



Exeter
City Council

ALLOTMENT GARDENS
RULES & CONDITIONS: 2026

Introduction

- a) The City Council has the power to make rules in order to regulate and manage the letting and use of individual allotments on its allotment sites.
- b) The Tenant is bound by the City Council's Rules and Conditions and by any relevant legislation being in effect at the time.
- c) Changes to these rules apply to all Council Allotment tenancies and the revised Rules replace those previously in force.
- d) These Rules apply in general to all the Council's allotment sites. Any specific variations will be notified to the Tenant to whom it applies.
- e) These Rules may be amended from time to time and a copy of these will be made available as defined under 'Notification.'
- f) Failure to comply with the Rules or conditions of tenancy will result in action being taken to terminate the tenancy.
- g) The Council accepts no responsibility for loss by accident, fire, theft, or damage on any Allotment. Tenants are advised not to store any items of value on the allotment.
- h) Any costs incurred by the Council in undertaking works in default of a Notice or clearing away any material at the termination of the tenancy will be recharged to the Tenant.
- i) At the commencement of the tenancy the Tenant shall assume responsibility for all items on the Allotment.
- j) The Council accepts no responsibility for any existing items within a plot when taken on as a new tenancy.

The Council reserves the right to alter, amend or suspend these rules in relation to a specific Tenancy.

Terms and Conditions

1. Allotment Use and Storage

- a) Tenants must use their Allotment and any structures on it for their own personal use and must not carry out any business thereon or sell produce from it.
- b) The Tenant may use the Allotment only for those horticulture purposes that the Council deems appropriate.
- c) Only materials for use on the Allotment may be stored there, such as beanpoles, cloches, pots, and netting for seasonal use.
- d) Storage of other items is not permitted.
- e) The use or storage of asbestos or similar hazardous materials is not permitted on the site.
- f) Allotments must be kept in a clean and tidy manner with no waste evident and structures utilised either for storage of tools and materials or for cultivation purposes.

- g) Over the next 6 months there will be a gradual phase out of the use of chemicals on all allotment plots (pesticides / herbicides, e.g. glyphosate rodenticides).

This means as from **1st of November 2026**, the use of such chemicals is strictly prohibited. In the meantime, chemicals must be stored safely to avoid any chemical spillage.

2. Cultivation and Weed Control

- a) The Allotment is let on the condition that it is maintained in a state of proper cultivation and must be maintained in such a manner that a minimum of 60% of the plot area (**excluding trees and bushes**) is in a state of active cultivation unless by agreement with the Authorised Officer.
- b) It is the Tenant's responsibility to keep the Allotment free of weeds, grasses (other than on pathways) and overgrowth that may cause a nuisance to adjoining Tenants. Any growth must be commensurate with an allotment space or under adequate control.
- c) No monoculture cropping on allotment plots.
- d) The council promotes usage of allotment plots to aid biodiversity and habitat. Such usage must be in line with proper cultivation and in keeping the allotment plot in a tidy manner.

3. Waste Materials and Pollutants

- a) Carpet may not be brought onto site or used in any way on an allotment. Any carpet found on an allotment will need to be removed immediately.
- b) Tyres cannot be brought onto site or used in any way on an allotment.
- c) The use of artificial grass within allotment plots is not permitted.
- d) The use of concrete for shed bases, glass houses or for paving, or any solid brick and cement structures is not permitted (dry laid slabs are permitted).
- e) Waste material, including green waste, may not be brought onto the Allotment site.
- f) Compostable material originating from the Allotment must be stored for use in a composter or purpose-built enclosure.
- g) The Tenant must not allow any decaying matter to remain on the Allotment Garden which may cause a nuisance or annoyance.
- h) The Tenant is responsible for their own waste and must dispose of accordingly.
- i) Materials must only be brought onto allotment plots for immediate or near-term use.

4. Structures, Paths, and Fences

- a) The written permission of the Council is required before any structure may be placed on an Allotment.

