

Briercliffe with Extwistle Parish Council

Allotments Policy



Adopted by: Briercliffe with Extwistle Parish Council – 2nd July 2026

Minute Number – 26/27/077 **Next Review:** July 2029 / Every 3 years or earlier if required

1. Purpose

This policy sets out how the allotment sites owned and managed by Briercliffe with Extwistle Parish Council are allocated, managed and regulated.

The policy aims to ensure:

- fair and transparent access to allotments
- responsible use of council land
- good site management and maintenance
- protection of neighbours and the environment
- compliance with relevant legislation

2. Scope

This policy applies to the following sites managed by the Parish Council:

- Parish-owned Allotment land
- Harrison Street Allotments

It does **not apply** to allotments managed by other local authorities, parish councils or private owners.

3. Legislative Framework

The provision and management of allotments is governed by legislation including:

- Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908
- Allotments Acts 1922 and 1925
- Local Government Act 1972
- Animal Welfare Act 2006
- Environmental Protection Act 1990

The Harrison Street Allotment sites are currently designated as **Allotments**.

4. Policy Objectives

The Parish Council aims to:

- maintain well-managed allotment sites
- promote healthy lifestyles and community wellbeing
- encourage food production and sustainable gardening
- support biodiversity and environmentally responsible practices
- ensure allotment services are financially sustainable
- manage waiting lists fairly

5. Governance and Management

The Parish Council retains ultimate authority and responsibility for all allotment decisions.

Day-to-day management is delegated to a Lead Councillor supported by an Allotment Committee

5.1 Allotment Committee

Briercliffe with Extwistle Parish Council have established an Allotment Committee to support the effective management of allotment site.

The Committee operates under delegated authority from the Parish Council and must act in accordance with:

- this Allotments Policy
- the Council's Standing Orders
- the Council's Code of Conduct
- relevant legislation and best practice guidance

The Allotment Committee is made up of Parish Councillors and Allotment Tenants (non-voting) and the Parish Clerk

Responsibilities include:

- overseeing day-to-day allotment management
- monitoring waiting lists and allocations
- making recommendations on rents, charges and budgets
- reviewing applications for structures and site changes
- considering complaints and minor disputes (Stage 1)
- supporting biodiversity and environmental initiatives
- promoting good practice among tenants
- overseeing maintenance
- agreeing expenditure for regular cyclical maintenance work and improvements, within the set budget;

The Allotment Committee will:

- meet as required (minimum 4 times a year)
- keep written minutes of meetings and record all decisions
- report regularly to Full Council
- ensure all members can contribute

The Parish Council retains final authority on all policy decisions.

6. Site Inspections

The allotment site will be inspected at least twice annually, normally during the growing season. Inspections are carried out to ensure that the allotment site and plots are safe, well maintained, and managed fairly for the benefit of all tenants

The purpose of inspections is to:

- Monitor cultivation standards - Ensure plots are being properly cultivated in line with tenancy requirements
- Maintain site standards - Identify plots that are untidy, overgrown or potentially abandoned.
- Ensure compliance with policy and tenancy agreements - Check that tenants are adhering to rules relating to structures, livestock, waste, fires and general conduct.
- Promote fairness and effective use of land - Ensure that allotment plots are actively used, particularly where there is a waiting list.
- Identify health and safety risks - Detect hazards such as unsafe structures, dangerous materials, blocked paths or fire risks.
- Provide early intervention - Identify issues early and give tenants the opportunity to rectify problems before formal enforcement action is required.

Additional inspections may be carried out where:

- plots appear neglected
- complaints are received
- tenancy breaches are suspected

Inspections may take place without prior notice.

7. Eligibility and Waiting Lists

7.1 Eligibility

Applicants must:

- be 18 years or older
- live within the Parish boundary *
- submit a completed application form

*Where no waiting list exists, plots may be offered to residents outside the Parish. Applicants Outside of the Parish may be added to the Waiting list, however priority will always be given to residents of the Parish

7.2 Waiting List Management

Waiting lists are managed on a first-come, first-served basis (Application Date).

Applicants will be contacted when plots become available.

Applicants may be removed if they:

- fail to respond to correspondence
- no longer meet eligibility requirements

The Council will periodically review waiting lists, contacting all applicants.

