Updated July 2026

SHEPHERD'S HILL ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION

TENANTS' HANDBOOK of FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Haringey Council will have given you a copy of the Tenancy Agreement and Notes for New Allotment Tenants. This Handbook covers some additional local rules and guidelines for Shepherd's Hill Allotments Association members which reinforce the documents from Haringey Council. All documents can be found on our website http://www.shepherdshillallotments.co.uk/

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1. What does the site committee do?

The Shepherd's Hill Allotments Association has an elected committee of volunteers. The AGM and elections usually take place in April. Committee members meet regularly and meeting minutes are published on the allotment website. The committee aims to work collaboratively with Haringey Council on your behalf to uphold the Tenancy Agreement, to ensure that the site is maintained for optimal use and to uphold the right of every tenant to the peaceful enjoyment of their allotment plot.

To this end, committee members undertake a number of key functions: they liaise with Haringey Council, manage the waiting list, let plots to new tenants, support probationers, manage the Trading Shed, maintain the website, stay aware of maintenance issues, manage the site finances, send out regular newsletters and communications, coordinate site community events and volunteer working parties.

A committee member represents the site at the Haringey Allotment Forum, http://groups.yahoo.com/group/haringeyallotmentsforum/ The forum, which comprises all sites across the borough, meets every two months, usually on a Saturday at Bruce Castle in Tottenham, all are welcome.

The Shepherd's Hill Allotment site is large with over 200 plots. Every tenant is encouraged to volunteer in some capacity no matter how small to help undertake the many tasks required to maintain the effective running of the site. Opportunities to volunteer for specific tasks are regularly advertised by the Site Committee.

You can contact the Site Committee via email info@shepherdshillallotments.co.uk This Handbook is regularly updated by the Site Committee in response to questions and issues that arise. We hope it proves useful.

2. I'm new to the site and have an overgrown plot to clear. What do I do with all the stuff I am uncovering?

• Compost or recycle as much as possible on your own plot.
• The Haringey Recycling Centre is in Western Road, Wood Green.
• Please do not simply dump green or other waste anywhere on the site, this is in breach of your Tenancy Agreement.

3. Is it OK to have a bonfire?

- Bonfires are only permitted between **November 1st – end of February**.
- Tenants should consider carefully whether there is an alternative to having a bonfire and keep bonfires to an absolute minimum in the interests of environmental and human health.
- Avoid having bonfires when Sunday Barn events are taking place.
- Wherever possible **use an incinerator** rather than an open bonfire. Incinerators burn at higher temperatures, reducing harmful emissions.
- Remember your tenancy agreement stipulates that if you are asked to extinguish a nuisance bonfire by a neighbour, tenant or otherwise, you **must** do so immediately.
- Always make sure you **only burn dry natural materials**. NEVER burn synthetic materials such as plastics and rubber or treated and painted wood.
- Further bonfire guidance from Haringey can be read on our website (but note that SHA has a more restrictive period when bonfires are permitted).

4. Is it OK to walk around the site?

Please do. It can be inspiring to see what other plot holders are up to. But please stick to the footpaths at all times. And never wander on to another tenant's plot unless you have been invited to do so.

5. Can I bring my family and friends, is it OK to have a picnic or BBQ?

• Guests are welcome but should always be accompanied by the tenant.
• They should not wander around the site unescorted or go onto any other plot, including vacant plots.

- BBQs are permitted on site, but we ask you to consider the environmental impact of burning, and if possible to use eco-friendly alternatives to charcoal and fire-lighters. Also have due regard for any nuisance to your neighbours.
- Firepits are considered in the same way as bonfires and only allowed between November and end of February.

6. Can friends help me on my plot?

Haringey has strict rules about helpers. Please refer to the Tenancy Agreement, the Haringey Notes and Responsibilities for New Allotment Tenants and the Haringey Allotment Service Note on Sole Tenants, Joint Tenants, Co-Workers and Casual Helpers. All are on the site website.

