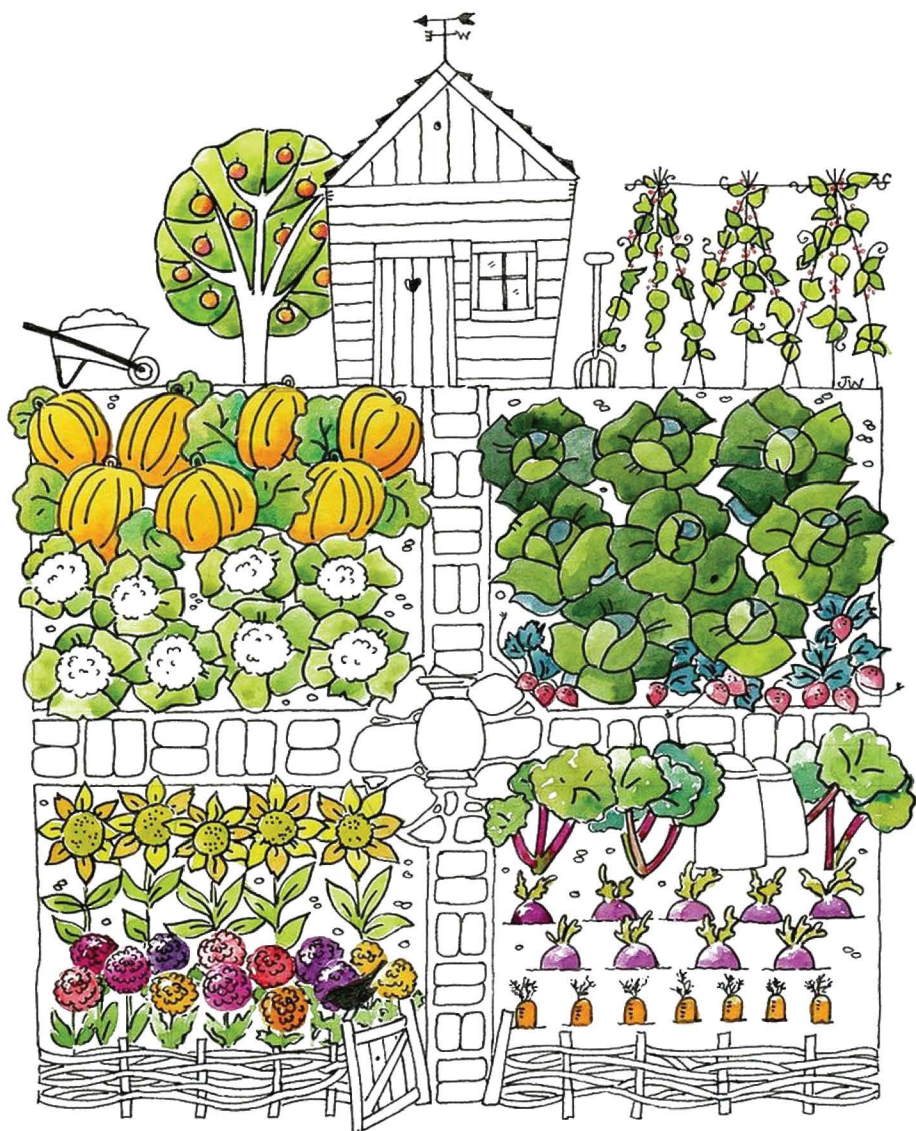


Baildon Horticultural Society



Allotment & Smallholder Handbook

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Introduction

Baildon has a long history of providing allotments which date back before the 1st world war. Today we have two sites, Charlestown which has approximately 100 plots of which 24 are designated as smallholder plots and Thompson Lane which has approximately 35 plots, of which 3 plots are designated as smallholder plots. Both sites have a sales hut, selling a wide range of products to allow you to get the best out of your plot. The sales huts act as a great social hub for the allotments and are run by volunteers who have plots on the sites and who are also a great source of knowledge for new plotholders. Please try and support our sales huts - opening times and price lists are on our website. The benefits of allotment gardening to individuals, families and the environment have come into sharper focus over recent years.

Their main function remains the production of relatively inexpensive and healthy fruit and vegetables, but at the same time they also provide an opportunity for people to exercise outdoors, learn new skills and make new friends. They can also contribute to broader environmental aims such as reducing food miles, encouraging organic gardening practices and provide space for wildlife.



This Handbook has been produced for anyone who rents an allotment (or smallholder plot) from Baildon Horticultural Society.

A fully comprehensive set of Rules and Health and Safety requirements are available at both Sales Huts, Notice Boards and on the BHS website. It is a condition of Tenancy that the potential plotholder has read and agrees to be bound by these Rules.

What is an Allotment ?

An allotment garden or plot is a piece of land which can be rented by individuals for growing fruit, vegetables and flowers for personal and family use. It is not to be used for commercial purposes.

What is a Smallholder Plot ?

Smallholder Plots were introduced in 2019 with the co-operation of Baildon Town Council to enable the keeping of livestock on the allotments thus formalising what had been unofficial practice for nearly 50 years.

