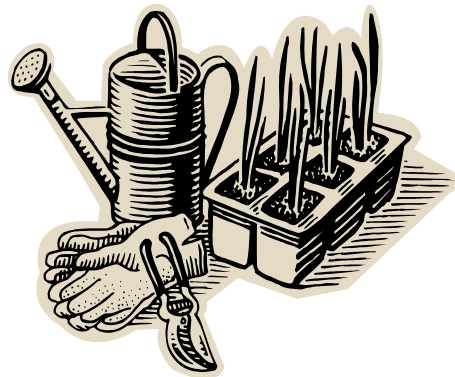


DOVER TOWN COUNCIL

“A Plotters Guide”



A Useful Handbook for Tenants

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The Dover Town Council Aims for the Future

To enable the Council to deliver the best practice management of its allotments 6 aims have been adopted, each having its own objectives. Each aim will be assessed annually to ensure all actions taken are supportive of the objectives.

Aim 1: To have sites which are welcoming and accessible to all

- 1.1 To make sites look positive and inviting throughout
- 1.2 To have good and safe access to sites
- 1.3 To have sites which are inclusive

Aim 2: To have healthy, safe and secure allotments.

- 2.1 To improve site security and make tenants feel safe
- 2.2 To ensure all livestock is well cared for
- 2.3 To have sites free from hazards to health

Aim 3: To have well maintained and clean sites.

- 3.1 To improve waste management
- 3.2 To improve site maintenance
- 3.3 To ensure properly maintained plots and structures

Aim 4: To create allotments that encourage sustainable practice.

- 4.1 To reduce the use of chemicals so as to increase wildlife
- 4.2 To improve water efficiency
- 4.3 To increase recycling of unwanted materials

Aim 5: To improve the management of sites

- 5.1 To provide efficient administration
- 5.2 To improve information available to tenants
- 5.3 To undertake improved monitoring of sites

Aim 6: To promote community partnerships and social inclusion

- 6.1 To identify groups to work in partnership with
- 6.2 To support and develop projects which promote social inclusion
- 6.3 To identify tenants' needs and develop best practice

Welcome to our Plotters Guide

This Guide is free for anyone who rents an allotment garden from the Dover Town Council.

The Guide should be read together with your agreement as it explains all the conditions tenants must abide by as well as other useful information.

It also contains the Allotments 6 Aims for the Future, which layout Dover Town Council's commitment to allotments provision and services.

Any further questions you may have can be asked of the Technical Support Officer at the Council using the contact details provided in the guide.

The success of an allotment site is dependent on cooperation between garden tenants, allotment representatives and those responsible for the management of the site as a whole.

We hope you enjoy your time with us and urge you to talk to us if you have any problems or queries.

WHAT IS AN ALLOTMENT?

An allotment garden is a piece of land; sizes vary but are usually about 250 sq. m., which has been provided by the Town Council for rent. It can be used for growing fruit and vegetables for you and your family. There are also some plots that are used for keeping poultry.

WHERE ARE THE ALLOTMENTS?

Sites are provided at:

Allotment	Address
Pilots Meadow	Adrian Street
Goschen	Off Goschen Road
Northbourne	Off Astor Avenue
Prospect Place	Off Prospect Place
Maxton	Folkestone Road
Pretoria	Green Lane
Astley Avenue	Off Astley Avenue*

*Though this site is owned by the Council it is managed by an allotment holders association.

WHY WOULD I WANT AN ALLOTMENT?

Cultivating an allotment will provide a source of good quality fresh fruit and vegetables. If grown in an organic manner they will reduce exposure to pesticides, herbicides and fungicides. 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 can be a social activity.

WHO CAN HAVE AN ALLOTMENT?

Anyone who lives in the 6 Town Council wards of Dover can apply for an allotment garden by writing to or calling in at the Council Offices.

WAITING LISTS

When sites are full with all gardens let, the Town Council will keep a list of people interested in renting a garden. When a garden becomes available the Town Council 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. Where possible you should plant fruit-trees in the middle of your garden, not at the edges where they may cast shade over neighbouring gardens.

MAINTENANCE OF FENCES AND PATHS

The Town Council is responsible for maintaining the fences, hedges, gates and hard surfaced paths on the sites. Grass mowing on paths between gardens is the responsibility of the allotment gardeners on each side of the path.

