



Thetford Town Council Allotment Policy

Policy and Purpose

The main purpose of the Council providing allotments is in order to encourage community engagement and cohesion, social interaction and well maintained plots and sites promoting the growth of vegetables, fruit and the provision of eggs for families in a safe, environmentally friendly setting.

The Council's intention is to provide allotments that we are proud to manage in an economically and efficiently way and thus creating a sustainable community for the benefit of all.

The Council have given delegated authority to the Allotment Committee to administer the allotments according to the terms of reference agreed in April 2017 and updated In July 2018.

The aims of this Policy relate to:

- The practical management of the allotment site
- The process for the management of tenancies, disputes and waiting lists.

This Policy has been adopted so that Allotment Holders, Councillors and staff are informed about the processes. The Policy aims to be fair and consistent.

Responsibility

The Allotments belong to Thetford Town Council, and are under the management of Thetford Town Council.

Management Principles

Thetford Town Council has set out terms of reference for its Allotment Committee, which aim to:

- Provide fair and consistent treatment of all Allotment Tenants
- Undertake fair enforcement where rules are not followed
- Ensure that the Allotment site is maintained to a high standard and within the budget

- Strive to ensure that all plots are utilised and maintained

Allotment Clubs

The Council wishes to encourage the creation of democratic allotments clubs who meet regularly, discuss issues and bring those issues to an informal meeting with members of the Allotment Committee. If appropriate these issues may then be included on the following Allotment Committee meeting agenda held on a quarterly basis.

The formal Allotment Committee meeting would continue to have a 15 minute open forum where the public, including allotment holders and clubs can speak.

The clubs are expected to do the following:

- Be properly constituted with an elected committee;
- Be a member of an appropriate body i.e. The National Allotment Society;
- Provide a list of member plots to indicate representation;
- Hold public meetings regularly; quarterly perhaps to start, reducing to bi-annually once the main issues are addressed;
- Produce an agenda and minutes of their meetings with recommendations for discussion with the Allotment Committee;
- Liaise between the council and allotments holders on issues such as non-compliance of rules and regulations;
- Provide support and advice to both the tenants and the Council;
- Provide advice to new allotment holders and help them understand the rules and their purpose;
- The committee to lead by example by upholding the rules.

The type of issues that could be discussed by the Clubs and recommended to the Committee are:

- Discussion of rules and regulations, their purpose, recommendations for change, new rules (maybe consideration of 10 rules per quarter to make the task manageable);
- Plot sizes, waiting lists, deposits and fees;
- Financing of provision of allotments;
- Community access and security;
- Cultivation standards;
- Environmental issues;
- Sharing allotments;
- Social interaction;
- Devolved management;
- Other forms of gardening;
- Site representatives, mentoring and training;

- Problems experienced by sites and possible solutions i.e. rats, clearance of surrendered plots, maintenance, health and safety;
- A presentation to promote the benefits of allotments at the Annual Town Meeting;
- A yearly social event where council and tenants come together.

There could be an allotment club for each site or one club can support a number of smaller sites.

Application Process

People wishing to rent an allotment should apply in writing to Thetford Town Council at King's House, King Street, Thetford IP24 2AT or through our website www.thetfordtowncouncil.gov.uk

A waiting list of people wishing to rent an allotment is maintained by the council.

Allotments are allocated on a first come basis.

Allotments will only be allocated to residents subject to clause 5.2 of the current Allotment Tenancy Agreement.

In the event of an Allotment Holder passing away, the allotment tenancy is deemed to have been terminated.

All Allotment Holder receives a copy of the Rules and Regulations in addition to their Tenancy Agreement. These must be followed.

A Tenancy Agreement must be signed prior to the tenancy starting. The appropriate payment must also be received.

Allotments may be divided when applicants request a half size plot.

A resident may hold a maximum of two full plots providing both are fully cultivated. A maximum of two residents in any one household may rent a maximum of one full size allotment each. Joint tenancies will only be allowed from the start of a tenancy between two people residing at the same address. Each plot is subject to the regulations for maximum building sizes and limits relating to the keeping of fowl.

The decision of Thetford Town Council's Allotment Committee shall be final in any matter.

Allotment Termination

Should an Allotment Holder leave the town during the growing season, they will be permitted to continue using their Allotment for the duration of the year on written request to the Council (i.e. to 10th October). This may be granted only, if there are no residents on the waiting list and there are no recorded breaches of the Tenancy Agreement.

A tenant who wishes to terminate their tenancy or relinquish part of an allotment should write to the Thetford Town Council at Thetford Town Council at King's House, King Street, Thetford IP24 2AT or via email to mail@thetfordtowncouncil.gov.uk No refunds will be given.

A Tenant who does not comply with the Tenancy and the Rules and Regulations can have their tenancy terminated. Should this take place during the year, no refund will be issued.

Rents

The rent for an allotment is charged annually in advance and becomes payable on the 10th October each year.

Allotment Holders who wish to change or alter their plots can only do this at renewal time, i.e. October

Allotment Holders will be issued with a written request for payment one month prior to the renewal date. Rent should be paid through our website, direct into the Council's bank account or at the town Council offices.

Rents are reviewed from time to time by the Council. Any decision to increase the rents will comply with the requirements of the Allotments Act 1950 and will be notified to tenants 12 months before the increase will be implemented.

Maintenance of the site

The income derived from allotment rents goes to Thetford Town Council to be set against the costs of running the site. Allotment Holders are invited to attend an Annual Allotment Holders Meeting which is organised by the Allotment Committee of the Council. This is an opportunity to raise issues and concerns about the site.

The Rules and Regulations for the Allotment site are designed to minimise unnecessary expenses for Thetford Town Council. Therefore, it is important that plot holders follow the Rules and Regulations.

Tenancy Rules

A copy of the Rules and Regulations applicable for all tenants is attached to this Policy.

The Tenant of an Allotment shall comply with the Rules and Regulations.

Rules and Regulations will be reviewed annually.

The Tenant shall pay the rent in accordance with the terms of the Tenancy.

The Tenant shall not sub-let, assign or part with possession of the Allotment Plot or any part of it.

Trees and Structures require permission, which should be requested in writing to the Council.

The tenants may hold an annual social event at the Allotment but are requested to advise the Council of the date of any such event in advance so that appropriate insurance can be put in place.

Regular inspections of plots are undertaken. No notice will be given of these inspections.

Policy

This Policy was approved by Thetford Town Council on July 18th 2018 and will be reviewed every year or earlier if required.

This policy is supported by the Tenancy Document and a copy of the Rules and Regulations.