- b) Any structure on the Allotment must be temporary and must be maintained in safe condition.
- c) Upkeep of any structures must be ongoing so that these should not be allowed to deteriorate.
- d) Tenants taking on an Allotment with existing structures will need to adhere to the ongoing upkeep of those structures.
- e) Structures shall be made from non-hazardous materials and shall be in keeping with the general environment. The use of tyres and similar materials is not permitted.
- f) If the Council is not satisfied with the condition of the structure the Tenant must either repair it to the Council's satisfaction or remove the structure within one month of an instruction to do so.
- g) Allotment associations subject to an Allotment Management Agreement with the Council may limit the size of structures specific to their site.
- h) Structures shall not exceed in size **8'x 6' (2.44m x 1.83m) on a 5-rod plot** and **10'x 8' (3.05m x 2.44m) on a 10-rod plot** unless written permission is given by an authorised officer. In addition to a permitted shed, you can request permission for 1 other structure (i.e. a greenhouse or a polytunnel which must be used for cultivation and not storage).
- i) No structures are permitted for plots smaller than 4 rods.
- j) Polytunnel construction material must be polythene as opposed to a net cover, unless used for fruit cage purposes.

4.1 Structures must be adequately secured

- a) Structures must be kept within the boundary of the Allotment and must not be constructed over underground utilities (e.g., water supply pipes).
- b) Solid fences adjacent to neighbours Allotments should not exceed 1 metre in height and wire and trellis fences should not exceed 1.5 meters in height.
- c) The use of barbed (type) wire is prohibited.
- d) No materials, plant or structures are to be attached to Council fencing.

4.2 Structures at the termination of the Tenancy

- a) The Council accepts no responsibility for structures left on the allotment at the termination of the tenancy.
- b) Any such structures should be removed by the outgoing tenant unless it is left by agreement in writing with the Authorised Officer for the benefit of the incoming tenant or others on the site.

4.3 Paths & Principal Paths

- a) All paths between Allotments must be maintained at a minimum of 600mm (2 feet) wide and be cut and maintained to the nearest half width by each adjoining tenant.
- b) Paths must be kept clear of obstructions at all times.
- c) Principal Paths must not be obstructed or parked on by vehicles.

5. Water, Bonfires and Other Restrictions

- a) Hosepipes or similar siphoning devices are not to be used to remove water from any water trough and Tenants must take every precaution to prevent contamination of the troughs or water supplies, e.g., tools and containers should not be rinsed in the troughs.
- b) The water supply to the site will be turned off between the 1st October and 1st April to avoid frost damage to pipes.
- c) Bonfires must be individual only for each plot (no collective bonfires) and must be contained.
- d) Bonfires are permitted only between 1 September and 31 March.
- e) Bonfires can only take place after midday on; Tuesdays, Saturdays (September only).
- f) The first Saturday of the month (October – March).
- g) Nuisance to neighbours must be avoided at all costs.
- h) All bonfires must be extinguished by dusk.
- i) No material other than that produced on the Allotment may be burnt.
- j) The use of accelerants is prohibited.
- k) Only dry vegetable material may be burnt.
- l) All potentially hazardous materials should be removed from the allotment site and disposed of at the relevant civic amenity site.
- m) Tenants may not remove soil or similar materials from the site.

6. Trees, Hedges, and Invasive Plants

- a) The planting of trees on the Allotment (with effect from 1/10/2014) is restricted to those on dwarfing rootstocks.
- b) Where trees planted prior to rule changes to dwarf rootstock only, these must be managed and maintained in line with the advice of the Authorised Officer so as not to become overgrown, excessively sizeable or to shade out adjacent plots or prevent cultivation in line with the non-cultivation rules.
- c) Tenants must not, cut or prune any trees outside their own Allotment, or fell any trees within their allotment plot, without consent of the Authorised Officer.
- d) Large or invasive plants including (but not confined to) bamboo, willow and forms of hazel may not be grown on the allotment.
- e) Tenants are responsible for maintaining any hedge or fence on their Allotment. Hedges abutting the Allotment should be trimmed so as not to

obstruct pedestrian or vehicular access or restrict the use of adjoining Allotments.

