

Watnall Allotments & Gardens Association

Since 1844

Watnall Allotments



Welcome Pack

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**In case of Emergency the address for Watnall Allotments is
Main Road, Watnall, Opposite Stannier Way NG16 1GL**

Booklet last updated April 2022

Welcome to Watnall Allotments and Gardens Association.

If you have recently taken on an allotment and joined our growing community, we would like to welcome you. We hope that you have many years of enjoyment of allotment life ahead. This Welcome Pack summarises how we manage the allotment site and what you can expect as a member of the Association. If you have any questions about anything, please ask! There are a lot of experienced growers on site and they are happy to share knowledge and give advice.



A 'Potted History'

Watnall Allotments are located on the main road, opposite Stannier Way and next door to the Weather Station and Aero Fabrications. The allotments are not Council controlled and they are on private land, currently owned by MI & EG Scott-Dalglesh.

The administration of the tenancy is between the committee and Shouler & Son of Melton Mowbray.

The earliest record of allotments at Watnall was 1844 and they were known as Cottage Gardens and the land was owned by the Right Honorable Lord Melbourne.

The rent payable to the owner is renewed and agreed every three years when the tenancy agreement is updated and signed.

All the allotment holders are members of the Watnall Allotment and Gardens Association. A committee is elected annually by the members at the AGM. The committee members administer the affairs of the Association. A minimum of six members of the committee is needed. The committee arrange activities, resolve problems, and represent the association. A list of the current committee members is available on our website (<http://watnallallotments.co.uk/committee/>).

The Association has adopted a **constitution**, which describes the function and objectives of the Association; it also describes the types of memberships, who is able to vote at the AGM, the Committee structure, the roles and how the finances and income are managed. The constitution is published here <http://watnallallotments.co.uk/constitution/>.

The Association has used the Royal Oak Inn as its base for Committee meetings, annual show and AGM for as long as anyone can remember. It has been a tradition that the licensee at the Royal Oak is asked to be President of the Association.

The Association raises its own funds through Allotment rents, membership subscriptions, trading, and other efforts. We have also been supported on a regular basis by Greasley Parish Council and Councillor Phillip Owen made a contribution to the new main gate. We are always seeking new sponsorship.

In 2017 the Association received a generous donation from allotment holder Chris Dorkes of St James' Place which allowed us to purchase a new trading hut. This new hut is much larger and more secure than the old one, and should last us well into the future and the Association is very grateful for the donation.

A standard allotment plot is approx. 280 square yards which allows for a single central pathway between each pair of allotments. The size of some allotments has changed over the years, caused by the provision of car parking, main road widening, and some members creating extra pathways and moving fences. There are several half-sized plots which are normally created when a member is unable to continue to maintain a full plot.

Winners of the allotment awards are presented with trophies at the Open Day which are kept for a year. They will then be presented with a smaller award at the AGM, which can be kept forever.

The association has public liability insurance. We are an affiliate member of the Allotments & Gardens Council UK, Trading as Nottingham & District Allotment Council. This allows us to purchase seeds from Dobies at cut prices. (Further details on seed purchasing can be found further on in this pack.)



BEES There are a number of beehives on our allotment site, managed by experienced beekeepers who are members of the British Beekeepers Association. Bees are an important component of a healthy ecosystem, and the bees are managed in accordance with best practice for bees on allotment sites ([Layout 1 \(bbka.org.uk\)](http://Layout 1 (bbka.org.uk))). A designated area on Plot 85 is the Beekeeping site for the Allotments. All beehives are to be kept on Plot 85. Any Plot Holders wishing to keep Beehives at the Allotments will do so on Plot 85 under the Watnall Allotments Beekeeping Policy which is agreed by the committee.



Rules / Allotment guide to a positive growing experience

Over the years, members of the Association have agreed a number of rules for all to follow to ensure a good experience for all members and effective management of the allotments.