7. I have kids who are keen to come too. Is there anything I should bear in mind?

• On the one hand, the site is a great opportunity for children who are interested to learn about how to grow food.
• However, the site is not a playground.
• It is not suitable for ball games, and there are all manner of potential dangers; rusty corrugated iron, ponds, unsafe structures. Children should be supervised at all times.
• All tenants have a right to get on with their gardening in peace and quiet, and you should ensure that any children you bring consider their neighbours' sensitivities and respect their rights.

8. Can I bring my dog to the plot?

Yes, if they are kept on a lead at all times, any fouling is cleared up immediately and they do not cause a nuisance or distress to other plot holders.

9. Can I use petrol driven power tools?

Yes, strimmers, mowers and rotavators are fine, but please be aware of noise pollution. Please DO NOT use any power tools (petrol or electric) after 1pm on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

10. Is it OK to bring a vehicle onto the site?

• Yes, but please be aware that no one has a right to do so.
• Parking at the Wood Vale gate can get very congested and pedestrian access is sometimes obstructed, which is particularly unhelpful to people wheeling barrows. At busy times it is best to park in the street.
• There are purpose-built bicycle parking facilities in the Trading Shed yard and at the Wood Vale gate.
• Parking in the Trading Shed yard is restricted for specific events or activities such as the Annual Plant Sale in May, Potato Sunday in February and for Trading Shed deliveries throughout the year.

11. Is it OK to leave the main perimeter gates unlocked?

No, the site is not open to the general public and we do not wish to encourage strangers to wander in. Please keep all perimeter gates locked at all times (except the main Montenotte Road gate during trading shed opening hours).

12. Who looks after the paths?

• Tenants are responsible for keeping **ALL** paths bordering their plot , including the main path, clear and accessible; this also applies if you have a fence or hedge between your plot and a bordering path. You must prune back any plants or shrubs that are overhanging the main path.
• This can involve cutting the grass, pruning back bushes, brambles and over hanging trees.
• Repairs to the main path that runs the length of the site are coordinated by the Site Committee.

13. What do I need to know about the water tanks?

• The water tanks are there for everyone to use, to water the plot.
• Therefore, they should not be used to wash muddy vegetables, plant pots or tools, to rinse out containers that have contained chemicals or to do the washing up after a BBQ!
• Children should be supervised to ensure they treat the tanks as functional elements of plot life.
• If you use a hose, use it sparingly and do not leave it running unattended or overnight.
• The water is turned off from November to March.
• You must not instigate any plumbing tasks yourself; if there is a problem inform the Site Committee.

• See the Watering Advice note on the site website under Resources.

14. Can I help myself to those blackberries?

If they are not on your plot and you have not gained permission from the plot holder, then don't and that goes for windfalls too. If you ask first, most tenants are more than willing to share when a glut strikes. It has been known for children to be sent off to forage for blackberries across the site; please do not encourage this.

15. Can I help myself from the piles of woodchip?

Yes, when available. However, be aware that spores from moulds growing on piles of woodchip have been shown to cause health problems if inhaled.

16. What do I need to know about 'site inspections'?

• To ensure the allotment site is being used optimally by registered tenants, there are regular (2-3 times per year) site inspections which are coordinated between Haringey Council and the Site Committee.
• Where a plot is considered to have fallen below an acceptable standard of tidiness/cultivation and/or not being cultivated primarily by the registered tenant, Haringey Council will consider issuing a Non Compliance Notice (NCN). More details on this process are in your Tenancy Agreement, and in the Notes and Responsibilities for New Tenants Probationer Pack, which specifies definition of full cultivation.

17. How do you define a weed?

• A weed can be defined as anything that you did not plant but came up of its own accord in the 'wrong' place, having taken root or seeded itself naturally. Please bear in mind the adage "one year's seed is seven years' weeds". Your neighbours are most unlikely to appreciate sharing your weed seeds.
• Also, please keep an eye out for 'weed tree' seedlings and do not allow them to grow. This includes indigenous species such as oak, sycamore and ash.
• Much as we like trees, they must not exceed three metres in height.