COMPOSTING

Most gardeners know how important composting is and we would like to encourage all our tenants to do it. All organic matter such as vegetable waste, grass clippings, hedge trimmings, and even weeds can be used in a compost heap. Leaving weeds to dry out in the sun will make sure they are dead

when you add them to the heap but avoid fleshy perennial weeds such as bindweed as they will continue to grow in your compost. Have two or more heaps, so you can be adding to one while you use the compost from another. Keep your compost in bays made from old pallets or buy a purpose built one. Kent County Council sell a variety from as little as £8. Mix all the materials together and turn as often as you can as this will help to keep the heap open and allow air to circulate which is essential if the compost is to rot down quickly. Adding brown cardboard and scrunched up newspaper will stop the mixture from getting too wet. Nettles and comfrey make good organic activators. Cover the heap with black plastic sheeting to keep the heat and the moisture in. Usually it takes about six months for the heap to break down into dark brown, nutritious compost. Home made compost is an essential part of every organic gardener's garden and is cheap and easy to make, with the benefit of giving a supply of nutritious organic matter to restore the soil and feed and mulch your crops.

RESPECT FOR OTHER GARDENERS

There are nearly 200 allotment gardeners on Dover Town Council sites and almost as many different styles of gardening. It is up to individuals how they choose to work their garden. Traditional allotment gardeners may want to cultivate the entire garden and plant rows of vegetables and flowers. Others may have seating areas, shaped beds or containers of produce. The Town Council encourages gardeners to enjoy their gardening, but please respect other allotment gardeners and remember you have

a duty of care to each other and also visitors to the allotment site.

VISITORS

Any visitors to your plot must abide by all the conditions of the agreement. Do enjoy company while you work but please remember the point above.

ALLOTMENTS ANNUAL MEETING

All tenants are invited to an annual meeting usually held in late November to discuss the condition of the sites, and any suggestions for improvements together with any problems the Council may have experienced during the year. Recommendations are then forwarded to the Allotments Committee for consideration.

REPAIRS AND ENQUIRIES

Have you spotted a damaged fence, leaking water tap or had difficulty opening the lock to your site? If so please ring the Town Council to let us know and we will arrange the repair as quickly as possible.

CONTACTING THE TOWN COUNCIL

If you need information, have an enquiry about your bill or waiting lists, call Dover Town Council on 01304 242625, write to Dover Town Council, Maison Dieu House, Biggin St., Dover, Kent CT16 1DW or email council@dovertown.co.uk

GETTING STARTED

It is our intention that all plots are ready to work when let but if you are faced with

brambles, weeds or compacted soil here are five top tips to get you started:

- Don't try to clear the whole plot in one go, work on one section at a time.
- Cover other areas with weighted down black sheeting or cardboard. Do not use carpet.
- Cut brambles and burn; dig out roots of these and other pernicious weeds such as couch grass, bindweed and ground elder.
- Don't try to dig really wet or dry soil.
- Fork over the soil again and mulch with manure or compost. Move onto the next section!

LIVESTOCK AND BEE-KEEPING

You must not keep animals or livestock on your garden. Dover Town Council is keen to encourage beekeeping but for safety reasons only allows bee-keeping at certain locations. Bee-keepers must be affiliated to the National Bee keepers Association. There are also specific sites allocated for keeping poultry but only with prior agreement. Insurance must be provided and suitable accommodation which has been approved as fit for purpose. Food and waste must be properly dealt with as any vermin problem which can be traced back to your plot could result in the cost being recharged to you.

TRY ORGANIC GROWING

Organic gardeners avoid using artificial fertilizers and pesticides that may harm

wildlife and people. There is a strong organic gardening movement throughout the country and locally.

Organic gardening is all about loving your soil and using the wildlife on your plot to your advantage.

- Mulching with organic materials, leaf mold, manure or compost
- Growing green manures such as grazing rye, buckwheat and field beans on empty soil
- Using preventative pest control
- Companion planting
- Encouraging garden friends, ladybirds, bees, frogs and birds.
- Feeding with comfrey or nettle juice!

Contact Garden Organic for more information

ROTATING YOUR CROPS

The best way to reduce repeated crops failing from the same disease is by growing each vegetable group in a different place each year. This also prevents the soil becoming depleted of a particular nutrient that one group needs.

A simple rotation is shown below.

