment participation in town events
- Contributes to the content of the Newsletter
- Initiates and participates in developments and projects in order to improve the allotment site
- Seeks funding to enable the delivery of project plans as appropriate



We all work in harmony to make our allotment environment as good as it can be and we are always eager to hear your thoughts and suggestions on how we can make further improvements.

We wish you a long, happy and successful allotment gardening experience.

OUR ALLOTMENT COMMUNITY

One of the many benefits of having an allotment is being part of a richly diverse group of people with a common purpose of growing vegetables, fruit and flowers within a friendly gardening community.

At this point let us say that we recognise that we all aspire to varying levels of involvement. For some there will be no desire whatsoever to interact socially. That said, most allotment holders wish to be friendly and supportive towards each other.

COMMUNICATION

The most important requirement for any community and probably the most difficult to achieve is effective communication.

LAA committee meetings are held every 2 months at the Town Council offices. The Site Manager and the committee members get together to discuss allotment business, matters raised by plot-holders, any problems or complaints, new developments and to share news. All matters are dealt with in a fair and democratic manner. Minutes of committee meetings are available on the LAA website and a paper copy can be found in the community shed or the Town Council Offices.

The Allotment Association AGM is held in May at the Town Council offices, and all Association members are invited to review the allotment year and elect committee members. New committee members are always welcome as they bring new ideas and energy to the team. AGM minutes are sent to all LAA members. A copy is available on the LAA website, in the community shed or the Town Council Offices.

The Allotment Newsletter is produced in spring, summer and autumn by the Site Manager with the support of the LAA. A copy will be placed in the community shed. You can also receive it by email, view it on the Allotment Association website, or request a copy from the Town Council. The Newsletter contains information about upcoming events, stories about allotment life, hints about gardening and crops etc. Any contributions are welcomed.

Notice Board There is a glass fronted notice board which has emergency contact details, and can be used for notices about allotment events, local events of interest etc.

The LAA website (www.leominsterallotments.co.uk) has pictures and news about the allotment site and allotment activities. It also has a calendar of forthcoming events, a record of all meetings and important documents relating to the allotment site.

The chalkboard on the locked cube – is available for notices – chalk is in the loo.

You can email the LAA committee via leominster.allotments@outlook.com. There is also a Facebook page.



Probably the most effective mode of communication is word of mouth – not usually a problem.

NAS AFFILIATION

We are affiliated to the National Allotment Society (NAS) which holds quarterly regional meetings throughout the West Midlands. Affiliation gives us insurance for our plots and a quarterly magazine (copies in the Community shed). The regional meetings are open to everyone and are an effective way to network with other allotment gardeners and to appreciate the wider picture of 'all things allotment'.

Affiliation also gives us access to **KINGS SEEDS** at greatly reduced prices. Catalogues and order forms are available in August/ September or can be downloaded. There are order deadline dates. Early orders give the Association an additional discount which is used to benefit the allotment site.

CHILDREN

The LAA has an active link with Leominster Junior School, helping with the gardening club and encouraging an interest in growing vegetables and flowers.

You are most welcome to bring children to your allotment. It is important that we share the delights of growing our own produce with a future generation. Children must be supervised. Their safety is of utmost importance. It is vital to minimise risks of incidents and accidents. Please do not allow children on other plots without the consent of the plot-holder.

There are numerous vehicles coming and going so please prevent your children from playing in or near the car parks and access tracks. Check that the site gates are closed.

On your plot there are many opportunities for children to engage with allotment gardening. You might consider allocating them their own area to grow their own vegetables and flowers. Younger children may need child-size tools to make this work easier. Children could start by growing seeds which are easy and reliable – perhaps pumpkins, runner beans, beetroot, radish or flowers like sunflowers and sweet peas.

Apart from the achievement of growing and eating fresh vegetables and picking and enjoying beautiful flowers, it is a wonderful healthy and educational experience encompassing biology and ecology. There are many creative opportunities too – making scarecrows, bug boxes or pretty decorations for the shed or gate.

EVENTS

The social side of allotment life can be an enjoyable diversion from the rigours of food production!

The main annual event is the Harvest Supper and Awards evening, held on the first Friday in October and organised by the Town Council. Everyone brings food to share, and enjoys a good humoured social evening. Prizes are awarded for the best kept allotments.

During the year other social events may be organised depending on the level of enthusiasm, commitment and support of fellow gardeners. We have organised coach trips to gardens of interest, barbeques, produce shows, competitions (scarecrows / pumpkins) and talks about



gardening. The LAA often participates in town events like the Apple Fair, Seed Swap or the Leominster Festival.