SITE SECURITY - THE GATE The last member out, at any time must lock the gate with the padlock. All members are issued a key and this *must* be carried at all times to avoid being locked in. Do not enter the allotments without a gate key. If you ask anyone to water or collect crops during the summer, make sure that they have a key. Gate keys are available from Gregor Rauch for a refundable deposit.

'SAFETY FIRST' SPEEDING Please drive slowly through the allotments, and keep to the 10mph limit. Speeding vehicles of all types could pose a major danger especially to small children that could suddenly appear from behind fences. In the hot summer months, clouds of dust can spoil a lovely crop. Speeding vehicles also cause some damage to the surface of the track.

HEDGES Members must ensure that there are no gaps in the boundary hedge/fence. In the past, trespassers have climbed through any small gap with intent to cause damage. Keep all hedges tidy and well-trimmed. Hedge bottoms must be kept clean and tidy.

BOUNDARIES Please ensure that boundaries next to the track are kept secure and fastened back. If they are barbed please keep them cut back. There have been reports of cars being scratched. Ideally boundaries should be well back from the track to allow for vehicles to pass with ease. We recommend 1.8 metres from the centre of the track. If you organize a delivery of manure from the farmer your fence must be removed in order to facilitate delivery without damage to neighboring boundary fences.

TRESPASS Please refrain from venturing onto other members' allotments without permission. Unauthorised removal of vegetables or equipment from other allotments will be reported to the Police.

RUBBISH Please do not dump scrap metal, rotting vegetables or rubbish of any type in the car parks. Keep hedge bottoms free of rubbish. This will harbour rats and rabbits, giving ideal conditions for breeding and subsequent infestation. From time to time we will organise collection of scrap metal and advise you when and where to place it for collection.

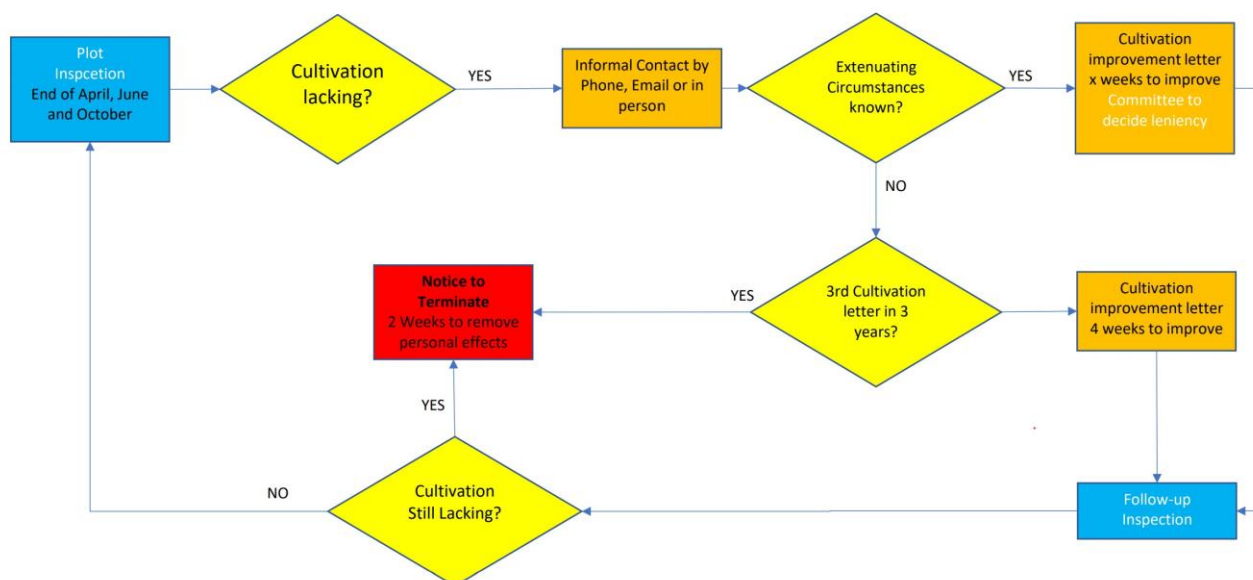
BONFIRES Whilst there is no known restriction on bonfires please do not burn plastics, rubber, fibre glass or painted timber on bonfires as these will cause toxic fumes and damage the soil. We would not wish to be reported for unsociable behaviour. Please also consider weather conditions and wind direction before lighting fires. Ideally the wind direction should be away from the main road and residential areas.

