

Trap Ground Allotment Association Rules (updated April 2010)

There are rules governing the site. A set of revised rules were agreed at the 2010 AGM.

Underlined text indicates amendments to the proposed rule changes discussed and agreed at the AGM held on 31 March 2010.

The current rules are designed to protect the site, maintain standards and define the powers and duties of the committee. These are set out below:

1 The Title of Association is Trap Grounds Allotment Association (TGAA).

2 The Trustees The Association shall appoint three Trustees and all land occupied by the members is held under licence from the Trustees. On death or retirement of a Trustee, the vacancy shall be filled at the next Annual General Meeting.

3 The Committee shall consist of the Chair, Treasurer, Secretary(ies), Letting Secretary(ies) and at least three other members.

Duties and powers of the committee

i) The committee shall hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) giving due notice to members of the time and place. At this meeting, committee members shall be elected and an auditor appointed. The rules of the Association may be changed only at the AGM and by majority vote. The quorum for the AGM shall be five.

ii) The committee shall have the power to appoint a member to fill any vacancy that may occur between AGMs.

iii) The committee will let plots in accordance with the Code of practice for lettings as agreed at the 2004 AGM (see below).

iv) The committee is responsible for fixing the amount of fees and any other levies that may be necessary, also for the letting of plots and the collection of fees.

v) The committee may authorise payments for work or materials necessary for maintenance of the Association's property.

vi) Should the committee need to give any member notice to quit, two months warning notice of this will be given to that member.

vii) Holders of plots left unworked for two months or more – but only one month in the growing season (March to October) - may be issued with a letter (Warning letter A for new members or B for established members – see below) enquiring if they wish to remain a member. If there is no reply and the plot remains unworked for a further two weeks from the date of this letter, the committee may issue an immediate notice to quit.

viii) In the case of a persistent breach of any of the Rules for members listed below, the committee may dispossess a member of his/her allotment after issuing a seven-day notice in writing, giving reasons for the dispossession.

ix) The Committee may expel immediately any member found guilty of theft of produce from another member.

x) The quorum for a meeting of the committee shall be three.

Rules for use of plots and members' responsibilities

a) **Fees** Members must pay their plot and membership fees within a reasonable period of the AGM, which is when they become due. Fees should be paid at a time and in a manner directed by the Treasurer. Failure to pay by the 1st of May in any year will be taken to mean that the person concerned no longer wishes to be a member of the Association and their plot will be offered for re-letting. In paying their fees, members are assumed to agree to abide by these rules.

b) **Changes in circumstances** Any change of address or other contact details must be notified to the Secretary. Any written communication from the committee will be delivered by hand to the plot holder's last known postal address. If the committee is not kept informed of a change of address, any communication sent to an old and out-of-date address will still be deemed to have been delivered to the plot holder.

Members who are unable to work their plot as a result of illness or other reason for a long absence must keep the committee informed. Failure to do this may result in a plot appearing to be neglected and so being re-let.

c) **Plot boundaries** Plots are not a uniform size so new members must accept their plot boundaries as defined at the time of letting. Members are responsible for making sure that plots are clearly numbered.

d) **Care of plots** Members must keep their plots in a reasonable state of cultivation and cultivated to at least 75% of the potential in a proper and husband-like manner. This is taken to mean that a minimum of 75% of the plot (by area) is either in readiness for growing, well stocked with produce (relevant to the time of the year) or being made ready for crops or being prepared for the following season.

e) **Care of pathways** Members must co-operate to ensure that adjoining pathways giving access to plots are kept tended and clear to a width of one metre.

f) **Willows** Any construction on a plot made from live willow must be kept pruned and trimmed at all times. The committee may instruct plot holders to remove willows from plots and/or adjoining pathways and arrange to up-root any thought to be at risk of becoming a nuisance.

g) **What can be grown** Plot holders may grow any kind of vegetables, flowers, soft fruit or herbs. No wild brambles or new large trees or large shrubs are allowed on any allotment. Fruit trees may be planted only if they are of dwarf stock. This means: apples grown on rootstocks M27, M9 or M26; pears and quinces on rootstock Quince C; plums grown on rootstocks Pixy and Ferenain; and compact peach cultivars. Fruit trees and bushes should be sited only where they will not create an obstacle or nuisance to others as they grow. No more than 30% of a plot holder's total land (by area) may be given over to fruit trees. If plot holders do decide to cultivate a number of trees they must ensure that the surrounding areas are kept weed free and neatly mown.

h) **Weeds** Plot holders must take steps to eradicate pernicious weeds - such as bindweed, thistles, ground elder, golden rod, michaelmas daisies and nettles – and ensure that they do not spread to other plots. Members must not cause a nuisance to other plot holders by allowing weeds to seed.

