

PATCHWAY PRETORIA ROAD ALLOTMENT SOCIETY

HANDBOOK AND GENERAL RULES

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Pretoria Road Allotments

Pretoria Road Allotments were established in 1947 when Patchway was in its infancy. The site was previously agricultural land which was converted for use as allotments. At the time the soil was tested at three different sites in Patchway and the land alongside Pretoria Road was found to be the most suitable, no doubt helped by the underground water table that was recently identified in the area.

The site is owned by Patchway Town Council and is managed by the Patchway Pretoria Road Allotment Society via an elected Committee, all of whom are unpaid volunteers.

We have a mixture of Full plots (Approx. 90feet in length), Half Plots (Approx. 45 feet) and a few Quarter Plots (Approx. 23 feet). We also have Raised Beds for disabled users.

We have a kitchen and shop on site, and these are available to all members whenever there is a committee member in attendance. We also have toilets and these are available to members at any time by means of a key code entry system.

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Introduction

Welcome to the Society and to your allotment site. This booklet is to explain the rules of the Society and what can and can't be done on your allotment and on site generally. This booklet also explains how the site is managed and who to contact if you have any problems.

We include some snippets of information in this booklet which we hope will prove useful to you.

Contacting your committee

If you have any problems or queries, you can contact any member of the committee in person when they are on site or failing this you can email us on allotmenteer@outlook.com (We do not have an official postal address.)

YOUR ALLOTMENT AGREEMENT

Your annual tenancy is between you and the Pretoria Road Allotment Society. When you sign the agreement, you are agreeing to...

- * Pay the rent on time each year.
- * Look after the plot and cultivate it properly.
- * Maintain the paths surrounding your plot.
- * Return your key to a committee member if you give up your plot for any reason. The key always remains the property of the society. Copies of the key must not be made. Should you need an extra key, you may purchase an additional key from the committee.
- * Make use of your plot for your own growing purposes. Subletting your plot is strictly forbidden.
- * If you give up your plot, you cannot hand it over to someone else. You must hand it back to the committee, who will decide who to let it to.
- * Your tenancy starts on the day you sign your agreement and is renewable at the society's discretion at the end of September each year when your annual rent is due. You may pay your rent at any time during September, but it must be paid by 1st October at the latest or you will be in arrears and subject to a £10 surcharge.
- * Abide by the rules set out in this handbook.

WAYS TO PAY YOUR RENT

Rents are made up of three parts - Rent, Water rates and Membership fees. If you are a new member, you will also be charged a Key Deposit and a Plot Deposit. These items are reviewed each year and notice of any change will be emailed to members and posted on the notice board in the kitchen. Rent can be paid by cash or cheque direct to any committee member. You may also attend the AGM and pay your rent direct to the treasurer. Please ensure that when paying rent, you clearly state your name and plot number.

KEY AND PLOT DEPOSITS

New members pay a Key and a Plot Deposit. The key deposit is refundable when you vacate the plot for any reason, provided the key is handed back. The plot deposit is refundable after three years membership, provided the plot is in good and acceptable condition. If you leave prior to the three year period, then a refund will only be made if the plot is in a good condition and needs no work from the committee before it can be re-let.

CHANGES TO CIRCUMSTANCES

If you change address or your contact details change (email, phone number etc.), you must tell us as soon as possible. We will not be responsible for letters or emails not received by you, if details have changed and we were not informed.

NOTICE TO QUIT

The plots are regularly inspected and if your plot is not being cultivated or is overgrown, or if your paths are not being regularly mowed, you will receive a warning letter from the committee. After 14 days your plot will be checked again and if nothing has been done to remedy the situation, you will receive a second letter telling you that you must put matters right or forfeit your plot. If the plot still remains unsatisfactory after this, you will be given notice to quit. We do not want to take this sort of action and will always listen to any problems you may have and make a decision based upon that. Any emails you receive will always give you information on how to contact us.

We will give notice to quit to any member who is 14 days or more in arrears on rent following the 1st October deadline. We do not accept reasons such as being on holiday or forgetting when rents are due, as notice of rents due and the dates etc, are posted at the kitchen for all to see and it is up to you to make arrangements for your rent to be paid on time. As landlords, Patchway Town Council may also choose to serve notice to quit on tenants with appropriate notice, as defined in law.

CARING FOR YOUR PLOT

Your most important responsibility as a tenant, is to look after and maintain your plot. This means you must keep your plot free from weeds and you must keep the plot safe and tidy and free from rubbish. The plot must be free from hazards e.g. glass and scrap metals. As a tenant, you have a duty of care to make sure that your plot does not present a health or safety hazard to you or to anyone else.

