Streatley Allotments Society:
Plot Holders' Guide

October 2026 (updated)

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1) Introduction:

This guide is aimed to help Streatley Allotments Society *(SAS)* plot holders. It includes the responsibilities of all plot holders together with the general rules on plot usage. It supplements, but does not replace nor rescind, any of the obligations entered into in the plot holder's Tenancy Agreement with *SAS* (June 2023). The Allotment site does have a committee of plot holders who manage The Site. They are known as the *SAS* committee and can be contacted on a the following email address: *streatleyallotments@gmail.com*

2) Dos and Don'ts for plot holders:

A plot holder is required to: -

(a) Communicate with *SAS* committee, in confidence, if their personal circumstances temporarily prevent their plot management. *SAS* will always make every effort to assist in these situations.
(b) Cultivate their plot themselves (with assistance if necessary) as an allotment garden and for no other purpose.
(c) Keep the plot free of weeds (see glossary), and in a good state of cultivation and fertility throughout the year. An allotment plot that remains uncropped or unplanted during any one year will be considered as non-cultivated.
(d) Comply with any Action Notices and Formal Warnings should any be served following a site inspection. (see Appendix 2 Glossary at the end of this guide.)
(e) On leaving the Allotment Site, having ascertained no one else is on site, ensure all gates are locked. Gates must remain unlocked when on site to allow access for Emergency Services in case of accident
(f) Use water sparingly. Water troughs are provided on the Allotment Site for use by plot holders. The use of hosepipes or sprinklers is not permitted;
(g) Compost and recycle as much as possible except materials which could attract or encourage vermin or harbour disease or pests within the Allotment Site;
(h) Remove non-compostable waste (twigs/branches, plant pots, wire ties, plastics, broken canes, broken glass, spoiled produce, etc.) from each individual plot and from the Allotment Site;
(i) Comply with all legal requirements in respect of hens on the Allotment Site. Plot holders must ensure that dogs are kept under control at all times when on the Allotment Site and are kept on a lead when in communal areas;
(j) Ensure that children are closely supervised at all times when on the Allotment Site;
(k) Attend working parties when possible and participate in communal effort to maintain site thus reducing external maintenance costs.

A plot holder must not:-

(a) Cause a nuisance, damage, or annoyance to other allotment plot holders, neighbouring properties, or residents in the nearby areas. Obstruct any paths or roadways that have been set out for the access to or within the Allotment Site;
(b) Erect fencing to individual plots greater than 1m in height or use barbed wire on or around any allotment plot;

(c) Build a shed, greenhouse, polytunnel on an allotment plot without obtaining the prior permission of *SAS*. Specifically, *SAS* will require conformity with the following guidelines:

- the placement of such facilities may only be on the southern boundary of a plot, directly against an existing hedge line, or located such that they minimise any shadow cast on a neighbouring plot;
- be placed such that they do not overhang other plots or common access routes nor cause water to run off outside the plot;
- sheds and other wooden structures shall be painted or stained in an unobtrusive neutral colour (brown, green, dun) and roofing material shall be of a similar dark hue;
- sheds should be set back at least 2 (600mm) from the boundary of the Allotment Site;
- maximum shed dimensions must not exceed 7' (2100mm) high and area 8' x 6' (2400mm x 1800mm);
- no more than two greenhouses and/or polytunnels and no more than one shed may be constructed on a plot;
- for each greenhouse / polytunnel height must not exceed 7' (2100mm) and area 8' x 10' (2400mm x 3000mm);

The contents of sheds, greenhouses, and polytunnels are not covered against theft or damage under *SAS*'s insurance policy and the contents are entirely at the plot holder's risk;

(d) Deposit any materials including stone waste, weeds or any type of waste from their plot in hedgerows, accesses or vacant areas of the site.

3) Health and Safety

(a) Personal responsibilities
Plot holders have a duty of care (responsibility) to anyone on their individual plot and on the overall allotment site regardless of whether or not they have personal permission to be there. Plot holders should act responsibly and comply with any health and safety law or information provided by *SAS*.