i) **Spraying** Plot holders must take care – and be considerate of others - when spraying herbicides and pesticides or other chemicals. Spraying should take place only when conditions are still and calm.

j) **Rubbish** No rubbish may be dumped on any part of the Association's land. Carpet is considered to be rubbish and its use is prohibited on the allotment site. Unwanted vegetable matter must be burnt or composted, and other rubbish kept and put in the skip provided from time to time. Kitchen waste that attracts vermin– eg cooked food, meat, cheese and egg shells – should not be composted and so must not be brought to the allotment site.

k) **Bonfires** Members must follow the 'Code of practice for bonfires on allotment sites' laid down by Oxford City Council (see below). If a communal bonfire has been lit, members should use that in preference to a bonfire on an individual plot.

l) **Wells** Plot holders who have a well on their plot are responsible for the safe maintenance of it and for providing and maintaining a strong, raised well surround and cover. New wells may be dug only with the permission of the committee. Members can apply to the committee for help with the cost of materials for building and maintaining wells. Well water is the common property of all so wells should not be locked and they should be readily accessible to all. Wells should not be left uncovered and members must take care to replace lids on wells after use.

m) **Plot inspections** Plots will be inspected by the lettings secretaries plus a minimum of two other members of the committee regularly throughout the year. This sub-committee will monitor cultivation level and general maintenance as well as noting any non conformance with any of these rules. The holder of a plot falling

below a standard acceptable to the committee shall be notified in writing that his or her plot must be brought up to standard within a specific period of time (depending on the time of year – less time will be given during the growing season. If no acceptable improvement has been made within that time, the plot holder may be notified that his or her right to occupy the plot has been terminated.

n) **Use of machinery** When using shared machinery, members must follow the guidelines for the safe use of machinery.

o) **Children** are welcome on the allotments but must be carefully supervised by a responsible adult at all times.

p) **Consideration of other members** Members must not cause any nuisance to other members, whether from obstruction of paths, encouragement of vermin, use of bad language, loud noise or any other misuse of land.

q) **Dogs** All dogs must be kept under control at all times. When not on their owner's plot, dogs must be kept on a lead and must not be allowed to foul the allotments.

r) **Gates** Members must close gates – and ensure that they are locked - on entering and leaving the allotments. Observance of this rule is vital to the security of the allotments to preserve them from unauthorised entrance, vandalism, pilfering and/or damage from straying animals.

s) **Sub-letting** Members may not sub-let their plots or any part of them. If a plot becomes vacant, it will be let by the lettings secretaries in accordance with the 'Code of Practice for lettings' (see below).

t) **Shared plots** People may share a plot but all people sharing must become members of the association and pay the appropriate membership fee.

u) **Sheds, greenhouses, fruit cages, polytunnels and other structures** Before erecting any structure on their plot, members must read and comply with the Code of Practice for sheds and other structures as agreed at the 2009 AGM (see below).

v) **Live stock** Any member wishing to keep live stock on his or her plot must first discuss their plans with the committee and must comply with guidance published by the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners.

- Hens and Rabbits on Allotment Plots
- Bees on Allotment Sites

w) **Other** Members must accept the ruling and directions of the committee in all matters (including disputes) affecting the land.

Code of practice for lettings

1 At the time of letting, new members will be given a welcome pack consisting of a membership application form, fees payment form, a copy of the TGAA rules, an information sheet on the care of a new plot. New members will be asked to sign the membership application form and return it to the Letting Secretaries and to send the fees payment form to the Treasurer with payment.

2 At the time of letting, and where appropriate, the Lettings Secretaries will provide new members with information and advice on the care of established trees on their plot.

3 The Lettings Secretaries will ensure that all members sign and return the membership application form. The signed copies will be retained by the Lettings Secretaries who will also pass details of new members to the Treasurer and Secretary.

4 The Secretary will be responsible for adding new members to the email distribution list.

5 Two months after the date of letting – one month in the growing season (March to October) - the Lettings Secretaries will inspect the state of the plot. Warning letter A will be sent if no reasonable progress is seen to have taken place.

6 If there is no response by the given date (two weeks later), the Lettings Secretaries will liaise with the Committee, which will issue a Notice to Quit.

7 When necessary, Lettings Secretaries will keep a waiting list; the order of names will be as per the dates when the prospective plot holders first made contact. However, prospective plot holders who live locally will be given priority over people who do not.

