

All previous By Laws are rescinded

Woburn Sands and District Allotment Society Ltd

*An Industrial and Provident Society
Registration No. 8139R*

By Laws

Amended: 25th April 2013

**Registered Office: Keens Shay Keens MK
Sovereign Court
230 Upper Fifth Street
Milton Keynes
MK9 2HR**

Woburn Sands and District Allotment Society Ltd

1. **Shareholding:** Each Member of the Society (hereafter called Member) holds one share for each 5-pole plot allocated. The value of each share is 10p¹. No Member may hold more than 40 poles². As a general principle, the number of poles allocated per Member will be limited to 20. However, if a greater number has been allocated before 1st January 2012, then this Member will be allowed to continue to hold any amount previously allocated by the Management Committee (hereafter referred to as the Committee).

2. **Tenants - Membership Fee:** A non-refundable payment is required to become a Tenant. This is regarded as a Membership Fee. A Tenant is an Associate Member of the Society and does not have a vote at an AGM or SGM. The Membership Fee is set by the Committee and approved at an Annual General Meeting (AGM) or Special General Meeting (SGM). At 1st April 2013, this payment was £21.00.

3. **Probationary Period:** All Plot Holders are tenants for a probationary period, usually 12 months. However, it can be longer if deemed necessary by the Committee.

4. **Shareholder Status:** Following the first AGM (ie in March) after the probationary period ends, the Associate Member then moves to Shareholder Status. As at 1st April 2013, a Share Certificate for the plot(s) was issued at a cost of £4.00 per share, ie £4.00 per 5-pole or £8.00 per 10-pole of plot. On leaving the Allotment Society, the Member will receive a refund of monies paid for Share Certificates which he/she is expected to return to the Secretary.

5. **Pole Charge Payments:** Every Member shall pay their pole charges, and any other monies owing, by the 30th April. An option exists to pay pole charges at the AGM which will usually take place in the second or third week of March.
 - a) The Member who holds the plot on the 1st April each year shall be liable for the pole charge.
 - b) The period from 1st April until 31st March is regarded as the 'Plot Year' and 'Members' Financial Year'.
 - c) From 1st April 2014, the annual pole charge will be £2.50 per pole of plot(s).
 - d) A levy can be introduced by the Committee at any time to cover unforeseen expenses and it shall be levied in proportion to the Member's shareholding. Approval for this levy is not required by Members voting at an AGM or SGM.

6. **Keys:** Each member shall pay £5.00 for one key to the padlock on the gates, this money being refundable on return of the key when leaving the Society. All keys issued fit all locks to the five gates to the Field.

7. **Plot Cultivation and Footpaths:** Every Member shall keep their allotment in a proper state of cultivation. It is the responsibility of the Committee to ensure good husbandry of the Allotment Society's plots. To this end, the Committee will proceed in the following manner.
 - a) All plots will be inspected twice each year, ie in spring/summer/autumn, at the discretion of the Committee.
 - b) In the event of any Member's allotment, or part thereof, being neglected so that it becomes overgrown with perennial or other weeds, the Committee shall in writing, request the Member concerned to put it in good order by cultivation within one month.

¹ Friendly Societies Act 1992

² Allotments Act 1922

⁴ 1st April 2012 figure

If the Member fails to do this efficiently within the time stated, the Committee shall arrange to have the ground cleared of weeds by mowing, flailing or otherwise, and shall recover the cost from the Member concerned.

- c) Overgrown plots will be cut down within the timescale indicated above and the offending Member will be charged £35.00 (£25.00⁴) for this action, be it for part of or for the whole plot.
 - d) Should this occur, the following year a surcharge will be levied at an additional £35.00 (£25.00⁴).
 - e) After two years, if the problem persists, the Committee will seek the expulsion of the offending Member from the Society under Rule 10 of the Constitution.
 - f) Plot Footpaths: All plots should be separated by paths which are to be mutually shared and maintained by the two adjacent plot holders. Where plots are fenced, the fencing must not encompass or encroach on the path(s). If two plots are merged, the path must be replaced when the plots are relinquished.
 - g) Each plot holder is required to place a sign on his/her allotment indicating the plot number.
8. It is expected that Members cultivate their own plots. This may be done with the help of family and friends. Members shall not sublet. Subletting in this context is defined as allowing others to cultivate their plot instead of the Member **or** renting the plot to another person.
 9. Where a Member shares a 10-pole plot with another Member, both Members must act responsibly and considerately with regard to granting mutual access, eg with deliveries of manure. These 5-pole plots will be given an 'a' or 'b' designation after the plot number. The half-plot nearer to the main track or pathway will be given the 'a' designation and the further 'b'. The plot's footpaths running parallel to the plot will be shared.
 10. The Secretary will keep a waiting list of people requiring allotments and the Committee will, in principle, allocate these according to the order in which application is made. Priority will be given to residents of Woburn Sands.
 11. The Allotments are private property and access is via gates to which all Members have a key. Members should close and lock gates after entering and on leaving the field. Members shall not pass keys on or make copies. Members may request a second key for the cost of the key cutting.
 12. No encroachment or trespass shall be made by any Member on a neighbouring allotment and no damage shall be done by a Member to the fences, gates, gateposts or to the cropping on any of the allotments. The Committee shall assess any damage done either by a Member or by a person accompanying that Member, and the offender shall pay such sum as the Committee may determine to the Member who has suffered the damage, or to the Society. Theft of produce from plots will lead to immediate termination of membership and expulsion from the Society.
 13. **The Field and Strangers on it:** The Field is defined as the area contained within the boundaries of the land owned by the Society.
All Members, without putting themselves at risk, should challenge any person they suspect of not being a Member who is seen in the allotment Field. It must be stressed that the Society's privacy must be protected at all times. It is not permitted for the general public to enter the Field, for example to run, jog or walk.
 14. Every Member shall keep the tracks or pathways bordering their allotment(s) in good repair and shall promptly remove any refuse or substance placed thereon. Grass and weeds growing on the tracks and pathways are to be kept cut back and not allowed to seed. Depositing organic and other waste along the Field's borders, or anywhere else on the Field, is not permitted.