8. Allocation of Plots

When a plot becomes vacant the Council may:

- offer the plot to the next applicant on the waiting list
- subdivide the plot to create smaller plots
- allow an existing tenant to transfer plots

Plots cannot be transferred to friends, helpers or colleagues.

On acceptance of an offer of a tenancy, the Lead Councillor or Representative will complete all paperwork and the New Tenant Inspection form (Appendix B) with the tenant taking a minimum of 2 photographs of the plot.

10. Tenancy Agreements

All tenants must

- sign a Tenancy Agreement before taking possession of a plot. (Appendix A)
- Pay the Annual rent and water charges
- Pay a deposit
- Adhere to terms of Tenancy Agreement
- Ensure contact details, including current address are up to date with the Council

11. Cultivation Requirements

All allotment plots shall be used solely for the domestic cultivation of fruit, vegetables, and flowers.

Tenants must:

- cultivate at least **60% of the plot**
- keep plots tidy and free from excessive weeds
- maintain paths and boundaries
- control invasive plants

Plots must not be used for storage, business or commercial activity

No new trees are allowed to be planted on an allotment plot or any other part of the site.

12. Bio Diversity and Wildlife

Briercliffe Parish Council encourage organic gardening, composting and biodiversity.

Allotments can support wildlife while still being productive.

Up to 25% of a plot may be used for biodiversity features such as wildlife habitats.

Examples include:

- bug hotels
- bird or bat boxes
- log piles
- hedgehog houses
- small ponds
- pollinator-friendly flowers

Biodiversity areas must not:

- exceed 25% of the plot
- contain invasive weeds
- shade neighbouring plots
- obstruct access paths

Companion planting within crop beds does not count toward the biodiversity area.

13. Buildings and Structures

No structure may be erected, installed, or placed on a plot without prior written consent from the Parish Council, by submitting designs and location plans of any proposed buildings, fencing or other structures to the Lead Councillor or Clerk This includes, but is not limited to:

- sheds
- greenhouses
- fencing (no higher than 1.6m and should not prevent an unhindered inspection of the whole plot.)
- animal housing
- polytunnels
- any other semi-permanent structure

Structures must:

- be safe and well maintained
- not exceed reasonable size limits
- not include permanent foundations

New tenants will take responsibility for all agreed structures on the plot at Tenancy start

Structures used to house livestock must comply with Section 14 (Livestock) and meet all welfare standards.

Barbed wire fencing is not permitted.

Overnight stays or residential use of allotments is prohibited.

14. Livestock and Animals

Livestock may only be kept on designated Plots, only chickens and rabbits are permitted.

No other livestock may be kept without the prior written consent of the Parish Council.

The Tenant shall ensure that the majority of the plot is used for the cultivation of fruit, vegetables, or flowers, for personal consumption.

Livestock may be kept only as a secondary use. Livestock, structures, and non-cultivated areas must not dominate the plot.

Tenants must comply with the Animal Welfare Act 2006.

Tenants must adopt good husbandry practices, including animals are not overstocked and welfare standards are met, additionally neighbours are not disturbed

Pigeons are not permitted. Bees require prior written approval.

Pest control on allotment sites is the responsibility of tenants

15. Dogs

Dogs are permitted but must remain on a short lead in all communal spaces; they must not cause nuisance, or be left unattended. Dog waste must be removed and disposed of responsibly.

Dogs must not be permanently housed on allotments.

16. Fires

Fires are discouraged but permitted under controlled conditions.

Tenants must:

- only burn dry garden waste from their own plot
- minimise smoke and nuisance
- consider wind direction
- never burn plastics, rubber or hazardous materials
- ensure fires are supervised and fully extinguished

17. Waste Management

Tenants are responsible for appropriate removal and disposal of waste from their plots.

It is prohibited to:

- bring external waste onto the site
- fly tip or dump waste
- burn non-garden materials

18. Water Supply

Water is available to all tenants, though cannot be guaranteed and may be interrupted.

The charge will be reviewed annually in line with changes in tariffs set by United Utilities and the amount of water used. The previous year's water costs will be divided proportionately between all plots.

Tenants should also install **water butts** to conserve water. Frugal use of water and prompt reporting of leaks is requested

The Council reserves the right to review charges or take action where water misuse is identified

19. Vehicles

Vehicles are not permitted on allotment plots. Storage of vehicles, trailers or caravans on plots is prohibited.

