



ALLOTMENTS

Frequently Asked Questions

NB These FAQs should be read strictly in conjunction with the Allotment Tenancy Agreement

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1. Are there allotments in St Ives?

Yes, they are at the top of Hill Rise on the northern edge of the town.

The allotment site is divided up into allotment plots and a plan kept of those plots.
If you wish to see a copy of the plans of any of the allotment sites, please contact the Council Offices at the address given below.

2. How do I find out if there are any plots available?

From time to time the Council will post notices setting out particulars of any allotment plots available for hire at each allotment site. The notice will specify:

1. The allotment gardens available
2. The rent to be paid
3. How to register your interest, and the name and address of the person to whom applications should be sent.
4. Any special conditions that are to apply to the allotment gardens
5. Where copies of the letting agreement may be seen

If you have not seen any notices posted and would still like information about renting an allotment plot, please contact the Council Offices.

3. How do I apply for an allotment plot and when do I need to make any special requirements known?

If you are interested in renting an allotment plot, write to or telephone:

St Ives Town Council,
Town Hall,
St Ives,
Huntingdon,
PE27 5AL.

Telephone: 01480 388929
e-mail: clerk@stivestowncouncil.gov.uk

If there are allotments immediately available for rent, you will be contacted, either by telephone or letter, to confirm that a plot is available. You will then be met at the site by the Grounds Maintenance Supervisor who will show you the available plot(s) and the site generally. **If you have any particular requirements concerning the location of a plot (eg for health/disability reasons) please make these known before you are allocated a plot.** Following your confirmation a copy of the allotment agreement and details of the rent required will be forwarded to you to sign and return with payment. Once your signed allotment agreement and rent are received confirming your tenancy you can begin gardening!

If there are no allotment plots immediately available, or there are more applicants than available plots, you will be put on a waiting list.

Where there are two or more eligible applicants for an allotment plot the following rules apply:

1. Preference may be given to the applicant appearing most likely to keep the allotment garden in a proper state of cultivation

2. Preference may be given to an applicant who does not already hold an allotment garden or agricultural land, other than a garden of 505.86 square metres.
3. If all other factors are equal, preference must be given to the applicant whose name appears first on the list in the Council's waiting list. Preference will be given to residents of St Ives.

4. How much does an allotment cost per year?

The rent of an allotment plot must be paid annually on the 1st October in each year, unless otherwise agreed in writing.

Rent currently stands at £25 per annum, as agreed by the Amenities Committee. This is subject to further future reviews.

5. How many allotment plots can I rent?

One person may hold a maximum of two allotment plots.

6. What facilities are there at the allotment sites?

Water tanks are provided at the site and are marked on the site maps. Taps are switched off between November and March to prevent freeze damage and burst pipes.

7. Is the allotment site secure?

The allotment site is accessed from Hill Rise and at the entrance to the site is a padlocked barrier. The combination for the padlock is given to each Tenant when they sign their Tenancy Agreement. Tenants are asked not to give out this number to anyone other than relations or to those people who regularly assist them with their plot.

Once you have opened the padlock and gate to enter or leave the site you must then shut the gate, secure it with padlock and turn the digits on the padlock back to '1111'.

8. What happens if I need something delivered to my allotment?

When you arrange a delivery you, or someone nominated by you, must be at the allotment site to meet the delivery driver. You must not give the delivery company the combination of the padlock. Please ensure that the vehicle(s) making the delivery does no damage to any area of the allotment site. All damage must be rectified by the Tenant who ordered the delivery.

9. Can I drive right up to my allotment?

Tenants are asked not to drive on the dirt tracks between/beside the allotments in the months of November, December, January and February*. Outside these months you may drive to your plot to unload tools, compost etc from your car but please ensure you do not block the tracks to other users.

*Outside these months, should the tracks be obviously wet and the ground soft, we ask you to use common sense and not drive on them as this leads to problems with cars getting stuck in the mud and makes the tracks difficult to negotiate on foot.

