



## **CHILTON TOWN COUNCIL**

# **ALLOTMENT INSPECTION POLICY / PROCEDURE**

<b>DOCUMENT CONTROL</b>	
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This document outlines the policy / procedures for inspections at any of the following Chilton Town Council allotment sites: -

West Chilton Terrace (Sites 1 and 2)  
Prospect Terrace  
Hambleton Way (Sites 1 and 2)

General Routine site visits to all the Council's allotment sites may be conducted at regular intervals by the Chair and/or Vice Chair of the Allotments Committee. In the event of a contentious issue, it may be necessary for a further site visit to be undertaken by an officer of the Town Council, accompanied by either the Chair/Vice Chair of the Allotment Committee and/or the Town Mayor. The issue may have to be discussed by the Allotment Committee, before a specific course of action can be taken. Each issue will be reviewed on an individual basis and an appropriate course of action agreed, depending on individual circumstances.

### **New Tenants**

The first 12 months of a tenancy is a probationary period. During this time photographs will be taken but no inspection records will be kept.

After the 12 month probationary period, we'll expect you to cultivate 75% of your plot, in line with this policy. At this point, you'll enter the normal inspection process. If you don't manage this, the Council reserves the right to end your tenancy and re-let the plot

To help manage the areas of your plot that aren't cultivated, we recommend mulching with a weed suppressing membrane. This will condition the soil for when you're ready to grow crops, and will stop weed growth. Do not use carpet to do this.

You can also strim down grass and tall weeds in the non-cropped areas.

### **Site Inspection**

Inspections of allotments will take place twice a year in April and September, by the Chair and/or Vice Chair of the Allotments Committee and other members of the Town Council and officers. Inspections are carried out using detailed drone photographs taken by a professional operator. The inspections will cover the following criteria:

- General condition
- Rubbish on the plot (covering type of rubbish and amount)
- Hazardous and polluting objects / materials
- Percentage cultivated
- Structure condition

If it is agreed that a Tenant has contravened the Allotment Tenancy Agreement, the following procedure will be adopted: -

Stage 1	Issue of Improvement Notice (3 months to make improvements)
Stage 2	Further improvement notice after 3 months inspection
Stage 3	Issue of Notice to Quit

For the purposes of the procedure, any timescale stated in a Warning Letter for rectification work, etc. would commence from the date of the letter. An allotment site visit will be undertaken by the Chair/Vice Chair of the Allotments Committee and/or an officer of the Town Council to conduct the inspection.

## Stage 1 – Improvement Notice

The Officer will send an Improvement Notice to the Tenant within 4 weeks of the inspection photographs being taken. The Notice will state;

- The type of Notice being issued (see below for Notice explanations)
- the reason for writing, outlining area(s) of contravention;
- the rectification action required by the tenant;
- an opportunity for the Tenant to contact the Council to discuss the matter if they are experiencing difficulties or have any queries arising from the letter.

## Stage 2 – Further Improvement Notice

The Officer will send a further Improvement Notice to the Tenant within 4 weeks of the second inspection taking place. The Notice will state:

- The type of Notice being issued (see below for Notice explanations)
- the reason for writing, outlining area(s) of contravention;
- the rectification action required by the tenant;
- an opportunity for the Tenant to contact the Council to discuss the matter if they are experiencing difficulties or have any queries arising from the letter.

## Stage 3 – Issue of Notice to Quit

Due to the tenant being given 6 months to make improvements, it is felt appropriate that a Notice to Quit signed by the Town Council and accompanied by a covering letter will be sent to the Tenant and will include references to the following: -

- a termination date;
- an instruction to the Tenant to remove all personal property;
- an outline of the implications of failing to comply with any special condition imposed by the Council in respect of any clearance/rectification work deemed necessary to restore the Allotment Garden to an acceptable condition;

## Appeal

The tenant is entitled to appeal each stage of the Policy. Tenants will be offered the opportunity to meet the Allotment Committee to discuss the situation and what would be expected to make improvements.

## Improvement Notices

### Cultivation notice

You must grow crops or flowers on 75% of your plot. If you have large areas of lawn and unkempt or non-cropped beds, you could receive a cultivation notice.

If you receive a cultivation notice, increase the area you're cultivating before the re-inspection date on the notice. If things are not corrected and you fail the re-inspection, we could end your tenancy.

### Weed notice

If you've received a weed notice, clear weeds from your allotment to prevent weed seeds from affecting other plots. If there is no evidence that weeds have been dealt with, we could end your tenancy.

## Rubbish and polluting materials notice

If you have rubbish or materials that cause pollution on your allotment, you could receive a rubbish and polluting materials notice. You should act on this immediately.

You must not take non-compostable household waste onto your allotment. You must compost kitchen scraps at home before bringing them to your allotment. This is because scraps can provide a food source for vermin, such as rats and mice.

If a vermin problem is traced to your allotment you could receive a rubbish notice.

You're not allowed to bring garden waste onto your allotment. Doing this could result in a rubbish notice and we could end your tenancy.

## Materials that can pollute your allotment

A pollutant doesn't need to be immediately toxic and includes waste materials or visually polluting materials. This is things like glass, hardcore and excessive building materials that are not used quickly.

If the things listed in the table below are found on your allotment we could give you a rubbish and polluting materials notice, and we could end your tenancy.

Material	Issue	Rule
Asbestos	Toxic	Not allowed on site, but if found, cover it and inform the Town Council
Carpet	Pollutes the soil	Not allowed on site
Tyres	Pollutes the soil	Not allowed on site
Glass bottles used for construction	Dangerous	Not allowed
Scrap metal	Polluting	Not allowed on site
Chemicals	Polluting	Not allowed
Creosote	Polluting	Not allowed
Chemical drums	Polluting	Not allowed
Large numbers of plastic containers	Polluting	Not allowed
Painted timber	Polluting	Not allowed
Large quantities of plastic sheeting	Polluting	Not allowed
Wheelie Bins		Wheelie Bins are the property of the local authority and not the allotment tenant

## Nuisance notice

A nuisance notice can be issued if you:

- have a bonfire that's in breach of site rules
- have a dog roaming free without a lead in communal areas
- act in an anti-social or immoral way
- use a hose for unattended watering
- sleep over-night on allotment land
- block a track with a vehicle or other obstacle
- act in a way that is considered unsafe, either to yourself or someone else

Nuisance notices are recorded on your tenancy records, and remain active. The first nuisance notice you receive is a warning, but if you commit the same offence a second time, we will end your tenancy. Any nuisance notice issued could result in an investigation taking place, where you may be required to attend a hearing.

### **Dangerous shed or structure notice**

If, at inspection, any shed or building looks to be in a dangerous or unsafe condition, the Chair / Vice Chair and an Officer of the Council will request a meeting on site with you to discuss your buildings. You will be expected to allow access for inspection purposes. Failure to allow access could result in the end of your tenancy.

A dangerous shed notice can be issued if your shed:

- is collapsing
- is leaning dangerously
- has loose or rotten parts
- has broken panes of glass
- has loose or jagged metal work
- is too large – to detrimentally affect your ability to cultivate

If you've received a dangerous shed notice, make it safe or remove it completely within the time permitted.

### **Suspected Business Use notice**

If it is felt, at any time during the year that your allotment is being used for business purposes. You may be asked to attend a meeting to discuss this further and an investigation may be carried out. Business use is prohibited on any allotment garden, which includes the storage of business equipment, waste or materials.