15. Fruit trees or bushes shall not hang over the tracks and pathways or adjacent allotments.
16. Written consent is required from the Committee should a Plot Holder wish to keep bees, rabbits or hens⁵ (not cockerels). No other livestock will be considered. If bees, rabbits or hens are kept, this must be done so in accordance with the strict guidelines provided by the Committee and so that there is no nuisance to any other Plot Holder or to the neighbours of the Society. Rabbits or hens shall be kept in such a manner that is not prejudicial to their or Plot Holders' health.
17. The Committee administers communal purchases, distribution and maintenance schemes to provide a service to Members and income for the Society. No other commercial enterprises may take place on the Field⁶.
18. Written consent is required from the Committee to erect greenhouses, sheds or other structures larger than 8ft long x 6ft wide (2.4m x 1.8m). In principle, this is the maximum size of the 'footprint' permitted.
19. Dogs shall not be taken on the field except on a leash.
20. Only small, hand operated rotavators (max. 5hp) and lawn mowers may be kept on the field.
21. **Bonfires:** Bonfires are permitted on the Allotment Field but only within the strict conditions specified in the Appendix. Five key aspects are given below, but other conditions specified in the Appendix are also important.
 - a) Bonfires are permitted between 1st October and 30th April inclusive.
 - b) Permits must be renewed each year.
 - c) No bonfires permitted on Sundays in this period.
 - d) Great care must be taken to ensure bonfire smoke doesn't blow towards Tidbury Close.
 - e) Each Plot Holder with a bonfire permit must have an operational fire extinguisher or some other means available to extinguish the fire whilst the bonfire is alight.⁷
22. Cars or other vehicles are not allowed on the field except for delivery and collection purposes and must carry a minimum of third party insurance. In the event of wet ground conditions, the Committee may impose a total vehicle ban.
23. Written permission must be obtained from the Committee for pest control for vermin, eg rabbits, rats, squirrels and pigeons etc. prior to such activity.
24. **Plot Awards:** Judging shall take place about late June or early July. Independent judges shall be appointed by the Committee who will, among other things, consider plot design, innovative gardening, quality of crops, pest control, as well as general tidiness of the plot, paths and pathways.
25. A copy of the Constitution and By Laws (formerly referred to as the Registered Rules) will be given to all new Members and can be seen on application to the Secretary at a convenient time. A copy is also available on the website.
26. No amendment, or amendments, to these By Laws shall take effect until it has, or they have, been sanctioned by either an AGM or SGM of the Members. Due notice of the proposed amendments has to be given in the notice convening the meeting in accordance with the Constitution.

⁵ Allotments Act 1922

⁶ Allotments Act 1950 Section 12

⁷ Field Insurance requirement

Approved by the Annual General Meeting of Members held on

Signed: Chairman.....Date:.....

Secretary.....Date:

APPENDIX

By Laws and Guidelines Relating to Bonfires

1. These By Laws and Guidelines supersede those sent to Allotment Society Members in early June '12. This document is now the definitive version on this topic. Even if you signed and returned the previous reply form, you are required to complete and return an official form the Secretary will be able to provide.
2. A Plot Holder who has not signed, dated and returned an official reply form will not be allowed to have a bonfire. Any contravention of this requirement may lead to dismissal from the Allotment Society.
3. **Bonfires may only be lit between 1st October and 30th April.** Any Plot Holder not abiding by this By Law may be dismissed from the Society.
4. Great care must be taken to ensure that smoke does not blow over onto Tidbury Close. Therefore, prevailing wind direction at the time the bonfire is lit will be of paramount importance and must be taken into account.
5. Plot Holders nearest to Tidbury Close must have bonfires on their plot at the furthest point away from these homes.
6. Bonfires are banned between May 1st and September 30th, there being no exception to this rule. Lighting a bonfire between these dates may result in the Plot Holder being dismissed from the Society.
7. **No bonfires to be lit on Sundays.**
8. *Each Plot Holder with a bonfire permit must have an operational fire extinguisher or some other means available to extinguish the fire whilst the bonfire is alight.*
9. Bonfires should only contain dry allotment material, which will help reduce smoke. Materials that must not be burnt are tyres, carpets, oil, plastics, or any other toxic material. Materials must not be brought onto the field for burning, eg burning of domestic household waste is prohibited. Bonfires must only be lit on an authorised Plot Holder's own plot, not on other plots, or on paths and walkways.
10. Try to keep the bonfire small, hot and feed it a little at a time to maintain the heat. This minimises smoke emissions. In this way, a bonfire should last no longer than an hour
11. Smoke may occasionally blow across the Field from lighted bonfires, therefore we would, naturally, expect other Plot Holders to be tolerant towards any such smoke. This has always been the situation before the bonfire ban was imposed.
12. Plot Holders must not leave their bonfire unattended and must stay on the field for a minimum of one hour after bonfires have been extinguished. Use water to douse and extinguish, if necessary.
13. Unattended or nuisance bonfires must be reported to a Committee Member immediately.
14. Please be aware that, if Plot Holders do not strictly adhere to the above By Laws and Guidelines, the Management Committee will have no alternative other than to reinstate the bonfire ban.

Anyone wishing to have bonfires must complete the official 'permission' application form which can be obtained from, and must be returned to, the Secretary who will keep a register of applicants granted permission to have bonfires.