

Easington Village Parish Council

Allotments Policy

1 **Policy Objectives**

Easington Village Parish Council is committed to having allotment sites that:-

- Provide opportunities for residents to access fresh food;
- Provide spaces for residents to enhance their physical and mental wellbeing;
- Contribute to the sustainability of the local environment; and
- Balance the needs of tenants, non-tenants and the Council

2 **Background**

Public interest in allotments has increased over the last two decades as people's lifestyles and interests have changed to focus more on healthy eating, organic food and exercise. In addition, the recent economic downturn has led more people to consider an allotment as a cheap source of fresh food. Collectively, this had resulted in greater interest in allotments and therefore, the Parish Council needs to take steps to ensure that our allotment sites are well managed and achieve the Council's policy objectives.

3 **Allotment Provision**

Easington Village Parish Council currently owns 2 allotments sites that provide 66 plots in the Parish.

4 **Allotment Management**

In order to deliver the objectives, set out above, Easington Village Parish Council is committed to the effective management of its allotment sites in line with this policy and in compliance with the Allotments' Act 1908, 1925 and 1950. This commitment will be delivered through the effective implementation and enforcement of the Allotment Tenancy Agreement by the Parish Council.

5 **Enforcement**

Enforcement of the attached Allotment Tenancy Agreement will be achieved through periodic site inspections by the Parish Council and through the investigation of complaints made to the Council.

Where inspections or investigations identify that a tenant is in breach of their agreement, the following enforcement procedure will apply:-

- a) Informal Warning – Tenants who fail to comply with their tenancy agreement will be contacted to request that they address issues of non-compliance.

- b) Formal Warning – Tenants who fail to respond to an informal warning within a minimum of 28 days will be issued with a formal written warning.
- c) Notice to Quit – Tenants who fail to respond to a formal warning within a minimum of 28 days will be given notice to quit their plot.
- d) Eviction – Tenants who fail to respond to a notice to quit or vacate their plot within a minimum of 28 days will be evicted.

6 **Amendment of the Allotment Tenancy**

Easington Village Parish council reserves the right to amend the attached Allotment Tenancy Agreement at any time. Where such amendments are made, appropriate consultation will be undertaken and existing tenants will be informed of the final changes and of any transitional arrangements.

7 **Eligibility to Rent an Allotment**

Applicants must be a minimum of 18 years of age and who have not previously had an allotment tenancy terminated by notice to quit within the previous 5 years. Charity or Voluntary Groups need to have public liability insurance, be fully constituted and be able to provide risk assessments.

8 **Waiting Lists and Allocation of Plots**

When a plot becomes available and a co-worker is registered for the plot then they will be considered for the plot in line with the co-worker agreement first. If there is no co-worker registered or they do not want to take the tenancy, then the plot will be advertised for existing tenants who wish to upgrade or move plot. The advertisement will be placed on the Noticeboard for 21 days. If there are applications from existing tenants then the Council will offer it to the person/charity/voluntary group who have been on the waiting list for the longest period of time and are living within the parish boundary of Easington Village, or in the case of a charity/voluntary group are based within the parish boundary. If there is no-one from within the parish boundary who wants to accept the plot then those from outside the parish boundary will be offered the plot based on who has been on the waiting list for the longest period. Waiting list applicants can decline a plot they are offered, however, if they decline a second plot they will be removed from the waiting list. Where an applicant declines the offer of a plot, the Council will offer the plot to the next individual/charity/voluntary group on the waiting list. In the event of no-one being on the waiting list the plot will be advertised by the Parish Council.

9 **Co-Workers**

The Council allows tenants to register a co-worker as a means of enabling plots to be passed on to individuals where there has been a joint commitment to working the plot.

Each tenant will be allowed to register only one individual as a co-worker for each plot they lease. There are no restrictions on who can be registered as a co-worker, however, co-workers must meet the general tenant eligibility criteria at the time they are offered the plot.