If you are temporarily not using a portion of your plot, you may cover it with a tarpaulin or weed suppressing fabric. We DO NOT allow thin polythene sheeting or carpet to be used as both of these will break down and cause damage to the soil and any machinery which may be used in the future.

We appreciate that it may take a few months to bring your plot up to a good standard of cultivation. If your personal circumstances change, meaning that you are physically unable to cultivate your plot, please tell the committee so that this can be taken into account when plot inspections are carried out

If you decide to give up your plot, you can end your tenancy by telling the committee in writing or by telling a committee member. Once you tell us you are giving up, you then have 7 days in which to remove anything from your plot that you wish to retain. If you wish to wait and harvest crops, then let us know and we will make allowances for this, within reason and provided you are not retaining use of the plot past the rent renewal date. We cannot make refunds of any rent already paid, but we will return your key deposit when it is handed to us. We will also return any plot deposit you may have paid, provided the plot is in reasonable condition and not overgrown. Remember, it is your responsibility to clear your plot when you vacate it for any reason.

REMEMBER – Weeds continue to grow all year round, so don't assume that tidying your plot in the Autumn and leaving it untouched until Spring will be enough. Allotment gardening is a 12 months a year job.

WHAT CAN I GROW?

You can grow any vegetables, fruit and some flowers, including fruit bushes, for home consumption. You can grow trees, provided they are from dwarf stock, are not allowed to grow more than 2 metres (or 6 feet) tall and are kept under reasonable control. Trees should be centrally planted and not allowed to encroach on paths or neighbouring plots. Not more than a quarter of your plot may be used to grow flowers.

- You are strictly forbidden to grow any produce for resale or for supplying a business of any description. Likewise you are expressly forbidden to grow any produce for the purpose of extracting illegal substances. If you break this rule, you are liable to forfeit your plot.

LIMITS ON THE USE OF YOUR PLOT

Your allotment must only be used for growing vegetables, fruit and flowers. You may not camp or stay on it overnight. You may not turn part of it into a play area for children.

SHEDS, GREENHOUSES AND POLYTUNNELS

We allow the use of sheds, greenhouses and polytunnels, provided they are not more than 182cm by 122cm (6ft by 4ft) with a ridge height of not more than 182cm (6ft). All greenhouses and similar structures must be polycarbonate or toughened glass (standard glass is **not** permitted). All structures must be safe and secure and not pose any risk to neighbouring plots and plot holders; they **must not** be erected on concrete bases. All structures are erected at your own risk and will not be covered by any form of insurance. Sheds, greenhouses and polytunnels must be maintained by the tenant and removed from site when a tenancy is given up. Only sheds in shades of green or brown will be permitted. **No more than one shed and one greenhouse are permitted per tenancy.**

PLOT NOTICES

All tenants should display their plot number in a prominent position on their plot.

RIGHT OF ENTRY

Councillors, officers of the Town Council and others employed by Patchway Town Council have the right to enter the site to inspect it and to carry out work, without notice.

MAINTENANCE OF PATHWAYS

Patchway Town Council is responsible for the maintenance of the main paths on site. There must be a small path of at least 45 cm (18 inches) between each allotment plot and as a tenant, you are responsible for the maintenance and mowing of this path. For a small fee, you may hire a mower and strimmer from the committee to support this task.

MAINTENANCE OF FENCES

Patchway Town Council is responsible for the maintenance of the perimeter fences that bounds the site. If your plot is near such fencing, please do not grow plants close to the fence or prevent the council from accessing the fence in any way.

We do not allow fencing and hedges around individual plots. Barbed wire must not be used on site.

You may grow a short, low hedge around **parts** of your plot to provide shelter for crops and it must be maintained in a tidy condition and must not exceed 91cm (3 feet) in height. Hedging must be removed if you vacate your plot for any reason.

REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

If you spot a broken padlock, a damaged fence or leaking tap or any other problem on site, please report it to a committee member.

WAITING LIST

The Committee holds a waiting list of people living within the BS34 postcode area, who would like a plot. Existing tenants who would like a further plot will have to go on the waiting list and take their turn for such a plot.

WATER ON SITE

You are encouraged to set up a water butt on your plot to catch rainwater. We have also provided extensive water harvesting stations around the site and water from these should always be used before resorting to the use of mains water. Mains water will normally be made available from 1st March or when the rainwater harvesting stations are running low and will be shut off at the end of September each year.

The use of hosepipes, sprinklers and other irrigation systems is strictly forbidden. You may only use buckets and watering cans. Water is a precious commodity and should be used sparingly. Most plants need far less water than we habitually give them and will be much stronger if watered only when they really need it.

