Boundary Way Allotment Association

Plot inspections

All plot holders must look after their plot. This means growing crops, keeping weeds under control, removing rubbish, and keeping paths, boundaries and structures in good order.

Purpose

Inspections are to check that plots are being looked after properly. They also highlight what is going well and what needs improving.

Inspections are carried out by two or three committee members.

How often: Up to three times during the main growing season, then once in late winter/early spring.

What we look for

1. The plot is being used to grow crops- including fruit and flowers (it is productive).
2. Weeds are controlled and not spreading to other plots.
3. Boundaries with neighbouring plots are clear and kept tidy.
4. No unsuitable items or waste are stored on the plot.
5. Sheds, greenhouses and other structures are safe and maintained.
6. Where possible, rainwater is collected and stored.
7. The plot number is clearly visible.

If there are problems

- We will tell the plot holder what needs to be done and the deadline.
- If nothing is done, we will send a formal letter. This will include a date for ending the tenancy. If requested, we can arrange an on-site meeting with two or more committee members.
- If there is still not enough improvement, we will send a notice of termination.
- The plot holder must remove personal items. The plot will then be offered to the next person on the waiting list.

Notes

Inspectors will be fair and realistic. We recognise that people garden in different ways (including no-dig). We will also consider the starting condition of a plot for new tenants.

The inspection criteria above are based on the allotment rules. We use an inspection form to record the condition of every plot.

If we find issues, we will note them and give advice. Plot holders must complete the work by the deadline shown on the checklist.

The “Problems/Advice” column shows which plots may be at risk of a warning letter. If there are mitigating circumstances, you can send details to the committee in writing or by email.

*Note: Not having enough time is not accepted as a mitigating circumstance. If you cannot look after your plot, you may need to give it up. For short periods, you can arrange help.

Common problems and what to do

Problem	What you need to do
1. The plot is not being cultivated enough for the time of year.	Any ground cover should be temporary. Most of the plot should be: • Free of perennial weeds • Ready for planting • Growing crops, or being prepared for the next crop/season •
2. Weeds are taking over and spreading to neighbouring plots.	Control weeds early. Learn which are annual and which are perennial. Remove perennial weeds by digging out roots, drowning them, or covering/mulching (for example with woodchips).
3. Boundary or access paths are blocked or unsafe.	Clear boundary and access paths. Keep them free of weeds and rubbish. Make sure crops, hedges and structures do not overhang paths or neighbouring plots.
4. Rubbish or waste has built up on the plot.	Remove items that are unsafe, hazardous, or not needed for cultivating the plot.
5. Structures or hedges are unsafe or not maintained.	Repair sheds, polytunnels and greenhouses. Keep structures sturdy and make sure they do not shade or encroach on neighbouring plots. Keep compost areas tidy.
6. Rainwater is not being collected and stored (where possible).	If your plot allows, use water butts or other suitable containers to collect rainwater.
7. No plot number is visible.	Display your plot number clearly so it can be seen from the main path.

If your inspection shows problems, use the table above to help you understand what to do and the deadline for doing it. If nothing has changed by the deadline, the Management Committee may move to the next step. This could include inviting you to a committee meeting.
If you have mitigating circumstances and cannot meet the deadline, please contact a committee member as soon as possible.