Vehicles may only access designated parking areas and access roads.

All vehicle users must ensure the main access barrier is closed once passed through on all occasions

All site access rules and any reasonable directions issued by the Council must be adhere to.

20. Health and Safety

Tenants must ensure their activities do not endanger others.

The following are prohibited:

- storage of flammable materials
- asbestos materials
- unsafe structures

Any hazardous materials must be reported immediately to the Council.

21. Nuisance

Tenants must not cause or permit any nuisance to any other tenants, visitors, public or to the owners or occupiers of any adjoining or neighbouring property on the allotments, pathways or entrances to the sites.

Briercliffe with Extwistle Parish Council will not tolerate any threatening, violent or intimidating behaviour

22. Charges and Deposits

Charges will be invoiced annually and will include:

- annual plot rent
- water charge

A refundable deposit (currently £100) is required from new tenants. A signed deposit agreement (Appendix D) will be stored with the signed Tenancy Agreement

Invoices are issued annually from **1 April**.

Failure to pay within **40 days** may result in termination of tenancy.

Deposits will be returned when plots are left in acceptable condition.

Full rent and water charges will be payable for plots taken up before the end of September in each year. For plots taken up after September charges will be pro rata for the number of full months remaining to run up to 31st March

23. Termination / Leaving a Plot

Plot holders may voluntarily terminate their tenancy at any time.

When a plot holder leaves a plot, it should be in good condition and free of any buildings, fencing or other structures not in a good, usable order.

24. Enforcement Procedure

24.1 Support and Early Intervention

The Parish Council is committed to supporting tenants to maintain their allotments to the required standard.

Before progressing to formal enforcement, the Council will, where appropriate:

- provide informal advice and guidance
- offer a reasonable period for improvement
- agree a structured Improvement Plan with the tenant
- take into account personal circumstances such as illness or temporary difficulty

The aim is to:

- resolve issues early
- avoid escalation to formal enforcement
- promote fair and proportionate management

Tenants are encouraged to contact the Council if they are experiencing difficulties in maintaining their plot. Where appropriate, the Council may implement an Improvement Plan prior to issuing a Formal Written Warning.

24.2 Enforcement Action

Where breaches occur the Council will follow a staged enforcement process:

Stage 1 – Informal Warning - Tenant notified verbally or by email.

Stage 1.5 – Improvement Plan Letter - Tenant notified verbally or by email.

Stage 2 – Written Warning - Formal letter outlining breach and timescale to rectify.

Stage 3 – Final Warning - Failure to comply may result in termination.

Stage 4 – Termination of Tenancy - Tenancy terminated and plot reclaimed. Termination will not take effect until the representation period has expired and any representations have been considered.

Immediate termination may occur in cases involving:

- violence or intimidation
- criminal activity
- serious environmental damage or deliberate fly tipping

24.3 Representations and Review

Before a tenancy is terminated, the tenant will be given the opportunity to make representations to the Parish Council.

Where a Final Warning or Notice of Termination is issued, the tenant may:

- submit representations in writing within 7 days of the date of the notice
- provide any relevant information or mitigating circumstances

Upon receipt of representations:

- the Council will pause further enforcement action
- the matter will be reviewed by the Parish Council or delegated Allotment Committee
- a decision will be made based on all available evidence

The Council will respond in writing within 14 days of receiving representations, confirming one of the following:

- no further action
- extension of time / revised Improvement Plan
- progression to termination

The decision of the Parish Council shall be final.

25. Complaints Procedure

Complaints relating to allotments should be submitted to the Parish Clerk.

The Council will follow the following process:

1. Acknowledgement within 10 working days
2. Investigation by the Lead Councillor
3. Written response within 20 working days

If the complainant is dissatisfied, the matter may be referred to the Full Parish Council.

26. Allotment Reports

Lead Councillor/ Allotment Committee will provide a report to each Parish Council meeting outlining

- Application Forms received
- waiting list over view
- A list of vacant or due to be vacated plots
- new tenancies and deposit information
- Any requests received for maintenance work
- All issues/complaints received regarding the allotments

27. Policy Review

This policy will normally be reviewed **every three years** or earlier if required due to:

- legislative changes
- operational needs
- national guidance updates

28. Adoption

This policy was adopted by Briercliffe with Extwistle Parish Council at a meeting held on:
2nd July 2026

Chair Signature: _____