(b) Hazard reporting
Plot holders should report concerns about health and safety on their plot, or the site, to the *SAS* committee. Plot holder's visitors to the allotments site should be made aware of any ongoing health and safety issues by the plot holder.

(c) Personal safety
Plot holders often spend long periods of time alone on their allotment plots and should preferably let someone know where they are and what time they will return home.

(d) Vandalism
Good perimeter fencing around the Allotment Site has been provided by (Streatley Parish Council). It is the responsibility of plot holders to maintain their tools, etc. in a safe and secure condition. Plot holders should always report instances of vandalism to the police and obtain an incident number. Also, the incident should be reported to the *SAS* committee.

(e) Chemical use

Chemical use is discouraged on site. Plot holders have a duty of care with regards to the proper storage and use of herbicides and pesticides. This includes weed killers, rat poisons, fungicides, and soil sterilant. Chemical treatments are no longer permitted on the communal paths.

(f) Tetanus
Tetanus is an illness caused by bacteria present in the soil and manure and which can enter the bloodstream through a cut, scratch, or abrasion. Plot holders are advised to have a vaccination that may protect them against this disease. Plot holders should wear gloves whenever handling soil, compost or manure.

(g) Vermin
Many mammals including rats can carry the causative bacterium of Weil's disease in their urine. Plot holders must report any evidence of rats on the Allotment Site to *SAS* committee who will circulate their presence to all plot holders. The *SAS* Committee has contact details of a pest controller and will consult with them about any rodent pest problems and actions required.

(h) Allotment soil content
It is recommended that all produce grown in direct contact with the soil is thoroughly washed to remove all traces of soil and possible associated contaminants before cooking or eating. A clean water tap is located beside the water trough next to Plot 40, Please use this for handing clean.

4) Organic Areas

The allotment site no longer has any designated organic areas. However, please respect that a number of plot holders do cultivate organically. The society encourages good organic practice as much as possible, avoiding the use of chemicals where possible. When using pesticides or herbicides have regard to items 3e and g 'Health and Safety in this guide.

An organic gardener strives to work in harmony with the natural systems and to continually replenish any resources the garden consumes. Organic gardening therefore means cultivating without the use of chemical fertilisers, pesticides and herbicides. Instead focusing on increasing the natural health of the soil and plants using natural manures and composts.

Appendix 1 Resources

National Allotment Society which can be found using the following link. https://thenas.org.uk. The website has a wealth of information about a broad range of allotment issues.

Appendix 2 – Glossary

Action Notice- An Action Notice is served after an unsatisfactory monthly plot inspection with a requirement to address any issues before the next monthly inspection.
First Formal Notice- A First Formal Notice is served with a Second Action Notice if at the second monthly inspection issues have not been addressed. The Action Notice and Formal Notice require the improvement to the plot to be made by the third inspection.
*Second Formal Notice_* A Second Formal Notice is served if there is still no improvement to the plot. This is served with a 7-day timescale to remedy the situation. If there is still no action the plot holder will be asked to surrender their plot with immediate effect.
allotment plot – a piece of land which is allocated to an allotment plot holder and which is wholly or mainly cultivated by the plot holder for the production of vegetables or fruit by him/herself and family.
Allotment Site - the land referred to in the lease agreement between Streatley Parish Council (*SPC*) and Thames Water provided for use by subdivision into common areas and allotment plots.
allotment provider - the organisation (*SAS* on behalf of *SPC*) that rents out the allotment plot to the plot holder (tenant).
allotment authority - a local council (*SPC*) with a statutory provision to provide allotments.
common areas – the areas between and providing access to plots including access roads, turning areas and pathways.
devolved management - arrangement (Memorandum of Understanding (*MoU*))by which the allotment provider (in the form of *SAS*) manages the Allotment Site in agreement with the local council (*SPC*).
Lease - legal document signed by SPC with the Allotment Site owner (*Thames Water*).
plot holder (tenant) - the person renting an allotment from the allotment provider.
Tenancy Agreement - legal document the plot holder signs when renting an allotment plot.
Weeds - what some consider weeds, others may consider to be wildflowers. The expectation re weed management is to aim to reduce spread of seed-bearing weeds, e.g. dandelions, willowherb, and avoid nuisance to neighbouring plots.

