

Ebley Allotments Association

Welcome Letter to New Plot Holders (and General Information)

Dear member(s)

On behalf of Ebley Allotment Association Committee, we would like to welcome you to Ebley Allotments. We hope you enjoy your plot and the pleasures of allotment gardening.

Here are a few points from the Committee. We hope you find them useful.

1. The underlying principle of having a plot is for the enjoyment and pleasure of cultivating your own edible crops (and eating, of course) and ornamental flowers. Plot holders have plots for a variety of reasons: as a pastime, to grow fresh vegetables, as an escape from the computer (!), to introduce their children to growing, for exercise and fresh air. Whatever the reason, you will find plot holders to be a sociable bunch! And there are some very experienced gardeners on site so do ask for guidance!

2. Inevitably, there are some rules to ensure all plot holders enjoy their plots and avoid harm. All plot holders agree to abide by the Tenancy Agreement and the policies and procedures agreed by the Committee. We aim to keep these as straightforward as possible. If there are any issues that arise, we ask you to put these in writing (email) to the Secretary in the first instance or discuss with the Dedicated Member of the Committee who is on site. Further information can be obtained in our policy documents on our website.

3. Most of our communication is by email including regular updates from Ebley Allotments and a monthly newsletter from The National Allotments Association (NSALG). We welcome any contact and questions from our members so do keep in touch. Policies and procedures are available to view on the Cainscross Town Council website under Ebley Allotments: <http://www.cainscross-pc.gov.uk/>

4. Please remember that the underlying theme is that allotment land is for cultivation (growing crops) for use by your household/ family. The growing of ornamental flowers, especially those that encourage pollinating insects, is also welcomed although we would ask that flowers are a maximum of 25%.

5. Tenants are free to cultivate their plots in their own way but their activities must not harm themselves, their neighbours or the environment. We appreciate that, at the outset of taking on a plot, there may be a lot of clearing to be done so we will be sympathetic and discuss with you the priorities. We undertake regular Plot Inspections/ Walk Rounds and if, after a period of time, a plot is not being cultivated or dug ready for planting and generally weed free then you will be contacted and reminded of the expectation. We appreciate that weeds will grow, however, if they start to become a nuisance to other plot holders then we expect them to be cleared and you will be given one month to do so. The sowing of green manure is encouraged to keep weeds down when part of the plot is not used for cultivation. The use of weed suppressant material is **only** permitted in the winter months.

6. If there are mitigating circumstances why you are not able to cultivate your plot eg illness, injury etc, then we would ask you to email the Secretary to explain and/ or speak to the Dedicated Committee Member and we will do our best to help. Should a plot continue to show a lack of cultivation despite reminders, then the Committee will invoke the Eviction Policy. We prefer to avoid this!

7. Paths: these must be kept clear of debris at all times. We have a (very) small team of volunteers who mow the main paths. This is a massive undertaking so we expect individual plot holders to take responsibility for keeping the side grass paths around their plots cut. **All side paths should be a maximum of two feet between plots** and it is important that the paths are prevented from

encroaching onto your plot as this makes the plots untidy, impossible to mow and also decreases space for cultivation. Mowers are available to borrow (ask the Dedicated Committee Member) or you might find a battery operated strimmer very useful.

8. Cars: we have a dedicated car park at the top of the site. It can get quite busy so please park considerately (if you need to bring a car) or park on Chapel Lane. You are allowed (if the main paths are open) to park briefly near your plot to load or unload but then must drive round the site and park in the car park. Please observe the one way system and do not drive onto the site if there has been heavy rain.

9. Victory Park gate: if you need access via Victory Park, then do email the Secretary for the padlock code.

10. Food Bank: during the summer months, we collect surplus produce to donate to the Food Bank. This is organised by a member of the Committee and is hugely welcomed by the Food Bank as you can imagine. Collections are twice weekly (Tuesdays approx 10am and Thursdays at 1.30pm). All you need to do is put it in the wooden box located in the corner of the car park. If possible please put your produce in the polystyrene boxes (inside the wooden box) as this helps to keep a constant temperature and ensure the food is in the best condition when it leaves our site. There is a combination padlock on the wooden box (e mail the Secretary for the code). After you have made your donation please replace the padlock and move the dials AFTER it is locked.

11. Water! Collecting rainwater is a priority and we encourage all plot holders to collect rain water in barrels. There are a number of taps around the site for plot holders to use. RHS advice on watering: *'During spells of dry weather, the key to watering successfully is to water thoroughly to a depth of 30cm (1ft). Avoid watering the top centimetre or so on a daily basis, for example. Watering every 10-14 days (if there is no rain) is a general guide and also water in the mornings or evenings.'*

12. King's Seeds: as members of the National Allotment Association, we have access to King's Seeds catalogues for the purchase of seeds etc at a discounted price. The catalogues contain a wealth of information and may well encourage you to try new varieties! The Newsletter will inform you when the catalogues can be collected from the Dedicated Committee Member. Ebley Allotments Association obtains a small donation for its funds depending on the size of the order.

Finally, if you are fairly new to growing crops, then do ask for guidance.. and chat to your neighbours who often have huge experience. If you are feeling a bit overwhelmed, please speak to the Dedicated Committee Member who will be only too willing to offer advice.

ENJOY YOUR PLOT!