TRACK should be kept in reasonable repair in front of every allotment. It is your responsibility to keep the central grassed strip cut down. Please help to fill the potholes with stone provided. The stone is for use to repair the track and not for personal use. Please do not fill the holes with bonfire ash as this could contain nails. Keep the road adjacent to the allotment in good repair.

PARKING During the busy period, March – August would members please take care when parking and use the minimum space so that as many members as possible can park near their allotment. To make everyone's experience safe and happy, please consider parking tidily and as close to each other as possible to maximise the space.

INSPECTIONS Plots are inspected for cultivation and rubbish three times a year in late **April, June** and **October**. If plots are identified as lacking in cultivation, a committee member will make informal contact with the plot holder to ascertain if there are extenuating circumstances that have led to the lack of

cultivation. In the event that there are extenuating circumstances the committee will determine a grace period before improvement is expected. If there are no extenuating circumstances, the secretary will issue a Cultivation Improvement Letter, giving the plot holder 4 weeks to improve cultivation. After four weeks the plot will be inspected again. If there has been no or little progress the secretary will issue a termination letter. In the event that this is the third Cultivation Improvement Letter in three years, the secretary will not issue a cultivation improvement letter. Instead they will issue a Termination Letter.



CULTIVATION Keep allotment well cultivated and free from noxious plants and weeds. Keep path straight, tidy and to a minimum width. Cultivation is considered to be the working of the allotment for the growing of crops and raising plants. Depending on the time of year, during inspections, the evidence of cultivation is different:

Spring

- Preparation of the ground
- Raising of seedlings
- Planting and sowing in the ground

Summer

- Crops growing in the soil and/or greenhouse
- Crops being harvested

Autumn

- Crops growing and being harvested

Winter

- Preparation of soil
- Tidy up for next season

Please note: Covering over the ground with black plastic is one way to keep the soil warm in cooler seasons before the crops go in. However, an allotment that is still covered over in the height of summer is not cultivated. Strimming of weeds is not considered cultivation. (Please see separate notes on action to be taken in the event of non-cultivation).

We **strongly discourage the use of carpets** and underlays on our allotment site, even for short term weed suppression. Carpets contain synthetic fibres or foam which break down and release plastic and other contaminants into the soil. Carpets may have been treated with various chemicals as flame retardants or stain repellents for instance and these can leach into the soil. Also, many tough weeds such as bindweed and couch grass are not deterred by a layer of carpet and start to grow through it, making future removal of this material very difficult. Anyone who has taken on a plot with old carpet embedded in the soil or paths will know how difficult it is to remove and dispose of. For these reasons, the use of carpets is banned on many allotment sites. There are environmentally friendly alternatives for use as weed suppressants, such as green manure, permeable weed suppressant membrane, a layer of cardboard covered with compost or manure etc. We would ask that you use these methods if you wish to cover any part of your allotment.

WATER There is no mains water supply to the allotments and rainwater harvesting is essential in order to maintain adequate supply to get you through a growing season.

PEST CONTROL Sometimes we do allow local game controllers to deal with rabbits. Notices will be posted in the event of rabbit control being required, please make it known if you are opposed to this form of pest control treatment taking place on your plot.