SWAP TABLE

The swap table is situated in the first carpark. Here we can share our surplus plants, seedlings and produce with our fellow gardeners.

COMPOSTING TOILET

The beautiful structure was constructed in oak and cedar by a local woodsman. The instructions are clearly displayed on the loo walls. Please read and follow these carefully. If you have any queries please contact the Site Manager.

A volunteer allotment gardener monitors the composting toilet for sawdust, toilet paper and hand cleansing gel.

COMMUNITY SHEDS & GREENHOUSE

The large community shed is situated in the middle of the allotment site. The gate padlock key also opens the padlock on the community shed. There are many books about gardening and copies of the NAS allotment magazine. Copies of LAA committee minutes, the Newsletter etc. are here. There is a First Aid box. Social events are often held in the area just in front of the shed. The shed can provide refuge from the hot sun or the rain.

The smaller shed is fitted with a kitchen sink and running water for times when we have community events.

The Greenhouse alongside the sheds is available for those who wish to grow early seeds. If you choose to use this facility, please keep it clean and tidy.

COMMUNITY FLOWER BEDS

There are 2 areas where flowers are grown for the decoration of the site and to attract bees and other pollinating insects. The first site is by the composting toilet, and the second by the community shed. Help is needed to keep these areas attractively planted and tidy.

HELP SCHEME – TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR ALLOTMENT HOLDERS

This scheme was developed to assist gardeners who are temporarily indisposed, through illness, injury or personal difficulties. The Site Manager will organise support using fellow allotment volunteers.

The Site Manager holds a list of volunteers and the tasks they are willing to do to support other plot-holders in the short term (watering, deadheading, weeding, harvesting, grass cutting, digging etc.), and will match them to the specific needs of the situation. The need to call on support is infrequent and may be only one hour a week, but when required the help given could enable an absent gardener to return undaunted rather than being overwhelmed by an overgrown allotment.

Volunteers should make sure that the Site Manager has their details. Anyone needing temporary help should contact the Site Manager.



FRIENDLY MENTOR

We offer all new allotment holders the option of a mentor or buddy who, as an established and experienced allotmentee, can provide you with advice, encouragement and support. We estimate that a three month period will suffice, but the system is flexible.

If you wish to be a mentor, please contact the Site Manager.

STARTING OUT ON YOUR ALLOTMENT GARDEN

First of all, please read your allotment agreement carefully, it contains a list of DOs and DON'Ts.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

You might be lucky enough to have a plot that you can start planting straightaway, but mostly some basic planning is required. There are many books giving advice about ground preparation and allotment layout. (Some books in the community shed might be useful to you.) Your mentor might be able to help with this.

If your allotment suffers from a surfeit of weeds it may help to work the ground in manageable sections. You can weed, prepare and plant a small area relatively quickly and see the rewards of your labour. You might consider covering other areas with weed suppressant while you tend the first small area. Recommended suppressants are cardboard, thick plastic sheeting, or commercially available woven matting. Please do not use thin plastic because it becomes brittle and disintegrates, the particles will pollute the soil. Carpet is not recommended as a suppressant as it can leach chemicals into the soil, for example organophosphates and formaldehyde.

Initially you may wish to assess your plot for soil types, condition and drainage, the direction of prevailing winds, light and shade and surrounding views before you decide where to position permanent features. These may include paths, raised beds, storage areas, a pond, a shed. Remember you are not allowed concrete bases, so if you choose to have a shed consider placing loose slabs underneath to help extend its life.

Whether you choose to create individual beds or garden without distinct pathways, it helps not to tread on the soil, especially when wet, as the soil becomes compacted and the structure is destroyed.

If you make raised beds, make them no more than 4ft (1.2m) wide so that you can easily reach the middle of the bed from both sides. If you don't intend to have beds, then aim to use a plank to work from, again to avoid soil compaction.

Grass paths between beds look attractive but demand considerable care. Clippings can be added to your compost heap. Lower maintenance paths can be made easily, by laying weed suppressant, cardboard or several layers of newspaper and covering with wood chippings.

Consider areas for permanent planting such as rhubarb, asparagus and perennial flowers.