- f) Cutting of trees and hedges should not be undertaken during bird nesting season (1 March – 31 Aug).
- g) Only up to **1 tree and 2 bushes may be planted within a 5-rod plot** and up to **2 trees and 4 bushes on a 10-rod plot** (this increases in line with larger plots with agreement from ECC). Trained espalier tiers are exempt from this rule on the proviso that they are regularly pruned and shaped in line with established horticultural practice.

7. Assignment and Sub-Letting

- a) The Tenancy of an Allotment is personal to the Tenant named on the agreement.
- b) The Tenant may not assign or sublet all or part of their Allotment or structures thereon.
- c) The Tenant may share the use of the Allotment and or structures by agreement with the Authorised Officer.
- d) The tenant or their visitors may not enter onto or cross another Allotment without the express permission of the Tenant of that Allotment or in the case of a vacant Allotment, the Authorised Officer.

8. Water Storage and Ponds

- a) Ponds must be temporary and should not be constructed of concrete or any other hard landscape material. All ponds should be sited at least 2 metres distance from any Principal Path or path.
- b) The maximum surface area for a pond is 2.5 square metres and will be no deeper than 50cm deep. Ponds should be protected sufficiently to prevent potential accidents.
- c) Water storage containers must be suitable and deemed appropriate by the Council for the purpose.

9. Dogs, Livestock and Bees

- a) You are not permitted to keep any animals on your allotment in the first year of tenancy. From year 2 onwards, written permission is required from ECC if you want to keep hens or apply to keep bees.
- b) Dogs must not be brought onto any Allotment unless they are kept on a lead or otherwise restrained at all times. Dogs may not foul the site or stray onto other Allotments.
- c) The burial of animals on any Allotment land is strictly forbidden.
- d) Any Allotment holder contemplating keeping bees on their Allotment must contact the Council and a Bee Agreement finalised and agreed by both parties prior to the bees being sourced.
- e) No animals or livestock (other than bees, hens, and stock rabbits) may be kept overnight on site.

- f) A maximum of ten hens or four stock rabbits, (being rabbits more than six months old), may be kept on any ten Rods of Allotment Garden.
- g) You must register within one month of keeping poultry or captive birds in England. This rule applies to any number. As from 1st October 2024, any birds kept on an allotment plot must be officially registered with DEFRA. Plot holders can register their birds by email <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/register-as-a-keeper-of-less-than-50-poultry-or-other-captive-birds>.
- h) Anyone keeping birds (including chickens on allotments) must meet the **Five Freedoms**, including: access to fresh water, suitable food, protection from pain, injury & disease, ability to express natural behaviours, proper shelter and comfort.
- i) No bird shall be kept for the purpose of fighting.
- j) A maximum of two Rods (approx. 50m²) of each 10 Rod (approx. 250 m²) Allotment may be used for keeping hens and 1 Rod (approx. 25m²) for rabbits.
- k) Tenants must obtain the prior written consent of the Council to keep livestock or bees.
- l) As part of the bee application process, bee hives must be sited at least 15 metres away from any footpaths, cycle paths, residential boundaries, or roads. ECC has the right to decline permission to keep bees if we have a legitimate concern.
- m) Tenants cannot keep livestock or bees on Allotments smaller than 10 Rods (approx. 250 m²)
- n) Any part of the Allotment used for keeping hens or rabbits must be securely and adequately fenced to the satisfaction of the Council.
- o) Animal welfare guidelines must be followed and livestock provided with suitable and sufficient living conditions, diet and water.

10. Rent

- a) Rents will be reviewed and will rise by the amount agreed by the Council prior to the 1st April each year.
- b) Rent increase will apply to all tenants irrespective of whether the individual tenant has been advised of the increase. It is the tenant's responsibility to acquaint themselves of the increase.
- c) Any increase in rent will apply from the 30th September of each year and will be announced by way of a Notification within The Council's published Fees and Charges available on www.exeter.gov.uk.
- d) If the rent remains unpaid for a period of more than 40 days from the due date, the Allotment shall be considered vacant and will be re-let.
- e) The rent year runs from 30th September. Tenants taking up an allotment within the rent year will be required to pay for the remainder of the year pro rata.
- f) A tenant may relinquish their Allotment at any time, or have their tenancy terminated for breach of the tenancy agreement before year end but no rebate will be payable.