Please contact the Town Council if you have a physical disability which you feel might prevent you easily accessing the plot that has been assigned to you. Wherever possible you will be allocated a plot near to the entrance of the allotment site for ease of access.

10. Can I take as much water from the water tanks as I like?

At present the water supply to the allotments is limited (work is in progress to improve this supply). Because of this, Allotment Holders are requested to show respect for other Tenants when using this resource. The practise of direct siphoning of water from the tanks onto allotment plots is strictly forbidden. Tenants are asked not to completely drain tanks when they go to collect water from them as this leaves other Tenants without water until the tanks refill.

11. Is there an allotment association? If so, do I have to join it?

Yes there is, the Hill Rise Allotment Association (HRAA). Membership of the association is free.

Contact details are:

Richard and Hayley Weightman
Plot numbers 50 and 51
Hill Rise Allotments

email: info@hraa.org.uk.

There is no compulsion on tenants to be members, but for the purposes of the efficient running of the allotments, the Town Council would prefer to negotiate with a committee of representatives of the association, regarding matters to do with the running of the allotments or amendments to tenancy agreements.

12. The plot is bigger than I first thought, can I share it with a friend?

You must not sublet, assign, or part with possession of the allotment plot or any part of it, without the written consent of the Council.

If you are finding that the plot is too big for you to cultivate alone, contact the Council Offices. It may be possible to split your plot in half, if someone else is waiting and would prefer a smaller plot to cultivate.

Similarly, if you have been cultivating a smaller plot and feel that a larger plot would be preferable, contact the Council Offices. A larger plot may not be available immediately, but should one become available you will be informed.

13. Everything is getting a bit overgrown but that's okay, isn't it?

You must keep your allotment plot clean, tidy, free from weeds and in a good state of cultivation and fertility. It was agreed by the Amenities Committee that for environmental reasons foam-backed carpet must not be used for the control of weeds on allotments as they are non bio-degradable and chemicals from the foam may leach into the soil. If black plastic is used to suppress weeds then it must be firmly pinned down in the earth to prevent it blowing away (the allotment site can be quite windy) and becoming a nuisance.

You should also keep any pathway included in it free of weeds.

If you are finding it difficult to cultivate your plot, contact the Council Offices. We may be able to help with rotovating your plot for a fee, or help you move to a smaller plot (see above). If you don't tell us there is a problem and your plot becomes overgrown we will write to you and ask you to clear your plot before it becomes a nuisance to other allotment holders. If your plot remains uncultivated after 28 days, you will be advised in writing that your tenancy agreement has been terminated.

If you are not able, for any reason, to clear or cultivate your plot please contact the Council Offices.

14. There's a bonfire on the allotment plot next to mine every weekend, and the smoke is a real nuisance. What should I do?

Allotment holders must not cause any nuisance or annoyance, including noise annoyance, to the occupier of any other allotment plot, or obstruct the paths set out by the Council on the allotments. Bonfires are allowed as long as they do not give off excessive amounts of smoke.

Where the Council is advised of a nuisance or annoyance caused to the occupier of another allotment plot, the "offending" allotment holder will be advised accordingly, either by telephone or letter, and asked to remove or desist from further nuisance or annoyance.

If you feel that someone else is causing you nuisance or annoyance, contact the Council Offices immediately.

15. There is a tree at the edge of my allotment plot and nothing grows underneath it. Can I cut it down?

No, you must not cut or prune any timber or other trees.

If you feel that any trees or shrubs on or close to your allotment plot need pruning or cutting back, you should contact the Council Offices immediately. Do not cut or prune any trees or shrubs yourself. Your request will be considered and you will be advised of the outcome and any action to be taken by telephone or letter.