8 Existing members who want an additional half plot must take their turn on the waiting list. However, Lettings Secretaries will have discretion to allow an existing member 'in good standing' to jump the queue if a plot becomes available near to his/her existing one

Warning letter A: to new members not working on their plots

Date

Dear

Plot number:

As you no doubt know, there is now a strong demand for allotments on the Trap Grounds with a lengthening waiting list. Because of this, the Committee is anxious to ensure that all plots currently let are being worked to their full advantage.

On a recent inspection, we noted that very little work appears to have been done on the plot let to you two months ago[in the growing season: one month ago]. We do realise that there may be special reasons for the delay in working your plot but we would like to know when you can start working seriously or, sadly, if you feel you must resign. We certainly do not want you to resign but if you do feel that this is the best course, we are willing to reimburse the unused portion of your fees if you wish.

Please phone one of us about this as soon as possible, or leave a message on the answer phone with a number to call back. Please do not leave messages with third parties as these can go astray.

If we have not heard from you by [two weeks from the date on the letter], the Committee will assume that you have resigned and the plot will be re-let.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Lettings Secretaries

Phone numbers

Warning letter B: to existing members neglecting their plots

Date

Dear

Plot number:

As you no doubt know, there is now a strong demand for allotments on the Trap Grounds with a lengthening waiting list. Because of this, the Committee is anxious to ensure that all plots currently let are being worked to their full advantage.

A recent inspection of plots (something we do regularly) showed that your plot was not in 'a reasonable state of cultivation' (rules for members d) and you are 'causing nuisance to other members by allowing weeds to seed' (rules for members h)

We do realise that the difficulties preventing you from cultivating your plot may be temporary and that you may be about to get back to work, but alternatively you may be beginning to lose heart and give up. Either way, would you please phone one of us as soon as possible, or leave a message on the answer phone with a number to call back. Please do not leave messages with third parties as these sometimes go astray.

We certainly do not wish to lose members but, sadly, neither can we allow plots to remain uncultivated.

If we have not heard from you by [two weeks from the date on the letter], the Committee will assume that you have resigned and the plot will be re-let.

Looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely

Lettings Secretaries

Phone numbers

Code of practice for bonfires on Allotment sites

1 Bonfires must be supervised and attended at all times either in a communal area or on the plot holder's own plot.

2 No household rubbish, rubber, plastic (including bottles and bags), foam, tyres or oils shall be burnt on site.

3 If a communal area is provided then this should be used in preference to a plot holder's own plot.

4 Bonfires must not be positioned within six feet of any fencing, hedging, shed or other building or within two feet of a pathway or roadway.

5 Any plot holder found to have caused damage with a bonfire shall be liable for the full costs of repair or replacement.

6 There are to be no bonfires on Bank or Public Holidays and the site restrictions on lighting times for bonfires must be obeyed.

7 Only dry material should be burnt and wherever possible, composting and/or shredders should be used in preference to burning.

8 'No bonfire shall cause a smoke nuisance to the surrounding residents' as stated in Section 79(1)(b) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

9 Any plot holder found to be causing a smoke nuisance by the Environmental Health Department and/or a Committee Member or be in breach of this Code of Practice may have their allotment tenancy terminated.

Environmental Health

Oxford City Council

Code of practice on sheds and other structures

1 Where a full plot is sub-divided into two smaller plots, only one shed may be erected on the full-plot area; it is suggested that this could be shared between the two plot-holders.

2 Members considering erecting any structure on their plot are asked to consult their neighbours on the site and be prepared to compromise about the size and location of any structure.

3 Subject to rules 1 and 2 above, members may erect sheds, greenhouses, polytunnels and other structures up to the size 7ft by 5ft (base area) or the metric equivalent. Anyone wishing to erect something larger – or a fruit cage - must apply in writing to the Committee. They will be invited to present their case to the Committee when it next meets.

4 Sheds or greenhouses should not be erected less than 18 inches from a communal path in order to allow room for machinery to be operated on the paths.

5 Sheds should be used solely for storing materials for use on the allotment.

6 Members might generally like to consider shed-sharing with their plot neighbours in order to share the costs and reduce the amount of land used for the purpose. The Committee will look favourably at requests for permission to build sheds larger than 7ft by 5ft where they are to be shared.

7 Members considering where on their plot to erect a shed might like to consider doing so on the highest point of the plot, thus reducing the risk of flood damage to their shed and its contents. For the same reason, placing sheds on sleepers or other supports makes sense.

8 Members should be aware that there is a history of sheds being broken into on the site. It is not advisable, therefore, to store valuable tools or other items of value in wooden sheds. Members are entirely responsible for the security of sheds and their contents.

9 Members considering erecting greenhouses on their plot should be aware that such structures have invited vandalism in the past.

| **April 2010**