SHEDS AND POLYTUNNELS

Each tenant is allowed to have a **shed** on the plot. The shed should not exceed 6ft x 4ft (1.6m x 1.2m). Sheds are primarily used for storage and shelter, but can also add character to your plot as well as providing a useful resource for rainwater collection. The sides of the shed can be incorporated into your planting scheme, for example growing flowers that need shelter or for fan trained fruit.

The situation regarding **polytunnels and greenhouses** is a little blurred. These structures must be proportionate to the size of the plot and in the spirit of allotment gardening. Planning permission is not initially required but it imperative to discuss your plans with the Site Manager before installing a greenhouse or polytunnel. Greenhouses and polytunnels can extend the growing season considerably and are especially useful given our unpredictable weather patterns. The range of produce grown can be widened to include more exotic fruit and vegetables. The structures can also help to minimise the risk of tomato blight. Greenhouses and polytunnels must be kept clean to avoid of pests and help achieve optimum performance.

All structures must be of sound construction and be able to withstand high winds. However we are not permitted to erect any buildings with permanent foundations. In high winds polytunnels have become airborne and have damaged other plots. Responsibility for such damage lies with the plot-holder of the polytunnel. All structures must be maintained in a safe and intact state of repair.

TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT

Most gardening books advise that you have a number of essential tools; spade, fork, hand trowel and fork, hoe and secateurs. In addition you will need at least one watering can.

New tools are not necessarily the most durable and can be much more expensive than second hand items. Try local charity shops and car boot sales as well as auction websites or newspaper ads.

If you like old garden tools you could consider 'Tools for Self-Reliance' a voluntary organisation whose function is to recondition tools destined for the poorest countries in Africa. They also recycle lots of garden tools and sell them at workshops and festivals (e.g. Hereford Seed Swap). Such tools are not needed in Africa and are sold to raise funds. The nearest workshop is in Crickhowell.

Taking care of your garden tools will extend their life, so don't leave them outside but keep them clean and lightly oil them regularly after use. Tools such as shears, secateurs and hoes need to be sharpened too.

There is no electricity on the site so any power tools need to be battery operated and used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Such tools are expensive so don't store them in your shed.

When working on your plot please wear good strong boots or stout shoes and gardening gloves for your own safety.



SECURITY

The security of the allotment site and allotment property is extremely important. We have worked closely with our regional Crime Prevention Officer and achieved considerable improvements on the security of the perimeter of the allotment site. In 2009 with the help of the Boy Scouts a native species hedge was planted. Gaps in hedging have been filled with buckthorn, hawthorn and holly. Replenishing hedging is an ongoing process.

Following a successful grant application, the field gates were replaced with security gates including pedestrian access. Both gates and the community shed are padlocked. These access gates **must be closed and locked** – for the safety of those working on the allotment site and to deter intruders and criminal activities (theft, dumping rubbish, etc.). If you suffer damage to your plot you must report this to the Site Manager and the police.

Allotment sites all over the country suffer from occasional episodes of low level crime. It is important that we work together to minimise risk. Be alert to anyone acting in a suspicious manner – but do not approach an intruder if you feel it might put you at risk. Observe from a safe distance and then report the incident to the Site Manager and the Police.

Sheds are not designed for secure storage so do not leave anything of value in them, or any chemicals or inflammable liquids. The Police advise us not to lock sheds as a potential thief could ruin the shed door no matter what is inside. The Police also recommend that tools and equipment are post-code marked. The Site Manager organises regular property marking sessions.

When on your plot it is prudent to let someone know where you are and about how long you expect to be. It is advisable to take your mobile phone with you in case of emergency.

It really helps to look out for each other, reporting anything unusual such as shed doors left open or the spoiling of crops to the Site Manager. A well occupied tidy site with a high level of activity and people gardening is known to deter intruders.

WHAT TO GROW

The best advice really when it comes to growing your fruit, vegetables and flowers is to select those which you and your family, and your friends, will enjoy.

Your mentor, if you choose to have one, will be able to give advice about easy crops to grow if you are new to allotment gardening. This will hopefully ensure early success and give you confidence to be more adventurous! Please do not grow flowers and plants that will become invasive.

Check how much water your crops will require. It can be just as damaging to over-water plants as under-water.

Other considerations may be to grow those crops which are more expensive to buy at the shops and to experiment with unusual varieties. You can take advantage of the 5% discount available from Philpotts and Hinton's (you will need to show your LAA membership card) and buy plants locally, and consider the seeds in the Kings Catalogue.