10 Tenancy Limits

Easington Village Parish Council only permits allotment tenancies to be issued to one named person or organisation. Tenants will only be allowed to rent a maximum of one full plot. Those individuals who have historically held more than one full plot upon their tenancy ending only one plot will be allowed to be considered under the co-worker agreement.

11 Change in Circumstances

Easington Village Parish Council requires tenants, waiting list applicants and co-workers to keep it informed of any changes in their contact details. If the Council is not kept informed, any communication sent to the last provided email address/postal address will be deemed to have been delivered to the individual it was intended for.

12 Rents

Easington Village Parish Council's allotment rents fall within 2 categories Band 1 with water and Band 2 without water. Allotment rents will be reviewed each year and tenants will be given at least 6 months prior notice of changes. Details of current rent levels will be published on the Council's website or will be provided in paper form on request.

Annual rents cover the period 1st October to 30th September. Tenancies starting during the year will be charged a pro-rata amount based on one twelfth of the full year amount or part month that the plot is occupied. Partial refunds will be given for the remaining full months to the end of September for cancellation by the end of December.

13 Plot Boundaries and Fencing

Easington Village Parish Council will normally only maintain external fencing or similar on sites. However, the ability to undertake such work will be dependent on funds being available.

Tenants are not required to fence their plots. However, any fence or similar that they do have around their plot must be constructed and maintained in accordance with the attached Allotment Tenancy.

14 Maintenance

Easington Village Parish Council will maintain the access roads and entrance gates to the allotment site. This will include repairs and weed killing. However, the ability to undertake such work will be dependent on funds being available.

15 Security

The main entrance to the allotment sites will be secured by gates and locked. The landlord will retain a key for the gates and tenants will be responsible for locking the main gates to the site after entering the site. Keys will be available from the Parish Office where a deposit will be required. Deposits will be returned for keys upon the tenancy ceasing.

16 **Animals and Livestock**

No livestock will be allowed unless permitted by Easington Village Parish Council. This includes such as horses, pigs, sheep, goats, geese, cockerels and similar large animals, but might exclude fowl of most kinds (excepting geese and cockerels) and caged rabbits, depending on the site location. You must always seek written permission from the Landlord. Permissions previously granted to keep animals may subsequently be withdrawn if it is determined that the animals or the manner in which they are being kept is either prejudicial to health or causing a nuisance. In such circumstances the tenants will be expected to remove the animals from the site within a maximum of 3 months.

17 **Water**

Easington Village Parish Council encourages its tenants to use rainwater capture to meet their needs and as a way of reducing metered water usage. On sites where water is supplied the consumption costs of the water provided by the Council on site will be met by Council subsidy and the water surcharge included in the annual rent levied by the Council. All tenants must use the water sensibly at all times to eliminate excessive consumption costs and wastage. Whilst sprinkler systems and prolonged use of hoses will not normally be permitted under normal climatic conditions, some flexibility on this restraint will be allowed during periodic dry spells to alleviate any hardship suffered by gardeners, and in no circumstances must these be left unattended. The water supply will normally be turned off from 31st October until the 1st of April of each year, with provision for the water supply to be turned on for a limited short period to allow tenants to fill containers if hardship or difficulty is being experienced during a particularly dry Spring. The Council must be advised through the Clerk on the occasions when these provisions are required, and approval must be given. A prominent notice must be displayed on site in the Council notice board, informing all tenants, prior to the water being turned on for any period during the closed season. The Council shall review the water consumption costs and water surcharge levied on tenants at regular intervals.

17 **Reuseable Materials**

Easington Village Parish Council recognises that the re-use of relevant materials is an important and beneficial aspect of how allotment holders operate. However, this cannot be an excuse for tenants to store waste on their plots. Given this, the Council does permit tenants to store re-useable material on their plots provided: -

- They do not prevent compliance with the cultivation requirements;
- They are stored in a tidy manner;
- They do not stay there for an indefinite period of time;
- They do not cause a nuisance to other plot holders or neighbouring residents