Similarly, you must not take, sell, or carry away any mineral, gravel, sand or clay on your allotment plot without the written consent of the Council

16. The hedge near my allotment is very overgrown. Who is supposed to cut it?

It is the responsibility of the Grounds Maintenance staff to maintain any hedges or trees outside individual plots. However, you must keep any hedge forming part of your plot properly cut and trimmed. The maximum dimensions for any hedging within your plot is 4'(h) x 2'(w). There must be a gap of at least 18" between the boundary and the outside edge of your hedge. You must not plant any hedge at the front boundary of your plot. Your hedge must not cross the boundary with any neighbouring plot or, in the case of plots at the end of rows, the boundary with any communal path. The hedge must consist of native hedging only.

If you are not able, for any reason, to cut or trim your hedge please contact the Council Offices immediately.

17. What is 'native hedging'

'Native hedging' refers to plants native to Great Britain that grow naturally in the countryside. These hedges can provide protection for your plot and also food and shelter for many forms of wildlife that, in turn, can help the environment around the allotment gardens thrive.

Some of the most commonly found plants in a 'native hedge' are:

Hawthorn – *Crataegus monogyna*

Holly – *Ilex aquifolium*

Guelder rose – *Viburnum opulus*
Hazel – *Corylus avellana*

Your hedge could be planted with one single type of plant eg. Hawthorn or you may chose to plant a mixed hedge. If you are unsure what to plant you can contact either the Town Council or the Hill Rise Allotment Association for advice.

18. Are there any things I shouldn't plant?

You must not plant any trees unless they are dwarf fruiting trees fruit bushes. Additionally, you must not plant or cultivate any crop whose cultivation is against the law.

19. Can I have a shed or a greenhouse on my plot?

You must not erect any building on it without the written consent of the Council. Consent to the erection of any building reasonably necessary for keeping hens or rabbits may not be refused under this rule.

Where a shed or greenhouse is erected, it must be no larger than 10' x 6', be within your plot and in good repair. If you store any hazardous chemicals/materials or dangerous tools/implements in you shed you must keep your shed locked when you are not working on your plot. Polytunnels may be erected but must cover no more than $\frac{2}{3}$ of the plot and must be kept in good repair. There must be no more than 2 permanent structures on any one plot.

20. Can I have a pond on my plot?

Permission to keep in situ ponds installed prior to 30th September 2008 will be granted to current tenants as long as they are intended to promote wildlife and associated flora and fauna, assisting with natural pest control, promoting good ecology and within the boundaries of the maximum measurements defined by the Council. The keeping of fish is prohibited. *Permission for the installation of new ponds must be sought from the Town Council.*

21. Can I put a fence around my allotment to keep rabbits and other animals out?

You can erect a fence but you must not use barbed wire or razor wire for a fence adjoining any path set out by the Council on the allotments. If you decide not to continue renting your allotment you should take the fence down at the end of your tenancy.

22. Can I put fresh farmyard manure on my plot?

Fresh farmyard manure may be stored on your plot but the heap should not be in a position where it would contaminate a neighbouring plot.
NB. It is not recommended that fresh manure be used directly on crops but that it should be allowed to rot down for at least six months before use.

23. Someone has dumped rubbish just inside the gate to the allotments, who will clear it away?

Allotment holders must not deposit or allow other persons to deposit or dump any rubbish on the allotment, or place any matter in the hedges, ditches or dykes situated on the allotments or adjoining land.

If you see rubbish dumped at the allotment site, please contact the Council Offices immediately.

24. How do I get rid of my rubbish?

You should be able to compost all your compostable waste on your plot. Twice yearly the Council will provide skips so that you can get rid of any non-compostable waste from your site – these skips are not to be used for general domestic waste from home. The Council will inform Tenants when the skips are expected to be delivered.

NB If you discover any asbestos on your plot e.g. corrugated sheets from an old shed, you must contact the Town Council and inform them as this must be handled and disposed of separately from other non-compostable wastes in accordance with the relevant legislation.

25. I have seen a rat on my plot, how do I get rid of it?

Unfortunately, as in any countryside situation, rats may be a problem. Compost bins provide nesting places and food sources for rats. Bins must be rat-proofed by placing wire underneath, and preferably extending wire around the sides of the bin. The Council advises that you check compost bins weekly in the winter for signs of rat activity. Check under sheds and pallets for rat nests and avoid giving them places to hide.