Year	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3
1	Root Crops	Brassicas Cabbage,	Pod & Salad

	Potatoes Carrots, parsnips	sprouts	Crops Lettuce, peas, onions
2	Brassicas	Pod & Salad Crops	Root Crops
3	Pod & Salad Crops	Root Crops	Brassicas

As your plot flourishes you can try extending the rotation over up to seven years. Keep weeds at bay as well. Remember the saying "one year's weed is seven years' seeds".

YOUR ALLOTMENT AGREEMENT

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

SUBLETTING AND GARDEN SHARING

You may have a private arrangement to share your garden with a friend; however you will still be the tenant. The garden can only be held in one name at a time. The tenant is always responsible for the maintenance of the garden even if he/she chooses to share.

If you decide to give up your garden, you must not pass it on to your friend directly.

You must let the Town Council know you intend to give up your garden. If there is no waiting list we will then arrange a new agreement with your friend.

LIMITS ON THE USE OF YOUR GARDEN

You must use your garden only as an allotment and leisure garden for growing flowers, fruit and vegetables and for no other purpose.

DOGS

- Dog owners must keep their dogs on a lead while on the site.
- Dog owners must make sure their dogs do not damage other gardeners gardens.
- Dog owners must comply with Dog Fouling By-laws and pick-up and dispose of dog litter.

ENDING THE ALLOTMENT AGREEMENT

In some circumstances the Council can end the allotment agreement with you. The agreement shall end following the death of the tenant. The tenancy may also be ended in the following ways:

By the Council giving the tenant twelve month's notice in writing, expiring on or before the 6th April or on or after the 29th September in any year.

Or

By giving three month's notice in writing, if the land is required for building, mining, or any industrial use, or for roads or sewers needed for these uses, basically any purpose for which the allotment garden has been appropriated under any statutory provision as stated in the Allotment Act 1922

Or

By giving one month's notice in writing if the rent or part of the rent is in arrears for forty days or more, whether it has been legally demanded or not. Or if the tenant has breached the conditions in the allotment agreement or if the tenant becomes bankrupt.

PROBLEM TREES

Allotment gardeners must not remove or prune trees on allotment sites. If a tree is causing you difficulty please call the Town Council. We will inspect the tree and deal with the problem if possible. Preferably do not allow any tree or shrub on your plot to grow to this stage unreported, it will suck moisture from the soil and could overshadow crops and damage property.

CARING FOR YOUR ALLOTMENT GARDEN

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. Do not use carpet, as the backing may rot down releasing harmful chemicals into the soil and causing pollution. Do not stockpile timber, sheeting or other materials, as they may become a hazard and also a breeding ground for rodents. Your garden will be inspected approximately every 3 months. If not cultivated or if there is a breach of the agreement you will be written to and asked to bring the plot up to the required standard in the timescale indicated. The plot will be re-inspected at the stated date and if not up to standard your tenancy will be terminated. If you have temporary problems please let the Town Council know. We will be able to advise on what can be done. Under certain circumstances we may be able to offer assistance.

BRINGING COMPOSTS AND MANURE ON TO THE SITE

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 on to the site more material than you can use during the year. You must 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 the allotment garden within 24 hours of delivery.

WATERING YOUR CROPS

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.

First of all catch as much rainwater as possible and store in covered containers. If you need to use the tap spare a thought for others who may be waiting, limit your watering to half an hour. Don't leave hoses or sprinklers running when you are not on the allotment site. Never leave hoses or sprinklers running overnight. Remember that hosepipe and sprinkler bans imposed by the water companies apply to allotment gardeners and they can fine you for ignoring a ban.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please let the Town Council know your new address 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 garden. You could even lose your garden.

SHEDS AND GREENHOUSES

You can request permission to build 1 shed and 1 greenhouse per 250square metres of plot not exceeding 2m' x 2m' x 1.8m' high by submitting a written application with sketch plan. Application forms are available from the Town Council offices. Buildings must be within your garden boundary and not obstruct paths between gardens. They can be built from wood or prefabricated metal kits and should be painted brown or green. We recommend you to position buildings on the southern edge of your garden so shade falls on your garden rather than on your neighbours. Sheds and greenhouses should be removed upon termination of the tenancy;

however an agreement may be made with the incoming tenant if it is appropriate. Should the shed or greenhouse remain on the site longer than one week from the termination date it shall become the property of the Town Council.

SOIL & MINERALS

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

RIGHT OF ENTRY

Councillors, Officers of the Council, and others employed by the Council may enter, inspect and carry out maintenance work on your allotment garden without notice. For this reason we must have a copy of any key needed to gain entry.

