

Gunsite Allotments

Information for All Plot Holders

Revised July 2023

Barbecues & Bonfires – Occasional bonfires are allowed after midday, provided the material is dry & does not create a lot of smoke. Please consider your neighbours before having a bonfire or barbecue & ensure that the fire is properly extinguished before you leave. The Committee may ban barbecues &/or bonfires during very hot, dry weather.

Bees – there are a number of beekeepers on Gunsite who have hives within the trees, on the southern edge of the site. Keep well clear of the apiaries.

Chemicals, fertilizers, etc – These must be kept securely locked away or removed from site when not in use. Do not decant liquids or powders into unmarked bottles or containers. [See also Insecticides below.]

Children – children & young people are welcomed at Gunsite. However, children are the responsibility of their carers and must be supervised at all times, as allotment sites are full of potential dangers. Do not allow your children to run on paths and other people's plots.

Clothing – Ensure that you wear suitable clothing, and footwear, to guard against sunburn, heat stroke, insect bites, abrasions, etc. [Note. Ticks have been reported recently in the London area.]

Committee + Society Membership – Gunsite allotments are part of the Camberwell & District Allotment Society. All plot holders at Gunsite are members of this Society for which we each pay an annual fee of £3. Gunsite allotments are run by a committee, which meets four times a year. There is an AGM in Nov / Dec. All members are encouraged to attend.

Contact – contact with plot holders is mainly by email from gsallotments@gmail.com. It is therefore most important that we have your up-to-date email address. Please notify your site officer & gsallotments@gmail.com of any change to your contact details. There is a notice board near the shop and a Website.

Co-plot holders – two people can take on an allotment jointly. If one partner leaves, the other then becomes sole plot holder. Plot holders can also take on a co-plot holder at any later stage. However, such a co-plot-holder needs to be signed-up as a member for at least five years before they qualify to take over the plot, should the original member leave.

Dogs – are welcome at Gunsite but must be kept on leads.

Drainage + Ditches – we have a drainage problem at Gunsite which causes some paths to become muddy & waterlogged in winter. Plot holders must maintain their perimeter ditches approximately 6 – 8 inches deep & 6 inches wide. In digging ditches, care must be taken not to slice turf from paths. Currently, plot holders in the central section of the site must also lay pipes (available at the shop for no charge) under lateral paths.

Emergency phone numbers – for the site officers and beekeepers are on the site notice board. These should only be used in emergencies.

First Aid – plot holders should have their own first aid materials available. This should include treatment for bites & stings. Please ensure you include an epipen if you are allergic to bee stings.

Gate – the gate to the site must be kept closed.

Glass – this is a hazard to both children and adults. Do not bring untoughened glass (e.g. old window frames) to site. Dispose of glass on the skip.

Health & Safety – all plot holders are responsible for their own health & safety and are responsible for accompanied children. Please familiarize yourself with the Health & Safety Risk Evaluation for Gunsite on the Website.

Insecticides & weed killers – organic methods of control should be used wherever possible & the use of chemical insecticides avoided. [On occasion, the Committee may undertake localised chemical control to tackle invasive species on an abandoned plot.]

Inspections – all allotments are inspected annually, to ensure the tenancy agreement is being adhered to. Inspections normally take place in the summer.

For anyone who takes on an allotment between the summer inspection & the end of that year, their plot will be inspected in the normal way, the following year. They could be told to make improvements, in line with the tenancy agreement and in extreme cases, their tenancy could be terminated. But the state of the allotment when the plot holder took it on will be taken into account.

For anyone who takes on an allotment between 1st January & the following summer inspection, their plot will be inspected in the normal way & they could be told to make improvements, in line with the tenancy agreement. The state of the allotment when the plot holder took it on will be taken into account. Their tenancy cannot be terminated in this first year.

Manure – this is delivered periodically to the site & is free for everyone to use. However, plot holders are asked to be considerate to others & limit how much they take. The manure is mixed with bedding straw or woodchip & is not normally well rotted down. The site also gets occasional deliveries of leaf mould or wood chippings. If a fork has been left on the pile, ensure that this is not left pointing upwards.

Nelly Tee Hut – this is open on Sunday mornings, along with the shop. Shelter outside shop hours is available to plot holders using the keysafe.

Netting & fruit cages - if netting is used to protect crops from birds etc, it must have no holes & be securely pegged to the ground, all the way round. This is to prevent birds & other animals getting trapped inside the netting. Fruit cages must be similarly secure.

Noise – Please treat your neighbours with respect.

Numbers – allotments must be clearly numbered at the top end of the plot with a permanent sign.

Paths – the paths are mowed by volunteers. However, plot holders are responsible for keeping path edges and ditches regularly trimmed (monthly in summer), so that the ditch is clearly visible. This must be done using shears or strimmers & care must be taken not to slice turf from the paths. Paths must measure at least 75 cm in width. Limited amounts of manure may be spread over wheel ruts in winter but do not use wood chips as these will damage the mowers.

