**SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL**

**ALLOTMENTS POLICY**

**2023**

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1. **History and Background of Allotments**

Allotments are small plots of land used to grow vegetables and flowers for personal use. They have a long history in Ireland and Europe as a means of providing additional garden space for horticulture and indeed respite from city living.

There are two pieces of legislation concerning allotments – the Acquisition of Land (Allotment) Act 1926 and the Planning and Development Act 2010. In the former, legislative power was given to Local Authorities to provide land for allotments subject to a defined demand for them. In this earlier legislation, an allotment is defined as: ‘a piece of land containing not more than one quarter of a statute acre let or intended to be let for cultivation by an individual for the production of vegetables mainly for consumption by himself and his family’

In the latter act the definition is given as follows: ‘allotment’ means an area of land comprising not more than 1,000 square metres let or available for letting to and cultivation by one or more than one person who is a member of the local community and lives adjacent or near to the allotment, for the purpose of the production of vegetables or fruit mainly for consumption by the person or a member of his or her family. The current legislation includes that local authorities may reserve land for use and cultivation as allotments and regulate, promote, facilitate, or control the provision of land for that use.

The first local authority allotment facility was located on lands in Clondalkin 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 assumed responsibility 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)

This 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 and the Council identified four alternative sites throughout the County for the development of public allotments at Friarstown, Tymon Park, Corkagh Park and Mill Lane, Palmerstown.

GI6 Objective 10 of the current [County Development Plan 2022 – 2028](https://www.sdcc.ie/en/devplan2022/adopted-plan/) states *to continue to protect and promote existing allotments and provide for new allotments where feasible in accordance with a review of the provision and management of allotments across the County*

1. **Benefits of having an allotment**

There are a number of key benefits in the provision of allotments:

* Providing a social, community orientated activity.
* Providing physical activity to all age groups and different abilities.
* Providing locally grown fresh fruit, vegetables, and flowers.
* Bringing vacant lands into active use.
* Providing environmental education and awareness to schools and the wider community.
1. **Allotment Provision**

**3.a Existing 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

**3.b Management of Demand**

South Dublin County Council will maintain a waiting list for people wishing to access an allotment as set out in section 6.1 below.

South Dublin County Council will endeavour to manage the waiting list to ensure waiting times do not become excessive.

As of March 2023, the waiting list is 297. This is above the optimum figure and South Dublin County Council will endeavour to lower this through a number of actions. Many of these actions include active management of the waiting list as set out in this policy and includes the provision of new allotments.

**3.c Delivery Strategy for new allotments**

The provision of allotments is an important component of public open space provision for the council. Allotments provide for recreation and activity and can contribute to health and well-being and are also an important source of locally grown food. As such they act as both mitigation and adaptation factors to combat Climate Change. South Dublin County Council provides public allotments across the county and notes the important role that private allotment providers play in meeting increasing demand for allotments across the county.

In relation to the provision of new allotments South Dublin County Council is currently carrying out a Parks and Open Spaces Strategy that will be delivered in 2023. This will examine the provision and use of public open spaces and it is most appropriate that the allotment provision be examined in that context.

This Allotments Policy will be considered during the development of the Parks and Open Space Strategy. The Parks and Open Space Strategy will include the following:

* Assessment of the numbers of allotments required, considering the current waiting list.
* Meeting the demand for allotments.
* Identifying the appropriate provision of land and proposed locations for new allotments.

Once the Parks and Open Space Strategy is approved by Council there is provision within the three-year Capital Programme for the delivery of same.

It is worth noting that a current grant of planning in the Newcastle area (planning reference SHD3ABP-305343-19) which is under construction, includes the provision of allotments. It is currently envisaged that these allotments will be offered to the Council for taking in charge and will add approximately 30 nos. to the current allotment resource.

1. **Fee structure**

Annual 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.