- g) The tenant must remove any items or derelict structures from their Allotment before the end of their tenancy.
- h) Tenants should only take on an additional allotment plot when the waiting list for the site is exhausted. Permission must be given by the Authorised Officer.
- i) Tenants must immediately inform the Council in writing of changes of address and contact details.
- j) If a Tenant moves to an address outside of the boundary of the Exeter City Council their tenancy will be terminated.
- k) Notices to be served by the Council on the Tenant may be sent to the Tenant's address in the Tenancy Agreement (or as subsequently notified to the Council under these rules) by ordinary post or served on the Tenant personally; or placed on the Allotment.

Written information for the Council should be sent to Exeter City Council or by email to allotments@exeter.gov.uk

11. Site Safety and Security

- a) No Tenant may cause or permit harassment, alarm or distress to another occupier or user of the Site.
- b) It is the responsibility of the Tenant to ensure that their use and occupation of the Allotment do not represent a danger to themselves or others visiting the Site.
- c) Anything on the Allotment which is considered hazardous by an Officer of the Council shall be removed.
- d) Storage of fuels, other than small amounts (5 litres) for immediate use is prohibited.
- e) Tenants may not bring, use, or allow the use of barbed or razor wire or any similar material on the Allotment.
- f) All Tenants must lock gates on entry and departure to prevent access by unauthorised people or animals. This applies even if the gate is found to be already unlocked on arrival / departure.
- g) Children brought onto the site must be closely supervised at all times and not allowed to access any other Allotment Garden other than the Tenants.
- h) Nothing shall be done on the Allotment that will cause a nuisance to users of the other Allotments or those adjoining the Site.
- i) No overnight staying on the allotments.
- j) Only tenants and nominated individuals are authorised to be on site. Any variation must be agreed with the Authorised Officer.

12. Vehicles, Tents and Caravans

- a) Motor vehicles may only be parked within a designated parking area.
- b) Caravans and live-in vehicles are not permitted on any Allotment land overnight.

- c) The overnight use of tents or other temporary structures is not permitted on the Site.

13. Allotment Numbering and Notices

- a) Tenants must mark the Allotment number on the outside of a shed or greenhouse, or on a post, and keep it visible from the Principal Path or main access path.
- b) Only Site Society or Association, Federation and Council information may be displayed on Allotment notice boards, where provided.

14. Observance of Rules

- a) These Rules supersede any previous rules in force on Allotment Gardens or land managed in a similar way by the City Council.
- b) The Authorised Officer reserves the right to amend or waive any Rule in respect of a particular Tenancy where they consider the need is justified.
- c) Tenants must observe and comply with current rules and regulations and those which the Council may make at any time in the future.
- d) Rules will be posted online on the Council website www.exeter.gov.uk and will be displayed either on-Site notice boards or gates.
- e) Tenants must comply with any reasonable or legitimate directions given by the Authorised Officer in relation to an allotment or site.
- f) If a Tenant fails to use or keep their Allotment in compliance with these Rules, they shall be served a Warning Notice giving them 28 days to remedy the situation as specified.
- g) Failure to comply with the requirements of the Warning Notice will result in a Notice to Quit the Allotment.
- h) The Notice to Quit will require the Tenant to deliver vacant possession of the Allotment within one calendar month of the date of service of the Notice.
- i) It is the Tenant's responsibility to notify the Council in writing if they are unable for health or other reasons to maintain their Allotment.
- j) A Warning Notice will be served before a Notice to Quit except where in the opinion of the Council's Service Manager the use of the Allotment or the behaviour of those associated with it is such that the Tenancy should be terminated immediately.
- k) A Notice to Quit will be served if two previous Warning Notices have been served during the tenancy.
- l) The Authorised Officer reserves the right to enter onto the Allotment without prior notice to inspect the condition thereof or undertake groundwork or emergency repairs.