Traps and bait should be placed in sheltered places, e.g. in a tunnel made of old bricks, so that other animals cannot get to them. Follow label guidance for poison baits and protect the bait from rain. Alternatively, use a large trap specially designed for rats. With new traps, it is best to leave the traps loaded with food, but un-set for a week, until you see that the food is being taken. Once food is being taken the trap can be set.

NB. If you keep chickens, keep their feed in metal containers.

If you need any advice on this matter then please contact the Town Council or the HRAA.

26. Can I take my dog with me to the allotments?

Dogs must be kept on a leash at all times when on the site of the Allotment Gardens, and all dog faeces must be removed from the site.

27. I've got a problem with pests on my crops, can I use a spray?

When using any sprays or fertilisers, you must:

1. Take all reasonable care to ensure that adjoining hedges, trees and crops are not adversely affected, and must make good or replant as necessary should any damage occur; and
2. So far as possible select and use chemicals, whether for spraying, seed dressing or for any other purpose whatsoever, that will cause the least harm to members of the public, game birds and other wildlife, other than vermin or pests, and
3. Comply at all times with current regulations.

The Council recommends and suggests that Organic alternatives should be used in preference to other chemicals.

28. Are there any legal obligations I should know about?

Yes. You must at all times observe and comply fully with all enactments, statutory instruments, local, parochial or other bylaws, orders or regulations affecting the allotment site.

Lease Covenants

The Tenant of an allotment plot must observe and perform all conditions and covenants contained in the lease under which the Council hold the land that apply to the allotment garden.

Special Conditions

The Tenant of an allotment plot must observe and perform any other special condition the Council considers necessary to preserve it from deterioration of which notice is given to applicants for the allotment plot in accordance with these rules. Special conditions made under this rule may not prohibit or restrict the keeping of hens or rabbits.

Pollution

The tenant of an allotment plot must not contravene the Water Resources Act 1991 or any statutory re-enactment of it.

28. I saw someone walking about the allotments, making notes. Who can come onto the allotment sites?

If an emergency matter or a matter of Health & Safety arises relating to your plot any Member or Officer of the Council may enter and inspect any allotment plot at any time. If the matter is non-urgent then the Council will give the Tenant seven days written notice of the intention to inspect the plot.

29. I don't want to continue renting my allotment, what do I do?

If you wish to terminate your tenancy agreement, write to the Council Offices stating plot number and site and confirming that you wish to terminate your agreement.

If the allotment was rented by a member of your family who has died since taking on the allotment, the tenancy of an allotment will terminate on the rent day next after the death of the tenant. If you wish to terminate the agreement sooner, please contact the Council Offices.

Tenancy agreements will also terminate whenever the tenancy or right of occupation of the Council terminates.

30. Can the Council terminate my allotment agreement for any reason?

The tenancy of an allotment plot may be terminated by the Council by re-entry after one month's notice if:

1. The rent is in arrears for not less than 40 days or
2. The tenant is not duly observing the rules affecting the allotment plot or allotment site, or any other term or condition of the tenancy.

The tenancy of an allotment plot may be terminated by the Council or tenant by 12 months' notice in writing expiring on or after 29 September in any year.

The Council may terminate the tenancy of an allotment plot by re-entry after 3 months' notice in writing on account of the allotment plot being required:

1. For any purpose, other than use for agriculture, for which it was acquired by the Council or has been appropriated under any statutory provision, or
2. For building, mining or other industrial purpose or for roads or sewers necessary in connection with any of these purposes.

Service of Notices

Any notice may be served on a tenant either personally or by leaving it at his last known address, or by registered letter or by recorded delivery addressed to their last known address, or by fixing the notice in a conspicuous manner on the allotment plot.

If you have an enquiry or would like further information about Allotments in St Ives, please contact:

St Ives Town Council
Town Hall
St Ives,
Huntingdon
PE27 5AL

Telephone: 01480 388929
e-mail: clerk@stivestowncouncil.gov.uk