ORGANIC OR NON-ORGANIC

Our Town Council thoroughly supports the practice of organic gardening. However, we have a choice and the way in which we garden is for each tenant to decide, although we are encouraged to minimise the use of pesticides, herbicides and synthetic fertilizers.

It is important we recognise that we are custodians of the land we use for productive gardening and that we need to conserve and enrich the biodiversity around us.

Organic gardening can benefit our crops, our wildlife and the environment. Improving soil fertility can help to control pests and disease and the use of companion planting will attract beneficial insects and repel some pests. Having a pond or shady area will provide a suitable habitat for frogs and toads that reduce slug population.

Information and advice on organic gardening is available from many sources, including local libraries, the RHS and Garden Organic and other websites. The community shed has books on various aspects of gardening.

USE OF CHEMICALS

The allotment land is leased to the Town Council which aims to ensure that the site is not affected adversely with contaminants.

If you choose to use chemicals, only use products from garden or horticultural suppliers. Always use them in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Liquid and fine granular poisons should be used on a dry windless day only, to prevent contamination of other crops, stored water or neighbouring plots.

Many chemical products have been banned due to their profoundly negative impact upon our environment and it is unlawful to use any of these chemical poisons. Research is still taking place looking into the impact of chemical poisons. Ask the Site Manager for further advice.

When using chemicals you should wear protective clothing and gloves. The products must be stored securely and containers disposed of at the Bridge Street recycling centre.

CROP ROTATION

Crop rotation is the practice of growing vegetables in a way which helps to avoid a build-up of soil borne disorders by interrupting the life cycles of pests. It is particularly beneficial for the organic or near organic gardener.

The purpose of crop rotation is to make sure that no group or individual vegetable occupies the same bed in two consecutive years. Traditionally a 3 or 4 bed system is used as depicted below. Having more beds through which to rotate your crops means a greater length of time before they return to their original bed. Some gardeners use a 5 bed system which allows a bed to lie fallow (or for green manure) every year. Again, information is available in books and websites.

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
Preparation No manure	Preparation Manure No lime	Preparation Organic matter	Preparation Leaf mould in the autumn Organic fertilizer
ROOTS Aliums Beetroot Carrot Celeriac Celery Florence fennel Parsley Parsnip All other roots	POTATOES TOMATOES	LEGUMES Peas Broad beans French beans Runner beans Other peas and beans Sweetcorn	BRASSICAS Brussel sprouts Cabbage Cauliflower Kale Kohl-rabi Oriental greens Swedes & Turnips

FRUIT TREES

We are permitted to grow fruit trees but only on dwarfing root stock. The reason for this is that while we may wish for productive fruit trees, we must also be considerate towards our allotment neighbours. The Site Manager has a paper on 'Fruit Trees on Plots', which is also accessible on the LAA website.

Consider training fruit as cordons, step-overs or espaliers. They can look very attractive and productive while taking up less space and give a sense of achievement.

COMPOST AND MANURES

Composting is an essential component of allotment gardening. It is a wonderful, nutritious plant food and soil improver and can be made for free.

Compost is basically a mix of green garden waste, fruit and vegetable peelings with brown waste such as shredded paper, newspaper and cardboard. You may wish to take your pernicious weeds (e.g. docks, couch grass, nettles) to the tip on Bridge Street where the compost is made at much higher temperatures than domestic systems. The resulting soil conditioner is also sold at Bridge Street.

You can build a compost bin from un-returnable pallets or reclaimed timber. Plastic compost bins can be bought from the council or from garden centres. It is best to have at least 2 compost bins so you can turn the compost easily.

Comfrey is easy to grow and thrives well. Please do not grow wild comfrey, which sets seeds and spreads to encroach on other plot. Look out for the sterile strain Bocking 14 which was developed by LD Hills, founder of the Henry Doubleday Research Association (now Garden Organic). The leaves can be harvested and used to make liquid tomato feed, a potato fertiliser or compost activator or the leaves can be added to your compost heap. Wear gloves when handling comfrey as the leaves can cause irritation. The wilted leaves of



Bocking 14 contain as much nitrogen and phosphorus as farmyard manure and about four times the level of potash. Young nettle leaves also can be used in compost making.

If you do not wish to make your own compost ask a neighbour who might use your garden waste. Please do not dump any garden waste on the allotment site. Dispose of it at the Recycling Centre on Bridge Street.

Well rotted manure is beneficial for soil structure and plants. Fresh manure is very high in nitrogen and will be unsuitable for your plants. Be aware of Aminopyralid – a weed killer sprayed on grassland where horses and cattle graze. The weed killer is excreted by the animals. Applying the dung to vegetable crops results in their failure as the weed killer can stay in the soil for up to 2 years.