18. What is the Trading Shed?

• The Trading Shed is managed by the Site Committee with many additional volunteers. It is located in the yard at the Montenotte Road end of the site and sells a wide range of items including seeds, gardening materials, manure, composts, canes, fertilisers, soil improvers, netting and fleece.
• Proceeds from the Trading Shed support site activities
• We no longer supply chemicals and slug pellets that are potentially harmful to wildlife and the environment. We are looking at options for how we can reduce single use plastic.
• The Trading Shed opens each Sunday from 11am to 12.30pm (alternate Sundays

and shorter hours during the winter). In order to use the Trading Shed we ask for a £5 annual subscription due in January to support running costs.

19. Can I keep bees on the site?

To keep honey bees on a Haringey Council allotment site a formal application needs to be made to Haringey Council and the Site Committee also need to consider your application. In the first instance please contact the Site Committee.

20. How do I support wildlife on the site?

• It is recommended that all ponds have sloping edges that allow creatures to easily get in and out.
• Consider alternatives to slug pellets that contain the chemical metaldehyde. Hedgehogs particularly are at risk if they eat slugs and snails that have died from eating pellets containing this chemical.
• Consider alternatives to spraying herbicides, fungicides or other pesticides. The 'drift' when spaying potentially harmful chemicals very easily pollutes ponds and can be harmful to beneficial wildlife like pollinators. Even 'organic approved' sprays require care in their application.
• Plant flowers to attract pollinators and provide a source of nectar and pollen for them. Choose 'single' flower varieties as these are easier for pollinators such as bees to reach the nectar and pollen.
• Put up bird boxes.
• Around the perimeter of the allotment site we have some uncultivated areas that have been colonised primarily by nettles and brambles. Whilst it isn't always obvious that these areas have any value, they actually provide a vital habitat for many insects, butterflies and bees in particular. The Small tortoiseshell, Peacock, Red admiral, Comma and Painted lady butterfly all need undisturbed nettle patches to complete their life cycle.
• In June, the bramble blossom is visited by a host of insects including bumble bees, honey bees, hover-flies and butterflies searching for pollen and nectar. And of course having been pollinated, there will be some berries for us later in the season. Where these areas are not blocking paths or encroaching on plots, by leaving them undisturbed we are helping to support a wider range of insects, including the pollinating insects we need for so much of the produce grown on the allotment.
• Delay cutting back ivy until the Spring time. The flowers in late autumn are a valuable source of pollen and nectar for bees, hoverflies and butterflies. And the berries are taken by birds throughout the winter.

21. What community events take place on the site?

There are a number of events that take place throughout the year including; potato day in February, the plant sale in May, a seed and plant swap, various summer events, a winter warmer, and regular volunteer working parties. Monthly Sunday discussion groups on all aspects of growing and allotment life are held in the Barn, followed by

delicious lunches, and also monthly mid-week Barn cafes. All these events go towards supporting a positive community spirit with opportunities to get involved, meet other plot holders, have a cuppa, learn from others, share skills and pick up a bargain.

22. Where can I find more information on gardening my allotment?

Some useful websites: http://www.allotments-uk.com
http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/ http://www.nsalg.org.uk/
A good book for getting started is The Allotment Handbook and Planner: What to do when to get the most from your plot (by the Royal Horticultural Society).

23. How can I help with site activities?

The committee is always keen to hear from anyone who would like to volunteer. There are lots of opportunities to help – regular maintenance working parties, making cakes or soup for the monthly Barn lunches or helping with serving or washing up, volunteering in the Trading Shed, perhaps joining the committee, etc. If you would like to find out more about any of these ways of helping send an email to
info@shepherdshillallotments.co.uk