CHANGE OF CIRCUMSTANCES If during the year, there are personal difficulties for health reasons or other problems which make it difficult for your allotment to be cultivated please drop a short note to the Committee. This usually removes the need for any other correspondence about lack of cultivation. If you find that gardening is not for you, please give up your plot. It's ok to change your mind! We have a long list of people waiting for spaces.

TERMINATION It is a requirement that new members make visible progress in clearing and/or cultivating their plot within 3 months of taking over the tenancy and further progress at each successive inspection during the first year. By the end of the first year, you are required to have **cultivated at least 50% of your plot**. If your plot remains uncultivated for a period of time this will be picked up during regular inspections. You can read about the steps taken in the inspection and cultivation sections above. You will be notified by letter unless you have written to us explaining any temporary change in circumstances as above. If for any reason you decide to give up the Allotment during the year, please inform the Secretary so that it can be re-let before it gets overgrown.

You will be required to remove any rubbish or personal belongings.

GENERAL

- Keep your allotment numbered to aid identification.
- Huts and sheds must be kept off the ground so they do not harbour vermin.
- Dogs are welcome and must be kept on a lead!
- Firearms are not permitted in the allotments.
- Building waste, hardcore and items not related to gardening must not be stored on allotments.
- Clearance following vacation is costly and as per termination above you will be asked to remove any rubbish.

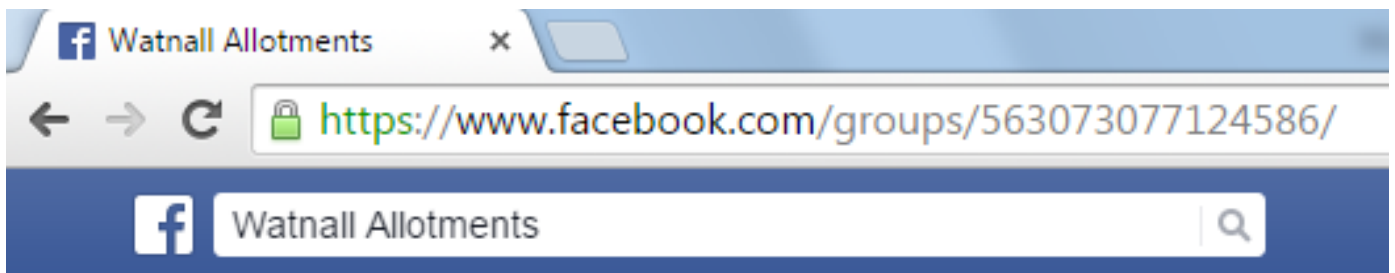
Website and Facebook

The Association has a website <http://watnallallotments.co.uk/> which contains much information about our group, including any upcoming events, competitions etc. The current membership of the committee is shown on this page <http://watnallallotments.co.uk/committee/> . We have published some favourite recipes to use up your produce, and we plan to add useful hints and tips from our experienced gardeners.

We also have a Facebook group, which is a closed group and only open to plot holders. If you are a Facebook user you can find us simply by typing into the search bar 'watnall allotments'. If you want to join the group, click the link to send a request to the administrator. There are many members, however FB is not for everyone, so it's up to you whether or not you wish to get involved. It can be used for posting pictures of your crops, asking advice from fellow and more experienced gardeners or sharing your own successes.

The administrators reserve the right to remove anything which may be construed as offensive to others.

Facebook is for fun!



Allotment Competitions

We invite an independent judge to judge our allotments at the end of June or early July each year. Full-sized plots are judged in two categories - **Best** and **Intermediate**. The winner of the Intermediate category will advance to the Best category next year. It is hoped that this will encourage more members to enter. There are separate competitions for **Half Plots** and for **New Members**, who are eligible for this category for the first 2 years of membership.

The dates of the judging each year will be communicated via notice boards, Facebook, committee meeting minutes etc. Further details from any committee member.

Judging process

The judge is independent of the allotment association. Our Chairman or nominated Committee member(s) will be involved with the recording and score sheet but occasionally representatives of local Councils, sponsors or the land agent may attend and observe. Members are not permitted to make contact with the judge prior to or during the judging.

Best Allotment competition

The judging criteria are shown on the sample entry form below. The judge will give points according to the Score Sheet. The judge's decision is final. The judge's score sheet and any amendment will be agreed by the Committee. The secretary will issue the Results Sheet to the participating and scored allotment holders as quickly as possible after the judging.

Intermediate Allotment Competition

This competition is to encourage more members to enter, and is judged on RHS criteria, which don't specify which crops to grow. Criteria include:

- Quality of crops (max 150 points)
- Originality of design and layout (max 50 points)
- Condition of plot (max 25 points)
- Visual aspect of plot (max 25 points)

The winner of this competition is encouraged to move on to the Best Allotment category the following year to allow others a chance!

New Members Most Progress Competition:

All new members are entered for a newcomer's competition in the first two years to judge how much progress they have made. Upon allocation, the plots are scored for condition. 10 points for a weedy plot and 0 for a weed-free plot. These initial scores act as a handicap. A small group of committee members will judge these plots.

Half Plots Competition:



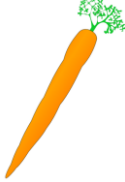


















Half Plots are judged separately to full-sized plots, and a small group of committee members judge these plots.

Watnall Best Allotment Competition – Sample Entry Form

Name **Allotment no.....**

The judging will take place late June / early July by a judge totally independent of the allotments. Hand your application form in to the trading hut or email watnallallotments@gmail.com or the Association Secretary.

In order to enter for the allotment competition you must grow a selection of crops from the categories below. Each crop counts for 10 points. **Use the tick box to help you ensure that your entry is valid.**

Roots and Alliums (max 40 Points)					
You must grow at least 4 of these to enter					
<input type="checkbox"/> Potatoes	<input type="checkbox"/> Parsnips	<input type="checkbox"/> Carrots	<input type="checkbox"/> Celery	<input type="checkbox"/>	
				Any Veg not listed	
<input type="checkbox"/> Leeks	<input type="checkbox"/> Onions	<input type="checkbox"/> Shallots	<input type="checkbox"/> Beetroot	<input type="checkbox"/> Swedes	
					
Legumes and Marrows (max 30 Points)					
You must grow at least 3 of these to enter					
<input type="checkbox"/> Dwarf Beans	<input type="checkbox"/> Runner Beans	<input type="checkbox"/> Broad Beans	<input type="checkbox"/> Peas	<input type="checkbox"/> Lettuce	<input type="checkbox"/> Marrow
					
Brassicac (max 20 Points)				Fruit or Flowers (10 Points)	
You must grow at least 2 of these to enter				You must grow a least 1 of these	
<input type="checkbox"/> Summer Cabbage	<input type="checkbox"/> Winter Cabbage	<input type="checkbox"/> Brussels Sprouts	<input type="checkbox"/> Cauliflower or Cabbage	<input type="checkbox"/> Any Fruit	<input type="checkbox"/> Any Flowers
					
General Items that are scored					
Cropping Scheme (20 pts)	Superior Work (20 pts)		Cleanliness (20 pts)		
Crop Rotation Intercropping Maturity Rotation General Layout	Planting & thinning distances Sowing rates Staking & Tying Earthing Up		Freedom from pest, disease & weed Composting		

**Max
Score

160
Points**

Annual Open Day

For the last few years, the Association has held an Open Day on the allotment site on August Bank Holiday Monday to welcome local residents and to raise money for charities and for our own funds.

At the 2021 Open Day, local residents, allotment holders, their friends and families visited the site to explore the plots of some of the winners of the various allotment competitions, and to buy plants and produce donated by allotment members. There was a popular BBQ and a cake stall, and visitors judged a scarecrow competition and a Veggie Monster competition for youngsters.



This was a fun community event and was very well attended. Local businesses generously sponsored this event and provided prizes for which we are incredibly grateful. We also held a raffle with many prizes, raising money for charity as well as for the Association.

Further details on this year's plans from any committee member.



Trading

The current Trading Officer is John Keating, ably assisted by Margaret Keating.

The trading hut located at the centre car park, is open whenever the Trading Officer is on the allotments and a flag is raised to indicate they are open for business!

See below for available items:

Garden Lime	Pelleted Chicken Manure
Growmore	Clover Multipurpose Compost
Fish, Blood and Bone	Peat free compost (on trial)
Sulphate of Potash	5ft, 6ft & 8ft Bamboo Canes
Potato Fertiliser	Slug Pellets
Onion Fertiliser	Nitrate of Chalk
Gardening Gloves	Liquid Concentrated Tomato Feed

John also collates orders every year for peas and seed potatoes.

Order forms for Dobies are available around late October / November. As an allotment association we do get a discount and great savings can be made. Members order directly from Dobies using a discount code. Dobies are quality seeds and have their own website if you want to check it out.

<https://www.dobies.co.uk/>.

Committee Meetings and Members

Committee meetings are held on the second Monday of every month, either at the Royal Oak in Watnall or online using Zoom technology. Meetings commence at 7.30 pm and are generally finished by 9.00 pm, and anyone is welcome to join the meeting. At each meeting, the minutes from the previous meeting are reviewed and agreed and signed by the Chair before circulation to members. These are then posted on allotment notice boards or on Facebook for downloading.

Current committee members are shown on our website <http://watnallallotments.co.uk/committee/> .

President – Usually the Licensee of the Royal Oak.

Meeting Agenda

- Chairman's Report
- Secretary's report
- Treasurer's Report
- Allocations Officer's Report
- Trading Officer's Report
- AOB

Typical Committee Meeting Calendar

January - There is normally no committee meeting in January due to the AGM which is usually held on the 2nd Sunday in the month

February - Anything arising from the AGM, Welcome & appoint new committee members. Consider appointment of an allotment judge, non-payments for plots and any action to be taken.

March - Report on terminations, review membership lists, payment of rent to Agent of landlord, renew raffle licence with Broxtowe Borough Council.

April - Approach GPC for grants, ask Chair of Greasley Parish Council to attend allotment judging and invite to Annual Open Day. Confirm date of end of month plot inspections.

May - Actions from April plot inspections. Invite guests to Open Day if applicable. Encourage entries to allotment competitions.

June - Best and Intermediate Allotment Judging takes place. Collect trophies for engraving, appoint staff for Open Day, discuss jobs for the event. Confirm date of end of month plot inspections.

July - Half Plot and New Members judging takes place. Actions from June plot inspections. Issue results of judging.

August - Annual Open Day, everyone needed. Site tidy up, track repairs by volunteers.

September - Discuss Open Day results, finances etc.

October - Discuss draft accounts and consider rents and subs for next year, confirm venue for AGM. Confirm date of end of month plot inspections.

November - Actions from October plot inspections. Take nominations for Committee. Ask missing members to confirm they wish to stand. Discuss and agree PROPOSALS for AGM. Order small plaques.

December - Issue Notice of AGM, invoices for rent and membership fees. Discuss format and speeches for AGM. Authorise payments for PLI and N&DAC. Discuss make up of Committee in New Year.

Annual General Meeting

The AGM is held every year in January. This is an opportunity for you to have your say and it is also the deadline to pay your subs for the forthcoming year.

The venue and time of meeting will be communicated prior to the meeting via the meeting minutes, notice boards and Facebook. A Notice of AGM and agenda is sent to all allotment holders in December.

Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the previous AGM
3. Chair's report
4. Secretary's report
5. Treasurer's report
6. Trading officer's report
7. Election of Officers & Committee for forthcoming year
8. Additional items including proposals affecting terms of tenancy or changes in the rules of the Association (must have been received by the Secretary before December 31st prior to the AGM)
9. Any other Business
10. Close

After the formal part of the AGM the Treasurer will be available to collect any outstanding annual subscriptions and allotment rents. The Treasurer will confirm rent for the forthcoming year, any increases will be in line with running costs and rent increases from the landlord.

If you are over 70 years old and have been a member for over 10 years you do not have to pay a membership fee. If you are over 80 years old and have been a member for over 10 years you will pay no membership fee and only half rent.

Please claim reductions upon payment.

If Allotment Rents are not paid by the AGM in January, it will be assumed that you do not want to continue with the Allotment, and it therefore becomes available to be re-let. This will be strictly enforced as there is a long waiting list.

The Association has a bank account at the TSB and Cheques should be made payable to "Watnall Allotment Association". Payment by BACS transfer is also now possible. In February 2019 we introduced PayPal as a means of making payment. There is a link on this page of our website to make payments this way: <http://watnallallotments.co.uk/rents/>.

Special Notes for New Members

All new members will have a 12-month probation period. Visible progress in clearing and/or cultivating the plot is required within 3 months of taking on the tenancy and at each subsequent inspection during the first year. At the end of the 12-month probation period, it is expected that at least half the allotment will be dug over and cultivated. If this is not achieved you may be notified of termination.

Helper Members.

If you have someone to help with the allotment, be they friend or relative, they should be registered as a helper member and pay the annual subscription. A helper member will be anyone who works on the allotment for more than two hours a week, on average, between March and October. This is required so that helper members are covered by the Public Liability Insurance and so that contact details are held in case of emergency. It is also a requirement that helper members are registered for five years before they can take over a plot from a member should the member decide to give up for any reason.

Getting involved

Maintenance and running of the allotments doesn't just happen and a lot of hard work goes into the upkeep of the site, preparation of plots for new tenants and preparing for an Open Day event. We welcome any help that you can give, for example - helping clear overgrown allotments for re-letting. If you have some spare time and are willing to participate in these activities, then please make it known. Several of the committee members have given over twenty years of service to the Association. The Committee meets regularly to discuss activities of the Association, solve problems, deal with complaints and are always trying to improve the assets of the Association. If you are interested in becoming a committee member then please speak to any of the committee members to put yourself forward at any time. We need a strong Committee and active Officers to keep the allotments going for future generations.

Data Protection Policy

This Data Protection Policy explains what personal information the Association collects from individuals and how this information is managed and protected.

Watnall Allotments and Gardens Association collects and holds personal information about:

1. The members of the Association, i.e. allotment holders and their registered helpers
2. Prospective members, i.e. those on a waiting list for an allotment
3. Those offering services to the Association, such as judges

The personal information that we hold may include your name, contact details including address, phone number, e-mail address, and other information necessary for the effective management of the legitimate interests of the Association. We collect this information in order to manage the allotment site, communicate with allotment holders and allocate vacant allotments. This information is also used to enable the administration of competitive events such as the Annual Show and Best Allotment Competition.

Watnall Allotments and Gardens Association stores the above personal information in a secure electronic system. Access to this information is restricted to those members of the committee who administer the allocation and management of the allotments. Your personal information is not distributed beyond the Association, and is never made available to outside bodies seeking to use it for marketing purposes.

When members relinquish their allotment and leave the Association, their personal information will be deleted once any outstanding communications and transactions are complete (e.g. payment of deposit on return of site key). The Association may retain certain historical archives such as records of meetings and awards.

As a member of the Association, you have the right to view the personal information that we hold on you and to have any necessary corrections made. In order to ensure our records are accurate, we ask that you keep us informed of any changes to your contact details and those of your registered helper(s). To view your personal information or request amendments, you should contact the Secretary of the Association (watnallallotments@gmail.com).

Policy last updated May 2018.