The plots are confined to land which was deemed at the time as 'unfit for cultivation' and consist of 10 plots at Charlestown and two at Thompson Lane. Smallholder Plot Holders can, with the permission of The Committee, keep Poultry (including one cockerel) rabbits, bees and livestock. This is subject to appropriate welfare conditions, size of plot and registration with DEFRA or other statutory bodies. Secure fencing and hygienic habitation are essential elements of this provision.

The Committee are aware of the risk of losing some of Britain's old breeds of poultry and ducks and would wish to encourage Rare Breeds on these plots. A separate Waiting List is in operation for these Plots which rarely become available.

For further information on these plots please see the Allotment Officer or a member of the Committee.



Getting Started

Your plot may be in reasonable condition however quite often recently vacated plots may have been neglected by their previous tenants and will require some work to bring them up to a reasonable standard.

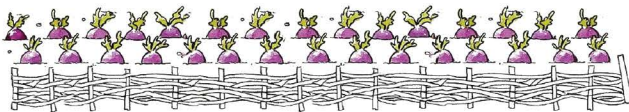
- Start with easy to grow vegetables such as potatoes, peas, beans, onions, pumpkins etc until you gain experience.
- Keep your allotment neat and tidy and as free of weeds as possible once spring and summer arrive.
- We don't insist that people garden organically but reducing the amount of chemicals and pesticides used on your allotment will be good for the environment and more rewarding in the long run.
- If you can't manage to cultivate all your allotment, as a temporary measure you can cover beds using polythene sheeting or organic mulches to keep the weeds down.
- Don't use rubber backed carpets as they may rot down and release harmful chemicals into the soil.
- Don't stockpile timber, sheeting, newspapers or other materials as they may become a fire hazard, will look unsightly and take up space which should be cultivated.

Caring for your Allotment

Water is essential for plant health and growth. In particular, seedlings and young plants need sufficient water until they become established, especially during the summer months and dry periods. Both sites have mains water however we would prefer tenants to collect and store water on site to help save costs.

Here are some useful tips to help save water:

- Mains water should be used sparingly for no more than 20 minutes in a 24 hour period, preferably to top up containers. Sprinklers are not allowed.
- If you have a shed or greenhouse consider installing a length of gutter and a piece of drainpipe to collect water off the roof into containers.
- Water butts and containers need to be covered and located on stable ground to reduce the risk of accidents and evaporation.
- Don't use a hose to water plants directly & try to water early in the morning or later in the evening when the sun is less strong.
- Mulch fruit and other permanent crops with a thick layer of compost or chipped bark to conserve water in the soil. It will also prevent weed growth! With crops such as strawberries it may be possible to grow them through black polythene.
- Both sites are regularly checked by the allotment offices to ensure a high standard.



The most important rule in your Tenancy Agreement is to keep your allotment cultivated and tidy.

There are also rules requiring you to look after paths, hedges, fences and gates on the allotment and ensure paths don't become obstructed by overgrown hedges or materials. By thinking about how your actions may affect other tenants and adjacent properties it may be possible to avoid unnecessary conflict. Here are some simple tips:

- Don't allow weeds to seed or spread onto other allotments or gardens.
- Keep the paths clear with hedges and fences adjacent to your allotment well maintained and no more than 4 feet high.
- Don't dump litter or waste on communal areas and show respect and consideration when you use other communal features such as buildings, taps, and compost bays.
- Only have bonfires as a last resort and consider alternatives such as composting or taking your waste to your local Household Waste Recycling Centre.
- **Close and lock the entrance gate immediately after use.**

Sheds, Greenhouses & Polytunnels

Many new tenants will wish to construct a shed for storage and /or greenhouses and poly-tunnels for growing seedlings, young and tender plants.

If you are considering putting up a structure on your allotment you will need written permission from the Committee. At the end of your tenancy, unless you have an agreement, you will be expected to remove any structure you have installed.

All structures should be well built and maintained and not pose a hazard or nuisance to yourself or the public.

Storage of Materials & Waste

- Don't store materials on your plot unless you intend to use them immediately and always store them safely and tidily. Large quantities of materials reduce your plot size and can pose a hazard.
- Dispose of waste responsibly and recycle materials where possible by either composting on site, taking it home or to your local household waste disposal site.
 - Do not bring old tyres or carpets on to your plot as they may pose a hazard or contaminate the soil.
- Remove any broken glass from your plot.
- It is an offence to leave waste material in communal areas. From time to time communal skips are ordered for people needing to dispose of large or bulky items. Please take care when filling skips and always wear gloves / sturdy footwear.
- Midden at Charlestown & Thompson Lane is for animal manure only (next to sales huts).



Wildlife & Pests

The types of wildlife (& pests) attracted to your allotment will vary depending on its location. Many types of birds, insects and amphibians (frogs and toads etc) prey on allotment pests such as aphids, slugs and snails.

Allotments can provide homes for these beneficial animals and tenants can encourage them by putting up nest boxes and bird feeders, creating a small wildlife pond or by growing flowers which will attract beneficial insects.