Paving slabs – a minimal number of paving slabs is allowed on plots. Slabs should not be strewn across plots.

Plastic – due to concerns about soil pollution caused by micro-plastics, plot holders are urged to restrict their use. Plastics degrade in sunlight and must be removed from site before they break down.

Ponds – wildlife ponds are permitted but are restricted for health & safety reasons by the insurer. Maximum size 2m x 1m x 0.5m with safety netting over. If you wish to incorporate a pond, please consult with your site officer. [Note. Parents/carers are warned that there is a deep drainage ditch on the south boundary with Dulwich Woods that fills with water in winter.]

Poplar trees – boundary poplar trees may drop branches without warning. Plot holders are advised not to venture near the poplars during windy weather.

Rents – rents for allotments & society membership fees are collected each September for the following allotment year, commencing October 1st.

Annual charges are currently: rent = £10 per rod (1 rod = approx 5 metres); membership = £3 each.

New plot holders also pay a deposit of £10 per rod, which is refundable when the plot is given up, provided it is in good condition.

Rubbish – there are two skips at the far SE end of the car park, one for limited allotment rubbish (i.e. plastic, glass, old carpets etc) and one for metal only. Tyres, rubble and soil are not permitted. Next to the skips is a dump for wood. Half way down the car park is the Dulwich Estate's green waste dump. Plot holders may dump green waste from their plot onto the pile but not in the contractors' work area.

Beware of contractors' vehicles. Plot holders must not bring rubbish / green waste /soil onto site for disposal. Soil must not be removed from site.

Sheds & Structures – the Gunsite Committee permits small sheds around the perimeter of the site only, provided these can be dismantled & removed, if necessary. Elsewhere, there should be no tool storage units or other structures on plots that are more than 1 metre in height. This does not include fruit cages, which can be taller. Concrete bases are not permitted. Any structure must be at least 1 metre away from plot edge / path.

Shop – this is normally open each Sunday from 10 am – 12 midday, apart from two Sundays in December/January each year. The shop stocks compost, manure, fertilisers, netting etc; also: potatoes, onion sets, broad beans & garlic in season. These should be ordered online and be paid for online or on collection. Any suggestions for other items the shop could stock are welcome.

Site Officer (s) – three people are currently volunteering as site officer. They are: Judith Patrick for the first section by the shop; Jane Taylor for the middle section; Liz Brunton for the far section near the skip. The site officers are responsible for overseeing their section and allocating new plots. They can be contacted by email at gsallotments@gmail.com. Anyone wanting to give up or reduce the size of their plot should contact their site officer.

Strimmers – strimmers can be hired. The hire is free but a small charge is made for the fuel used. Anyone wanting to hire a strimmer should contact either John Boreham at john-boreham@hotmail.co.uk /07813 919237 (best to text or phone John) or Nelly Tee on 07398 130811/email: nellytee@live.co.uk or find Nelly on plot 54 on most Tuesdays, Thursdays & Sundays. Plot holders must receive induction. Strimmers should not be used between midday & 3pm, in line with the Tenancy Agreement.

Tetanus – please ensure your immunisation is up to date.

Toilets – there are no toilet facilities on the site. However, we may use the toilets in the nearby Scout Centre if and when this is open.

Trees – only fruit trees can be planted on allotments. These must be of dwarf rooting stock & reduced to below 8ft/244cm in height, in the appropriate pruning season (eg. apple trees in autumn/winter; plum trees in spring). Advice can be sought from Ann Stanesby (anne.stanesby@btinternet.com) or Patrick McCabe (mccabepdl@yahoo.com) Trees should be planted in moderation & must be at least 1 metre from paths. Any branches overhanging paths must be cut back.

Tools – these are potentially dangerous to both children and adults. Secure tools when not in use.

Tyres – the use of tyres is discouraged due to the cost and difficulty of disposal. Tyres must be removed from the site after use & be disposed of by the plot holder.

Volunteers – the site is run by volunteers & there are many jobs to be done. If you are interested in joining the noble band of volunteers, the site officers would be delighted to hear from you.

Water – there are taps & water tanks around the site. Tanks have mesh covers; these must be reinstated after use. Hoses can be used to water crops but for no more than 30 minutes at a time. They must be hand-held at all times and be fitted with a self-closing trigger mechanism. Hoses must not be left to run unattended or be fixed to oscillators. Water should be directed to base of plants. Avoid watering in mid day heat. Apply mulch to suppress weeds and to minimise evaporation. Water tanks should be kept reasonably full. The water is turned off in the winter.

Website – Gunsite has its own website at www.gunsiteallotments.org

Weeds – certain invasive weeds are becoming a problem on Gunsite – Himalayan Balsam & Horsetail. If you believe that these are on or near your plot, please consult with your site officer.

Wheelbarrows – these are marked with “Gunsite” & are for everyone to use. They must be left at one of the three stations: at the far end of the car park, in the middle section or against the container near the shop. Faulty wheelbarrows should be parked by the shop, for repair.