If water rates increase, the Committee reserve the right to pass these rises on via your annual rent.

COMPLAINTS

If you are unhappy about any aspect of the way in which the site is being managed or if you have a complaint about the way in which you have been treated, you should put your complaint in writing and hand it to any Committee member or send via email. The complaint will be raised at the next committee meeting, unless the problem is of an urgent nature, when an emergency meeting may be called.

BEHAVIOUR AND COMPLAINTS

You, or anyone who comes on site with you, must not cause a nuisance or annoyance to others. You are responsible as a plot holder, for the conduct and activities of anyone you allow on the allotment. It is not possible to list everything that may cause nuisance but examples include:

- *Rowdy behaviour, excessive noise, shouting or swearing
- *Failing to maintain boundaries
- *Going onto other plots without permission
- *Harvesting produce from other plots without permission
- *Dumping household rubbish on site
- *Failing to comply with the rules outlined in this handbook

You must not harass, intimidate or abuse anyone on the site. This includes offensive behaviour directed at people because of age, gender disability, race or sexual orientation, religion, or beliefs. Likewise you must not make malicious allegations against people.

The Society will not tolerate any of the foregoing and will take action against anyone who carries out any of the above offences. In the event of a dispute between tenants, the Committee will investigate and its decision shall be final.

INTERFERENCE WITH PROPERTY

You may not damage, interfere with or take property belonging to the Council from around the site. This includes cutting any trees or taking any organic matter.

BONFIRES AND RUBBISH DISPOSAL

Bonfires are not permitted on site. The Committee is allowed, by arrangement with the Town Council and the Fire Brigade, to hold one bonfire night per year. This is to dispose of rotten wood etc. Plot holders must compost as much of their waste as possible on their plots. If you need help or advice on this, there is a notice on our website and this is also displayed on the notice board at the Kitchen area. We do have a green waste area and this is signposted. Please only use this for excess green waste, which you are unable to compost on your plot. Please tip responsibly. **ALL PLASTIC AND WASTE MATERIAL MUST BE TAKEN HOME AND DISPOSED OF.**

BRINGING MATERIALS ONTO THE SITE

Plot holders may bring green waste, such as grass clippings, cuttings and vegetable waste onto their plots for the purpose of making compost. Manure and bagged compost may also be brought onsite and stored on your plot. Please remember that humans are at risk of infection from handling animal manure. E-coli bacteria is especially prevalent in fresh manure, so good hand hygiene is necessary.

The Allotment society arranges an annual delivery of manure which plot holders can order in advance via the committee. Where manure is left on a main pathway, you must remove it within 7 days.

COMPOSTING

This is a cheap and easy way of providing your plot with good food for your soil and ultimately anything you plant. It is rich in nutrients. It conditions heavy soil, making it easier to work and improves the structure of your soil. It also increases the level of biological activity, which is vital for successful plant growth.

***DO COMPOST:** Fruit and vegetable scraps, Tea bags and coffee grounds, crushed egg shells, grass cuttings, soft prunings, leaves, shredded paper and cardboard, garden and pond plants.

***DON'T COMPOST:** Fat, Bones, meat, fish, cooked vegetables, woody material, coal and ash, animal litter, dairy products, shiny card, hard objects, diseased plants.

Compost bins are available from South Gloucestershire Council. Alternatively, build your own. Make sure it is safe and sound.

KEEPING LIVESTOCK

The keeping of any livestock including bees is prohibited on the site.

DOGS

Plot holders may bring their dogs on site, but they must be kept on a lead at all times and are not permitted to run free or trespass onto other plots. Plot holders must clean up after their dogs, just as you would elsewhere.

VERMIN

Vermin infestation is a serious threat to health because of the numerous diseases which rats carry. We are keen to keep the site free of vermin. Please avoid any practices which could encourage vermin. Overgrown plots and piles of rubbish will attract rats, so keep your plot tidy. If you see evidence of vermin (burrows, tracks, droppings) please inform the local council immediately.

FOXES

There has been a family of foxes living on or near the site for many years. Apart from the occasional flattened plant or freshly dug hole, their presence is hardly noticed. They do carry disease, so don't encourage them by feeding.

USE AND STORAGE OF CHEMICALS

We discourage the use of chemical pesticides on the allotment site. If you choose to use sprays, please take account of weather conditions when spraying to avoid spray going onto other plots. If using products, please consider using those that do not harm the environment, people, and animals.

You must not contaminate any water supplies. You must comply with the law about the use of pesticides and chemicals, which must be on an approved list for use in the UK. It is illegal to store and use out of date chemicals.