APPENDIX 3 -Hens

Under normal allotment assignments, provided the plot is used mainly for growing vegetables and fruit, plot holders may be allowed to keep hens (but not cockerels) on their allotment plots (subject to the size of the plot), It is recommended plot holders are aware of the minimum space required for each hen and adhere to any welfare requirements issued by the Department of Environment Food, & Rural Affairs (DEFRA). Any requirement for registering the flock remains with the plot holder.

Any plot holder wishing to keep hens must discuss and obtain *SAS* Committee's agreement to the arrangements prior to these being put in place and accept the installation and other costs involved. The plot holder should expect *SAS* committee to carry out spot checks, with or without notice, on such hens and their welfare conditions.

At the very minimum the plot holder will be expected to adhere to the following responsibilities and conditions, and carry the associated costs:

- Provision of suitable fences and structures to make sure the hens cannot escape or are a nuisance to adjacent plot holders, the fence must deter predation by foxes and other animals.
- Use hen feeders other than those of a non-spill type to prevent encouraging vermin onto the site.
- Provision of the safe and secure living environment for the hens in terms of housing, space, vermin free feeders and a regular water supply.
- Construct hens houses in line with recommended guidelines in terms of size and construction from appropriate bodies such as The British Hen Welfare Society and DEFRA.
- Provision of full contact details with 24-hour contact numbers in case of emergencies.
- The plot holders must make their own provision for caring for the hens in their absence,
- Any fatalities must follow recommended guidelines for disposal.

Appendix 4 – Wildlife Policy

The main purpose of this appendix is to share the Streatley Allotment Society (*SAS*) policy for dealing with wildlife who live around the allotment site. It is in response to several years when plot holder lost crops to the ingress of small mammals (voles, rabbits, mice, squirrels).

1. The allotment site has been established 14 years and is totally fenced in to deter small mammals from entering the site. The boundary fence is regularly maintained to avoid damage and breaches by local wildlife. The two entry gates, if left open, provide an opportunity for wildlife to access the allotment. The *SAS* Committee will send regularly reminders to plot holders to keep the gate closed at all times when entering and exiting the Allotment Site.
2. The *SAS* Committee recognise that it would be impossible to keep all crop eating wildlife from the allotment site but agreed the introduction of owl boxes would encourage owls to nest and act as natural predators to control the volume of small mammals residing in the Allotment Site
3. Due to the location of the Allotment Site adjacent to the Thames Water Treatment Plant and close to the river it is expected we will have visits from rats. Please see Section 3, Health and Safety for further information on how to report evidence of rats.
4. Regular site inspections will focus on any specific locations within our common areas that may be attractive to local wildlife and these will be actioned through working parties. If rats and rabbits are visible on the Allotment Site please report it to the *SAS* Committee who will agree and take the appropriate action.

Revision History	Activity	File Storage
June 2023	Plot Holders Guide Published and appear on Streatley Parish Council Website and issued to all new plot holders	Stored on SAS Google Drive for retrieval by Committee Members.
September 2026. Version 26.2	Updated by Janet Dutton. Additional appendix added on Hens. General update of text. Links to external resources removed.	By Yahoo email from Janet Dutton to Committee Members.
October 2026. Version 26.3	Updated by Janet Dutton Committee Feedback. Additional appendix added on Wildlife which was based on a Wildlife Policy created on February 2026 (author unknown)	By Yahoo email from Janet Dutton to Committee Members.
October 2026	Finalised and PDF Copy sent to Nick Barnes for publication on the Streatley Parish Council Website	SAS Google Drive
Suggested Review. October 27	Annual Review to check applicability of contents will be undertaken in October 2027. This date should be recorded in the Allotment Calendar.	SAS Google Drive