FENCES

Either the Council or private landowners in the bordering properties own the boundary fences of the allotment site. You must not move or damage any fences. In particular please do not pile rubbish against fences as this can cause them to lean and rot. Gardens may be fenced; however permitted height of 1m, you must not use barbed or razor wire, or any other materials that might injure passersby, such as doors or windows with glass panels as these often break leaving dangerous glass shards on your garden. Written permission needs to be granted the same as for structures. Please also avoid brightly coloured materials as they often cause offence to neighbours, and take care not to obstruct or narrow the pathways.

DISPOSAL OF RUBBISH

The Council would ask each gardener to consider composting as an alternative to disposal by the Council. Non-green waste should be removed or safely stored until skip day. The Council will provide a skip at each site at least once a year. 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 and unused allotment gardens.

GIVING UP YOUR GARDEN

When you decide you no longer want your allotment garden please let us know in writing or by telephoning our office. This will end your agreement. Please do not wait until we invoice you for the rent. We would ask for one months notice but you can give up your garden at any time. By letting us know early, we are able to arrange to have your garden taken over as soon as you stop working it. This will help you make arrangements if you have sheds etc. that can be sold to the incoming gardener, get the new gardener off to a flying start and makes sure the garden is not overgrown. Due to the administrative costs involved, we are unable to refund rent for any part of the year that is remaining from the date that you give up your garden. Remember your allotment garden must be in an acceptable condition when you give up your tenancy, otherwise you may be required to pay compensation to have the allotment garden brought up to an acceptable condition.

SECURITY

You must keep all gates closed and locked when not in use. This prevents trespass and illegal tipping.

STATUTORY NOTICES

In special circumstances the law of the land requires the Council to give notice to tenants. For example the Council must issue a statutory notice to terminate your agreement. Any Council Officer can sign the notice. The Town Council will serve notice in one of the following ways:

1. Writing to you at the last address you have given to us.
2. Putting the notice in a prominent place on the allotment site.

YOUR RENT

You, the allotment gardener are a tenant of the Council and agree by signing The Agreement to pay the yearly rent in advance at the rate set by the Council. Your rent is due on 1st April and the Council will issue a reminder invoice. The rent is due in advance. A discount is deducted from rent paid before the due date.

HOW TO PAY YOUR RENT

You can pay your rent in cash or by cheque at the Council Offices. Alternatively you can pay by post by sending a cheque made payable to Dover Town Council to Maison Dieu House. For security reasons please do not send cash through the post.

BURNING RUBBISH

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. 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. The council has

set a period from 6pm or dusk whichever is earlier to 7am for burning and not during July and August. You must not burn green or damp materials or household rubbish that will cause smoke. Never leave a fire unattended! If you have a problem with smoke from a neighbouring property contact Dover District Council's Environmental Health Section on 01304 821199 for assistance.

ADVERTISEMENTS

You must not erect notices or advertisements on allotment property.

USEFUL ADDRESSES & CONTACTS

Dover Town Council
Maison Dieu House, Biggin Street
Dover, Kent CT16 1DW
Tel: 01304 242625
www.dovertown.co.uk
Email: council@dovertown.co.uk

British Bee-keeping Association
National Beekeeping Centre
Stoneleigh Park,
Warwickshire CV8 2LZ
Tel: 02476 696679
Web Site: www.bbka.org.uk

Garden Organic
Ryton Organic Gardens
Coventry. CV83LG
Tel: 02476 303517
Web Site: www.gardenorganic.org.uk
E-mail: enquiry@gardenorganic.org.uk

National Society of Allotment and
Leisure Gardeners Ltd., (NSALG)
O'Dell House, Hunters Road
Corby, Northamptonshire NN17 5JE
Tel: 01536 264509
Web Site: www.nsalg.org.uk/
E-mail: natsoc@nsalg.org.uk

Allotments: A Garden Holders Guide
Copies available from
DTLR. P.O. Box 236, Wetherby
West Yorkshire LS23 7NB
Tel: 0870 1226236
E-mail: atlr@twoten.press.net

Also download via Allotment
Regeneration Initiative Web Site:
www.farmgarden.org.uk/ari

Amateur Gardening Magazine
Westover House, West Quay Road
Poole, Dorset. BH15 1JG
Tel: 01202 440 840
www.amateurgardening.com

Astley Avenue Association
Mr Kemp

Telephone 01304 213938

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Happy Gardening!