For safety reasons, you are not allowed to store chemicals on site.

SECURITY

Patchway Town Council and the Committee endeavour to keep the site as safe as possible. We do however, rely on tenants to keep us informed of any problems. If you are concerned about any aspect of site security, please contact any member of the committee. Neither the Committee nor the Council can take responsibility for the loss of belongings through criminal activity. You are advised to have your own insurance for tools and equipment etc.

Please report any break-ins and or thefts to the Committee and most importantly, to the police. For crimes in progress ring 999 or for less urgent matters ring 101.

Generally the allotment site is a fairly safe and secure area and we do whatever we can to maintain this, however it is not possible to make the site a risk free zone. Please bear in mind the following.

- *Ensure you keep your tetanus injections up to date
- *Observe basic hygiene rules when handling manure, chemicals and soil
- *Some tenants spend lots of time on their plots. Make sure you tell someone where you are and how long you expect to be
- *Report any hazards on site to the Committee as soon as possible
- *Always store sharp tools safely
- *Report any crime or suspicious behaviour to the Police and the Committee.

EQUIPMENT STORAGE

Storage of tools and equipment is entirely at your own risk and is not covered by any insurance that the Committee or Town Council hold. We discourage the storage of expensive tools on individual plots. The allotment has two storage containers where plot holders may store equipment, subject to space limitations. You will need to pay for a key for such storage.

VEHICLES ON SITE

You may bring your car on site, but you must lock the gates behind you when you enter and when you leave. Vehicles are not permitted to drive on the main paths as this can damage the pathways and you may get stuck.

The only vehicles permitted on the main pathways will be emergency vehicles and the farmer delivering manure as agreed with the committee.

We do provide some parking areas, but there will always be limited parking available. Therefore, if you live locally we suggest you walk to and from the site, unless you have heavy items to carry.

TIPS FOR NEW PLOT HOLDERS

- Plan your plot – A well planned plot is more likely to be successful. Good gardens don't just happen.
- Decide what to grow – Grow what you know you will use and find out the requirements of the plants.
- Don't be afraid to ask – As a rule, gardeners are friendly and helpful and some have years of valuable experience to pass on.
- Don't try to do too much at once – Do a bit at a time. A little bit done properly is more likely to be more successful than a lot done in a hurry.
- Be prepared to accept failure – It happens to everyone at times.
- The right tools – Try to have the right tools to hand for particular jobs. Look after them, as this makes life easier.
- Enjoy your plot – If you enjoy it, you will look after it. If you look after it your chances of success are much higher. If you allow your plot to become a chore, you can almost guarantee failure.

GOOD LUCK AND GOOD GARDENING.

USEFUL NAMES AND ADDRESSES

National Association of Allotments and Leisure Gardens (NSALG)

Telephone: 01536 266576

Email: natsoc@nsalg.demon.co.uk

Website: WWW.nsalg.org.uk

National Allotment Gardens Trust (NAGT)

Telephone: 02363 379175

Website: WWW.nagtrust.co.uk

Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens

Telephone: 0117 9231800

Email: admin@farmgarden.org.uk

Website: WWW.farmgarden.org.uk

Garden Organic

Telephone: 0247 630 3517

Website: WWW.gardenorganic.org.uk

WWW.allotments-uk.com

This is a directory of allotment links and information.

Royal Horticultural Society (RHS)

Telephone: 0203 176 5800

Email: info@rhs.org.uk

Bristol Water

Leak line and telephone number 0800 801011

Patchway Town Council

Calicroft House, Roadway Road

Patchway

Bristol

Telephone: 01454 868530

Email@ clerk@patchwaytowncouncil.gov.uk

USEFUL PUBLICATIONS

Kitchen garden magazine

The Allotment Handbook by Caroline Foley

ISBN: 1-84330-583-6

Allotment Gardening

ISBN: 1-903998-54-9

Green Essentials Organic Guides

ISBN: 1-904-60121-9

The Blue Book – A guide to approved chemicals in the UK

Available from HSE.

JUST A FEW REMINDERS.....

REMEMBER

TO LOCK THE GATE WHEN YOU ENTER AND WHEN YOU LEAVE

TO KEEP YOUR PLOT TIDY, WEED FREE AND TO MOW THE PATHS

TO USE RAINWATER WHEREVER POSSIBLE, INSTEAD OF MAINS WATER

TO TAKE HOME ALL PLASTIC AND WASTE MATERIALS

TO LOOK AT THE NOTICES THAT ARE PUT UP TO KEEP YOU INFORMED

AND LASTLY.....

ENJOY YOUR PLOT !