15. Observance of Rules, Disputes, etc.

- a) Interpretation of these rules will be made by the Authorised Officer.

- b) The Council's decision in any dispute is final and is delegated to the Service Manager (Public & Green Spaces) in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Place.
- c) Where allotment tenancies are rented to a group, they are collectively subject to additional rules issued by the Authorised Officer.

16. Tenancy Termination

- a) The Tenancy will be terminated where the right of occupation of the land by the Council is terminated.
- b) Otherwise, the Council will give the tenant one month's written Notice to Quit if:
 - c) The rent is in arrears for 40 days or more (whether formally demanded or not).
 - d) The Tenant is in breach of any of these rules or of their tenancy agreement.
 - e) The Tenant no longer resides within the City.
 - f) The Tenant has given 28 days' notice to terminate the Tenancy either by post to Exeter City Council Civic Centre Exeter.EX1 1JN or by emailing allotments@exeter.gov.uk giving details of the Allotment name and the Allotment number.
 - g) Upon the death of a Tenant, their partner may apply to the Council within four weeks to take over the Tenancy.
 - h) Any costs incurred by the Council in respect of the condition of the allotment at the termination of the tenancy will be recharged to the outgoing tenant.

Terms and Interpretation

In these Rules, the words used are to have the following meaning:

Allotment: An Allotment Garden (as defined Allotment Act 1922) is an area of land that is let by the Council for the cultivation of vegetable crops, fruit, flowers, and herbs.

Authorised Officer: The Service Manager (Public & Green Space) or an Officer of the Council delegated by them to perform the function.

Cultivation: Keeping the Allotment in good productive order or maintained in a manner acceptable to the Authorised Officer. The maintenance and improvement of soil, the control and prevention of flowering weeds and self-set plants which may be a nuisance to other tenants, the production of ornamental plants, vegetable crops, fruit, flowers, and herbs.

Notice: A formal direction to an individual Tenant served under the Conditions of their Tenancy (whether oral or in writing).

Notification: Any general information regarding the management of the Allotments which will be displayed as follows:

- The City Council's web site
- By Notice affixed at the Entrance of the Allotment site
- By Notice available at the Council's offices

Paths: Dividing paths between Allotments.

Principal Path: A common route within the site for vehicular and pedestrian access to allotments.

Rent: The annual rent payable for the tenancy of an Allotment.

Site: Any area of Allotments that are grouped together.

Structure: A building, shed, greenhouse, shelter, hard standing, animal run or hutch or poly tunnel.

Tenancy agreement: A legally binding written document which together with the Rules and Conditions records the terms of letting of a particular allotment(s). The Tenancy confers rights, privileges and responsibilities to the Tenant over the Allotment and shared facilities of the site.

Tenant: A person that resides within the City boundary, who holds the Tenancy Agreement and is the primary user of an Allotment.

The Council: Exeter City Council.

RACI Diagram (Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed).

Stage	Responsible (R)	Accountable (A)	Consulted (C)	Informed (I)
Stage 1 – Provisional inspection	Association/volunteers (on behalf of ECC)	ECC Allotment Manager	Association/volunteers	Tenant
Stage 2 – Initial decision & non-cult notice	ECC Allotment Manager	ECC Allotment Manager	Association (evidence)	Tenant
Stage 3 – Re-inspection	ECC Allotment Officer	ECC Allotment Manager	Line Manager (may attend)	Tenant
Stage 4 – Re-entry decision	ECC Allotment Manager	ECC Allotment Manager (with Line Manager agreement)	Line Manager	Tenant
Stage 1: Appeal	Operational Lead	Operations Lead	Allotment Manager / Allotment Officer (evidence)	Tenant
Stage 2: Appeal	HOS	HOS	Allotment Manager/ Operational Lead	Tenant

Allotment Non-Cultivation Process Flowchart

Stage 1:

