**SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL’S**

**ALLOTMENTS POLICY**

**2023**

**Contents**

1. History and Background ……………………………. Page 3
2. Benefits of having an allotment ……………………. Page 3
3. Locations of allotments………………………………..Page 4
4. Fee structure……………………………………………Page 4
5. How to apply for an allotment…………………………Page 4
6. Terms and conditions of Letting………………………Page 5

1. **History and Background of Allotments**

The Council’s allotment facility was located on Housing Lands at Lynches Lane east of the Outer Ring Road and north of the railway line. The facility was originally established by Dublin City Council as the land was not immediately required for development purposes.

South Dublin County Council became responsible for the allotments upon transfer of Dublin City Council’s lands in South Dublin County to this authority. The lands on which the allotments were located were zoned Residential in [**South Dublin County Council Development Plan 2004**](https://www.sdcc.ie/en/download-it/publications/development-plan-2004-2010.pdf)

* [**2010**](https://www.sdcc.ie/en/download-it/publications/development-plan-2004-2010.pdf) That Development Plan had two specific Local Objectives in relation to allotments. Whereby it stated, *“It is the policy of the Council to facilitate the further development of allotments through the identification of appropriate sites”.*

In November 2005, the allotments at Lynches Lane closed. The Council identified 4 alternative sites throughout the County which were developed to ensure plot holders in Lynches Lane had an allotment available to them from 1st January 2006. Over the years, some of the sites have been extended.

1. **Benefits of having an allotment**

An allotment can provide: -

* A good source of affordable food – you know the origins of
* You can grow your own fresh fruit, vegetables and flowers.
* Working an allotment is a healthy physical recreation for all age groups.
* The physical benefits of regular spells of gardening help plot-holders to keep fit even if they have sedentary jobs, the physical exercise also contributes to their mental well-being.
* Sense of achievement - As many new plot-holders discover, growing vegetables requires acquiring new knowledge and skills and the satisfaction gained from eating their first home grown tomato or new potato makes them taste even more delicious.
* Social outlet – People from all age groups and a wide variety of social backgrounds use the allotments and they all learn from each other through gardening together.
* Allotments have an educational value – a number of schools and educational groups have allotments.
1. **Location of Allotments**

South Dublin County Council have four allotment sites, comprising of a total of 431 allotments of varying sizes at 4 locations, ranging in size from 50 square metres up to 250 square metres.

* + Tymon Park, Tallaght – 13
	+ Corkagh Park, Clondalkin – 39
	+ Friarstown, Bohernabreena – 305
	+ Mill Lane, Palmerstown – 74
1. **Fee structure**

Fees are calculated at a cost of €1 per square metre with a reduction for applicants whose sole income is one of the following: -

* Job Seekers Allowance/Benefit
* OAP Contributory/Non-Contributory (if on private pension not entitled)
* Disability Allowance/Benefit
1. **How to apply for an allotment**

Applicants who wish to register for an allotment must complete and application form available from South Dublin Council. Forms can be requested calling
01-4149000 or the form can be downloaded from the Council’s website at <https://www.sdcc.ie/en/services/sport-and-recreation/allotments> .

Applicants must reside within the administrative area of South Dublin County Council, applications from outside the area will not be accepted.

Once a person has applied for an allotment, they will be placed on the waiting list or provided with an allotment if one is available immediately.

All new plots shall be allocated in accordance with our waiting lists.

1. **Schedule of Terms and Conditions of Letting**

The letting of an allotment is subject to the following conditions. Failure to comply with any of these terms and conditions may result in the termination of an Agreement.

1. **Allocation of Vacant Allotments**

Applicants who wish to register for an allotment must complete a form available from South Dublin County Council. Forms can be requested by calling 01-4149000 or may also be downloaded from [Allotments - SDCC](https://www.sdcc.ie/en/services/sport-and-recreation/allotments/#10) . All new plots shall be allocated by South Dublin County Council in accordance with our waiting lists.

A person on the waiting list shall be allowed to refuse an allotment location or plot size twice. After the second refusal the County Council may place the person at the back of the list or remove the person from the list.

Allotment holders should reside within the administrative are of South Dublin County Council. Existing allotment holders will be given first preference if they wish to relocate from one allotment to another.

You may permit people onto your allotment plot and/or to help you to cultivate your allotment. However, you must not –

* Transfer your agreement to any other person.
* Sub-let or otherwise part with possession of or pass on your allotment (or any part of it) to anybody else
* In any way, charge others for permission to use your allotment (or any part of it)
* You are responsible for the conduct and activities of persons you allow onto the allotment
1. **Rent**A new Agreement shall be entered into annually covering the period 1st January to 30th November and full payment for the term of agreement is payable in January.
2. **Keys/Fob**When an allotment is let, the new allotment holder shall pay a deposit of €50 to the Council for a key/fob to access the allotment facility. This deposit will be refunded when the allotment key/fob is handed back. These deposits are non-refundable unless and until the allotment is returned to the Council in a satisfactory condition upon termination of the Agreement.

Keys/fobs must be returned to the Council upon termination of the Agreement. Keys/fobs to the allotment facility must not be given to anyone else to use, and the allotment holder is responsible for ensuring the gate is locked after entering and leaving the facility.

A fee of €20 will be charged for replacement fobs. For security purposes only one key/fob per allotment will be allocated. The Council reserves the right to change the locks, keys & fobs as required and to vary the amount of deposit/fee in relation to increased costs.

1. **Inspections**

The Council will carry out regular inspections and photograph each of the allotment sites. If it is found that the plot allocated to you has not been worked in accordance with the schedule of terms and conditions, to a minimum of 75%, the following procedure will be invoked:

* A warning letter will be issued to the plot holder referencing issues of concern which must be addressed prior to inspection in the following month.
* The plot will be re-inspected 4 weeks from the date of the warning letter.
* If after three warnings have issued, including a final warning and no surrender form submitted or key/fob returned the plot shall be taken back and Agreement terminated. The plot will then automatically be allocated to the next person on the waiting list.
* There will be no refund of fees paid
1. **Termination of Agreement**

The allotment Agreement is for a period of eleven months commencing on 1st January each year. You may terminate your Agreement by completing and signing a surrender form. The key/fob should be returned to the Council on termination of your Agreement.

Before renewals are sent out each year there will be a site inspection. If plots are found to be in a poor state or unworked, renewals will not be sent to the holders of these plots. Instead, these plots will be allocated to those next in line. The allotment holder shall be responsible for the following;

* Removal of all waste matter relating to fences, gates and crops from the allotment at the termination of the Agreement.
* Removal of any structures erect on the plot.

1. **Use of the Land**

The allotment is rented to the allotment holder for the purpose of recreational gardening and/or the cultivation of herbs, flowers, fruit and vegetable crops for consumption by the allotment holder and his/her family and for no other purpose. The allotment holder shall not use the allotment for residential or commercial purposes.

1. **Cultivation**

Allotments must be kept free from weeds and shall not cause a nuisance to adjoining allotment plots. A minimum of 75% of the allotment must be cultivated. “Cultivated” means the allotment must have the soil turned, plants growing (these include vegetable or fruit crops, flowers, herbs etc) and be free from weeds.

1. **Weed Control**

It is the allotment holder’s responsibility to keep the plot free from weeds that may cause a nuisance to adjoining allotment plots. The use of cardboard, tyres or plastic covering on a plot for any purpose is strictly prohibited.

1. **Use of Herbicides and Pesticides**In May 2017 the council adopted a ban on the use of glyphosate, this stops it's use in public parks, playgrounds and public gardens.  This is being implemented across the County.  Allotment holders are not permitted to use herbicides or pesticides within the allotment grounds. Failure to comply with theses requirement will result in the allotment being revoked by SDCC.
2. **Nuisance**

The allotment holder shall not cause nuisance or use abusive language to Council representatives; to the occupier of any other allotment plot; to occupiers of neighbouring properties/land. The allotment holder shall not obstruct any path or access route on the allotment site.

Any allotment holder, or any person being a guest of that allotment holder, found removing produce or other items from another allotment holder’s plot without their consent, or from a vacant plot without the consent of the Council, may have their Agreement terminated immediately and may also face prosecution. The allotment holder will be held responsible for the behaviour of a guest(s) and their health and safety. The allotment holder shall comply with any relevant Health and Safety Regulations and exercise a duty of care towards themselves, other allotment holders, and the general public. Noise pollution can be considered a nuisance and should be kept to a minimum level.

1. **Waste Disposal/Dumping/Fires**

South Dublin County Council does not permit dumping (including the dumping of green waste) in, on, or around the allotment facilities. Anyone found dumping will be fined/prosecuted and their Agreement terminated with immediate effect. Bonfires are not permitted at any time on the allotment site.

1. **Composting**

The allotment holder may use a secure plastic compost bin on the allotment plot, provided that the compost bin is placed in such a way as to prevent access by vermin. In the case where an allotment holder does not wish to use a plastic compost unit, the Council will allow the use of open units but only subject to the units being fully enclosed, bottom and sides with a minimum of mild steel galvanised mesh chicken wire, 13 x 13mm, wire diameter 1mm.

1. **Planting Restrictions**

The planting of trees of any description is prohibited. This sub-clause shall not prevent the allotment holder from planting domestic fruit bushes. The allotment holder shall not grow any plants, weeds or otherwise, as specified and prohibited by Irish and European laws.

1. **Water**

Sprinklers are prohibited. Handheld hose pipes may be used to water plots directly if handheld or to fill water butts provided this does not prevent other allotment holders access water supplies.

No illegal connections to the water supply will be tolerated. Water supplies will be turned off in the winter months – November to February inclusive and shall only be turned on by the Council.

The allotment holder shall comply with any restrictions relating to the use of the on-site water supply as may be deemed necessary by the Council or Irish Water from time to time and during periods of water shortage. The allotment holder shall ensure that water butts and other water receptacles are securely covered when not in use. Leaking taps should be reported immediately to the Council. The water supply is only to be used to water your allotment.

1. **Vermin**

Allotment holders should maintain allotments in a manner which will discourage vermin by depriving them of nesting sites and food sources. The following practices must be adhered to:

* Harvesting of ripe fruit and vegetables promptly and their removal from the allotment as soon as possible.
* The prompt removal of discarded fruit or vegetables from the ground.
* Removal of food or drink from the allotment site.
* Ensuring the allotment plots are clean and tidy to eliminate cover e.g., free of long grass, weeds, crates, plastic containers, etc. If there is an issue regarding vermin at any allotment facility, it should be referred directly to South Dublin County Council. At no time should a plot holder lay poison on the allotment site.
1. **Animals**

Dogs, with the exception of guide dogs, must not be brought on to allotments or any part of the site unless they are kept on a lead within the owner’s allotment. Animals, livestock and poultry shall not be kept on allotments. Beehives are not allowed within the allotments.

1. **Allotment Numbering**

The allotment holder shall ensure that the plot number is clearly displayed on the allotment plot assigned to him/ her. No other notice or advertisement other than the plot number is permitted.

1. **Boundaries**

The allotment holder will be responsible for the maintenance of all boundaries of their plot. This includes the maintenance of hedges and fencing. The Council will provide stakes and fencing for new allotment sites. However, the future maintenance of these materials is the responsibility of the allotment holder.

1. **Sheds, Building and Structures**

Allotment holders are not permitted to erect structures on the allotment site without the prior written permission of the Council. Request for the erection of a structure shall include a drawing of the allotment plot showing proposed placement position of the structure; (sheds, recommended towards the rear of the site) the dimensions and materials to be used.

The Council reserves the right to request additional information in support of an application. Where consent has been given by the Council for the erection of a shed, the sheds shall be constructed in accordance with the specifications as set out by the Council in Appendix 1. No trade or business may be carried out from sheds, greenhouses, or tool lockers. Petrol, oil, fuel lubricants or other flammable liquids must not be stored in the allotment, shed, greenhouse, tool locker or polytunnel.

The Council shall not be liable for any damage caused to a shed or allotment during the erection of a shed. Glass constructed structures are not permitted.

The Council shall not be liable for loss of, damage to, whether by accident, fire, theft or otherwise, any shed, tools or contents in the shed, greenhouse, tool locker or polytunnel.

The Council shall not be obliged to replace or repair any private shed, greenhouse, tool locker or polytunnel which is destroyed or damaged. The allotment holders shall insure their allotment, any structure placed on the allotment and the contents of any structure, under their own insurance policy.

1. **Use of On-Site Storage Facilities**

An on-site facility is provided at Friarstown, Tymon Park and Corkagh Park, for allotment holders to store tools and equipment necessary for the cultivation and maintenance of the allotment plot. Allotment holders are provided with a key to this storage unit and are responsible for its security. The allotment holder shall ensure the storage unit is locked when not in use and before leaving the site. The Council cannot be held responsible for any damage or loss to tools stored in these facilities.

1. **Structural Alterations**

The allotment holder shall not remove any existing or future hedges, fences, walls or boundary marks at the allotment facility.

The allotment holder shall not use any barbed wire for any purpose on the allotment site.

The allotment holder shall not without the previous consent of the Council cut, prune or remove any timber or other trees.

The allotment holder shall not take, sell or remove any mineral, sand or clay or permit any other person to do so.

1. **Driving and Parking**

The allotment holder shall access the allotment sites with a vehicle and trailer solely for the purposes of loading or unloading. At all other times, the allotment holder should use the parking area adjacent to the allotments or any nearby public car park. The allotment holders in Corkagh Park and Tymon Park should exercise due care and attention when driving through the Park and comply with speed restrictions posted and with the Council Parks and Open Spaces Bye Laws.

1. **Access to Allotment Sites in Corkagh Park and Tymon Park**

The allotment holder is permitted to access the allotment site during official park opening hours only. These parks are open at 10.00 am each day throughout the year, (excluding Christmas day). The closing times vary with the season and are as follows: November, December and January 5.00pm, February and March 6.00pm, April and October 7.00pm May and September 8.00pm June, July and August 9.00pm.

Please note that the car parks may close half an hour earlier than the official time. The allotment holder must leave the allotment site and car park area when requested by the Council official on duty to facilitate closing of the park.

1. **Access to Allotment Sites in Mill Lane and Friarstown**

The allotment holder is permitted to access the allotment site during daylight hours, always being aware of personal safety.

1. **General Conditions**

Any duly authorised officer of the Council shall be entitled at any time to enter upon and inspect the allotment facility.

The allotment holder shall inform the Council of any change to the allotment holder’s address.

The Council reserves the right to alter, change or add any further conditions as it is deemed appropriate.

The allotment holder shall inform the Council if they are unable to work the allotment for a period of time of more than four weeks.

An allotment waiting list will be maintained by the Council as a list of people who are currently interested in working an allotment. Allotments are on a first come first serve basis.

While the Council will endeavour to ensure fairness and equality for all plot holders within the site, the Council's decision in relation to any of the above conditions is absolute.

**APPENDIX 1 – Structure Guidelines**

Structures – permission, conditions and guidance

Structures, including sheds, polytunnels and glasshouses will be permitted on allotment sites subject to the following conditions:

• Permission for the structure must be applied for in writing to South Dublin County Council and approved by the Council.

• The proposed structure to be installed can be a proprietary one purchased from a suitable supplier or one to be constructed by the allotment holder.

• Your application for permission to install or construct a structure must be accompanied by a specification of the proposed structure, including dimensions and a sketch.

• Permission must be granted by South Dublin County Council before the installation or erection of the structure commences.

• Structures must be placed at an appropriate edge of the allotment and in such a way as neither to interfere with boundaries or access nor to cause a nuisance or annoyance to other users of the allotment site.

• Any structure erected on an allotment during the rental period must on termination of the agreement be removed.

• The Council reserves the right to request additional information in support of an application.

SHEDS – Subject to the Above Conditions

• Structures of any size up to a maximum length and breadth dimension of 1.8m x 1.8m will be permissible. The maximum height allowable is 2.5m.

• Each shed must have an A shaped roof or a single sloped roof. Each sloped roof must have a collecting gutter for rainwater and each shed must have a rainwater barrel of a minimum capacity of 100 litres to collect water for use in the allotment plot. It would be advisable to install a much larger capacity barrel.

• The shed should be placed on a level hard core base. No concrete base will be allowed.

• The shed can be constructed of metal or timber, no glass material is permitted

• Sheds can have Green Roofs (that is, a roof planted with a thin layer of plant and substrate that is not dependent on a constant supply of water).

POLYTUNNELS- Subject to the Conditions Outlined Above

• A polytunnel can be up to 50% of the area of the allotment plot to a maximum of 10 meters x 5 meters.

• A polytunnel must be cylindrical in shape and its maximum height at the centre must be no higher than 2.5m.

• A polytunnel must be a proprietary one purchased from a suitable supplier. Please note: Friarstown Allotment site in particular is subject to high winds and the sheds may need to be weighted down. The advice of a supplier should be sought on this.