Poultry manure has a high nitrogen content and is also unsuitable for direct application to your crops but it is a great activator for the compost heap. The same applies to guinea pig and rabbit manure.

WATER USE

Water tanks

We have mains water supply to water tanks which are conveniently situated around the allotment site. The water supply is turned on around the beginning of April and off approximately the end of October. It is essential that we use mains water sparingly but effectively, not only for the sake of conservation but also because of water charges. We are not permitted to use hosepipes.

You can maximise the effectiveness of watering by doing so either early in the morning or in the evening. Watering in the heat of the day will increase evaporation and plant leaves may be scorched, this will prevent water reaching the roots of your crops.

The most water retentive soil is one which is rich in organic matter such as manure and compost.

When using the water tanks please ensure that you do not contaminate with chemicals, as other plots will be affected as well as wildlife.

Rainwater Collection

Rainwater is preferable to mains water on your crops.

You can easily capture rainwater into a water butt. If you have a building on your plot you can attach guttering. If your water butt is a recycled container, check its previous use and that it does not contain harmful substances. Keep rainwater butts covered.

If you have a greenhouse or polytunnel consider installing an internal rain butt as well. Greenhouse plants dislike cold water. The rain butt would solve this problem as well as acting as a heat store by absorbing heat during the warmth of the day and releasing it at night.

Drinking water

There is a drinking water tap on the first carpark.



CULTIVATION

It is necessary to set standards for plot cultivation to ensure that allotments are used to their full potential and so collectively we can be proud of our allotment community.

Your tenancy agreement states that you are required to cultivate at least 75% of your plot. This includes areas such as an actively managed composting area, green manure beds or a comfrey patch.

The remaining 25% may be used for your shed, a storage area for items such as pots, watering cans, bean poles, access paths and a seating area. It is very important to sit and admire your work!

While it is a requirement that each plot is well cared for, it is also essential that individuality of our plots is encouraged, a characteristic so attractive on any allotment site.

ALLOTMENT MONITORING

The purpose of monitoring is to promote a productive, caring and safe allotment environment and to note any problems in access and on the perimeters. The process is intended to be helpful and supportive rather than intimidating. It is a tool to identify and help with problems ensuring a plot does not become neglected.

Monthly monitoring of the allotments, boundaries and communal areas is carried out by the Site Manager, the LAA chairperson and a representative of the Town Council. The grass paths and gravel trackways are checked, and the site scanned for rubbish dumping. The team monitors the level of cultivation on the plots and checks that weed seed heads are removed, preventing seed dispersal to neighbouring plots.

If a plot is considered to be borderline, the Site Manager will contact the plot-holder just to ask if there is a problem and need some assistance through the help scheme.

If there is still a problem the next month a letter will be sent, formally asking if there are any problems, giving advice on action required and again offering assistance through the help scheme.

The following month if no improvement is evident a second letter is sent, requesting that the plot-holder contact the Site Manager and to return the plot to an acceptable level of cultivation.

The third and final letter is sent where no positive action has occurred. This serves as a notice to terminate the tenancy.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Health and safety are a high priority in public places and allotments are no exception. Accidents and incidents are fortunately few and far between. Here is some sound advice:



EXERCISE:

Regular exercise such as gardening is one of the health benefits of having an allotment. It can feel like very hard work, especially if you are not used to manual labour. Assess your own physical abilities and limitations and pace yourself accordingly. As your stamina increases you will be able to adjust your level of activity.

INFECTIONS:

Although extremely rare there are some infections that can be contracted through gardening. Examples are:

- Lyme disease – from tick bites. If you think you have a tick bite you must seek treatment immediately.
- Toxicara - from soil where infected dog faeces has contaminated the ground
- Tetanus - from bacteria in the soil, which enter the body through wounds, cuts and abrasions. Check your vaccination and immunity status
- Blood poisoning through infected wounds.

FIRST AID

We recommend that you have a basic first aid kit in your shed. You need just a few essentials -

antiseptic wipes, anti-septic ointment or tea-tree oil, gauze to cover a wound, tweezers for removing splinters or thorns, tape, a few plasters, insect bite cream or lavender oil. Clean water is available from the tap by the first car park.

There is a First Aid box in the communal shed. We ask you to replace any items you use.

SUN PROTECTION

In hot sunny weather think about protection from the sun. Wear a hat, long sleeved top or apply (and reapply) sunscreen. It is important to maintain hydration in hot weather and drink plenty of water or soft drinks.

GLOVES AND FOOTWEAR

Gloves are recommended when handling animal manure and compost as there is a risk of bacterial infection. Gloves are strongly advised when handling chemicals and fertilisers to prevent absorption through the skin or causing irritation. Good gardening gloves are widely available.

Wear sensible and protective footwear when gardening to avoid injury, especially when using a garden fork or spade.

A SAFE PLOT

It is important to reduce risk by keeping your plot free of hazards and storing tools, equipment, chemicals and manure correctly. Beware of common hazards like overgrown vegetation, protruding nails, loose fences and posts, garden canes etc. Make sure you protect garden cane tips (bought commercially or recycled yoghurt pots or drink bottles, ping pong balls etc) as it is easy to be scratched or worse by protruding cane ends.

You have a duty of care to anyone who may enter your plot whether or not you have given your permission.



BONFIRES

We are permitted to have bonfires on our plots but we must behave responsibly. Bonfires should be lit after 3pm, and you must be particularly careful if your plot lies under or near the electricity cables. Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 it is an offence to cause a statutory nuisance. This includes smoke, fumes and gasses 'emitted from premises so as to be prejudicial to health or a nuisance'. This can include nuisance created by a bonfire. You should be aware that smoke should not drift across the road.

Consider alternatives to burning green waste as it creates excessive amounts of smoke. It is much better if it is composted. Bonfires are, however, an effective way of disposing of diseased vegetation, most commonly tomatoes and potatoes affected by blight.

Be considerate towards your fellow allotment gardeners and check your neighbours will not be adversely affected by any smoke. Only burn dry vegetative material. Before you light a bonfire check the area for frogs, toads, and hedgehogs. Do not use accelerants, as they may cause an explosion, resulting in possible injury or the fire spreading uncontrollably. Avoid lighting bonfires in windy conditions as the smoke will affect a greater number of people and animals. In addition, the bonfire may be difficult to control.

Never leave a bonfire unattended, and extinguish it fully before you leave your plot. Douse with water if necessary.

Any non-organic materials (non plant waste) such as plastics, household rubbish and old carpets must be removed from the allotment site and safely disposed of at the recycling centre on Bridge Street.

GIVING UP YOUR ALLOTMENT GARDEN

We hope that you will enjoy many happy years of productive gardening on your plot. We are aware that plot-holders circumstances, abilities and needs change. The Town Council offers a range of plot size - mini-plots, quarters, half and full plots. Should the need arise, you could down- or up-size, subject to availability. Contact the Site Manager for more information.

However if you decide to leave allotment gardening you are required to give notice to the Site Manager, in writing or by email, and you will need to return your key and claim your deposit. The Site Manager will discuss the refund rent if appropriate.

You are requested to remove all equipment, structures and rubbish from your plot. If you wish to donate any items to the allotments, the Site Manager will be pleased to discuss this. Also you may wish to harvest your produce and lift perennial plants to take with you. We request you to leave boundary fence, posts and gate for the benefit of future tenants.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND CONTACTS

The Royal Horticultural Society

80 Vincent Square

London

SW1P 2PE

Telephone 020 3176 5800

Email: www.rhs.org.uk

The National Allotment Society (NSALG Ltd)

O'Dell House

Hunters Road

Corby

Northamptonshire NN17 5JE

Telephone: 01536 266576

Email: natsoc@nsalg.org.uk

Garden Organic

Ryton Gardens

Wolston Lane

Coventry

Warwickshire

United Kingdom

CV8 3LG

Telephone 024 7630 3517

Email: enquiry@gardenorganic.org

Kings Seeds

Monks Farm

Coggeshall Road

Kelvedon

Colchester

Essex

CO5 9PG

Telephone 01376 570000

Email: www.kingsseeds.com

Tools for Self Reliance Cymru

Tools Workshop,
Upper House Farm
Standard St
Crickhowell
Powys,
NP8 1BZ
Telephone: 01874 730155
Email: tfsrcymru.org.uk

Allotment and Gardens website

www.allotment-garden.org

Leominster Town Council

Corn Square
Leominster
HR6 8YP

Site Manager

Telephone 01568 611734 or 07587 969691
Email: grounds@leominstertowncouncil.gov.uk

Admin

Telephone 01568 611734
Email: admin@leominstertowncouncil.gov.uk