Rats and mice are attracted to waste vegetables and grain. Keeping your plot tidy and free of weeds and food debris will discourage these pests. Please turn your compost heaps regularly.

Use physical barriers such as yoghurt pots around young seedlings to fend off slugs and snails or nets over brassicas to prevent the Cabbage White Butterfly laying its eggs. If you do use off-the-shelf products please use them sparingly and in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Allotments are usually safe and secure places to be however from time to time you may either spot something which is a hazard or need to report a security issue.

Health and safety on site

It is important to remember that health, safety and security is everyone's responsibility and as a tenant you need to make sure that your plot is safe and secure for you & your family. Here are a few guidelines and rules which will help reduce risk.

- Handle & use pesticides with care and in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Never pour pesticides into unmarked bottles or containers & make sure they are locked away when not in use.
- Use protective clothing when using chemicals and wash your hands and any splashes immediately after using them.
- Don't spray chemicals when it's breezy as they may contaminate your neighbour's plot.
- Consider the potential harm to wildlife, pets & children & never spray near ditches, or ponds as the chemical may harm wildlife.
- Always dispose of your waste chemicals responsibly. Your local waste recycling centre will offer advice if you are unsure.
- If you are concerned that you may have asbestos on your plot please contact your allotment officer.
- We recommend you have access to a first aid kit.
- If you have any form of hazardous fuel on your site please let your allotment officer know.



Allotment Tenancy Agreement

When you rent an allotment you are in effect taking on responsibility for a piece of land. The Committee needs to be sure that you manage this land in a responsible manner & that it will be in a fit state to rent out again to another person if you decide to give it up. Our tenancy agreements are leased for a period of one year from the 1st January. You will receive your tenancy agreement form and rent demand which, if you want to renew for another year, will need to be signed and returned to the Committee. It is important that you read and understand the terms and conditions attached with your agreement as you will need to comply with them in order to protect your tenancy. If you have a temporary problem such as illness which prevents you from looking after your allotment please let the Allotment Officer know. Under certain circumstances we may be able to offer assistance or advice.

Subletting & Sharing

Subletting (charging others rent for the use of part or all of your plot) is not allowed and will result in your tenancy being withdrawn. You may wish to share the responsibility of looking after your plot with someone else however it is worth noting that they may not have any rights to your plot if you decide to give it up.

Rent

The rental fee you are charged covers the cost of managing the site and other local factors.

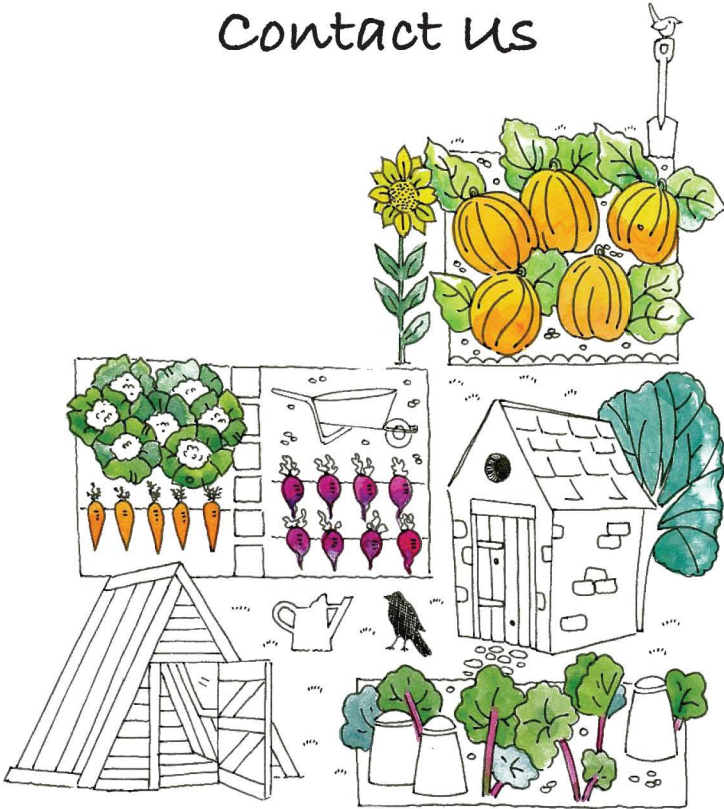
BHS rent invoices are usually raised and sent out in January for the year in advance. The invoice will explain how you can pay your rent.

The rent should be paid within the timescale explained on the invoice. If you do not pay your rent within the time allowed you will be in danger of losing your allotment.

Giving up your Allotment

If you decide that you no longer want your allotment please let us know in writing. You will be expected to remove any property unless you have made a special arrangement and to leave the allotment in a reasonable condition so that the next tenant is not unduly affected. The Council reserves the right not to refund your deposit if the allotment needs renovation work.

Contact Us



Names of Current Allotment officers can be found online
and on the Notice board at both sites.

Charlestown **charlestown@baildonhort.co.uk**

Thompson Lane **thompsonlane@baildonhort.co.uk**

Telephone **01274 5931698***

* This is a council number and your enquiry will be forwarded on to the right person.

www.baildonhort.btck.co.uk

