

Winstanley Road Allotments Society (WRAS): Code of Practice

Status of Code

- This code does not replace the constitution, tenancy agreement or rules but will guide their interpretation and set down best practice.
- Officers and Committee will sign their acceptance of the Code of Practice, and all members will be made aware of it.
- It takes effect when engaged on allotment Society business on and off the site.

Admission to membership and office

- All members shall demonstrate a wish to grow vegetables, fruit and flowers on an allotment.
- All members will support the aims and objectives of the Society.
- Membership is at the discretion of the Committee but shall not be unreasonably refused.
- All anti-discrimination and equal opportunities legislation and requirements will be observed.
- Members should take all reasonable measures to ensure the suitability of officers for office.
- The Society through its committee and/or general meetings shall have the power to suspend and/or remove persons from membership or office for necessary and sufficient reasons.

Committee Members' Responsibilities

- Officers and Committee members' duty of care to the Society requires them to act in the best interests of the whole Society.
- Officers and Committee members should act with selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, leadership (the Nolan principles).
- A good quality of service for Society members will be more fully delivered by the exercise of the personal qualities of positive commitment, enthusiasm, knowledge, skills, reliability, respect, and patience.
- All members should be able to experience peaceful enjoyment of their allotments.
- All members shall follow the conditions relating to the use and maintenance of the allotment as set down in the tenancy agreement and rules.
- Any remediation required of a member in relation to these conditions of tenancy shall be proportionate and take into account any personal factors that may be relevant.
- Every member acting individually or collectively shall not give, receive or provoke behaviour that can be judged to be verbally, physically or mentally intimidating, aggressive or threatening to other members or groups of members.

Building the Allotment Community

- The Society will communicate regularly with members to update them with news from the allotment site and allotment Society.
- The formal communications for meetings of the Society and its committee will be sent sufficiently in advance to enable attendance at meetings, payment of bills and effective discussion and decision taking.
- There should be open and effective two-way communication between the Committee and Members to address and overcome concerns. Can be listened to and where appropriate attended to by Members and the Committee.
- The Society through its committee will organise on-site and off-site events that will require members to cooperate with one another.

- The Society expects to stage social events on site to mark particular occasion's, for example, on-site plant sales, annual show and barbecue and should take part in one event held in the local community each year.
- The Society would endeavour to enable its affiliated members to take an active part in borough-wide allotment activities and branch meetings of the National Allotment Society.

Confidentiality

- Officers and committee members will be responsible for maintaining confidentiality of members' data.
- All data from members will be confidential and kept in accord with GDPR and the Society's privacy policy.
- Any personal and/or sensitive information about plot holders including information on health, relationships and financial well-being shall be held with enhanced security.
- Conflicts of interest and conflicts of loyalty shall be declared by members and appropriate action taken by the committee.
- Details of Committee discussions and individual voting patterns will remain confidential. Decisions once taken shall be supported by all members of the Committee
- Minutes are confidential until approved at the following meeting. Minutes made available to all members will be redacted to remove personal information.

Responsibilities for Conduct at Meetings

- All general meetings and committee meetings of the Society are formal meetings.
- All procedural items for any meeting shall be made known.
- Personal conduct at meetings shall cover matters which include addressing the chair, keeping to the agenda item, having a time limit and being respectful of all other persons present.

Protocol for meetings

- Committee meetings should occur monthly and at least nine in a year and may be called as required by the committee.
- Annual general meetings shall be held not less than nine months before and not more than fifteen months after the previous one.
- Extraordinary General Meetings may be called at any time by the Committee or by a requisition signed by the lower number of twenty members or one third of the membership.

Agenda for Meetings

- There should be consultation on the draft agenda.
- The AGM agenda should be published 14 clear days before the meeting.
- Agenda report items will appear regularly, items arising from the minutes of the previous meeting should be a separate agenda item and incorporate AOB and the date of next meeting.

Documents and reports required before and after meetings

- Agenda to be drawn up and circulated.
- Chair's report to itemise main developments since previous meeting.
- Secretary's report to chart changes of membership since previous meeting

- Treasurer's report to show revenue and expenditure since the last meeting, the current bank balance(s) to be made known and all items to be set alongside the year's budget figures.
- Documentary evidence of the financial activities are to be available at the meeting.
- The figures for trading sales revenues and costs should be made known

Processes for meeting efficiency

- Pre-meeting discussion can clarify the issues to be decided.
- Setting a timetable for each item on the agenda the meeting would assist the meeting ending at an agreed time.
- All members should be enabled to contribute.
- Chair to invite those who have not contributed to do so.
- Chair should limit repetitions and multiple contributions from a given member.

Meetings: Decisions, votes, actions

- All decisions made should be recorded in the minutes either as agreed but if a formal vote is taken the numbers for, against and abstentions should be recorded in the minutes.
- Action points should accompany decisions, the person responsible for a specific action should be recorded and the type of action required.
- That person is to report back by or at the next meeting and the item decided or set for further consideration.
- A time limit for any item to remain on the agenda should be set and, if agreed, then taken of the agenda,
- Draft minutes from the meeting should be available not more than 14 days after the meeting.

Financial Probity

- The financial year starts on 1st April of any given year and ends on 31st March of the following year.
- Cheques require a minimum of two signatures.
- Security provision for all online and telephone banking transactions needs to ensure that no one person can authorise payments.
- At least three quotes need to be obtained for any significant onsite works and for any other significant elective expenditure.
- Regular reporting to the committee about the financial health of the Society is required.
- Annual accounts need to be appropriately inspected or audited.
- The annual accounts need to be agreed by the membership at the AGM.
- A budget for the forthcoming financial year needs to be prepared.

Breaches of tenancy conditions and/or this Code

- Breaches can be made by any member, including committee members and officers acting individually or as a group of members.
- For non-cultivation there should be a series of steps from informal discussion with the plot holder, through notice of improvement, notice of rescindment or progression to a formal notice to quit.
- All available procedures should be taken to enable remediation.
- For individual or collective unacceptable behaviour, a graded series of responses should also be in place.

- Those steps will vary according to the severity of the breach and if previous breaches had occurred.
- The unacceptable behaviour on site should have been witnessed independently and may have been repeated.
- Where significant anti-social and illegal behaviour is involved however e.g. physical assault, drug taking or supply, an immediate suspension is feasible. The police will need to be involved.
- All available and reasonable procedures should be taken in all cases to enable remediation.
- Any breach that is alleged to have been made by a committee member or officer would require that member to take no part in the committee's deliberations or voting on the issue but give that member the right to a fair hearing to refute the alleged breach.
- External mediation can help in later stages but it will need to be agreed by both parties, and is time-consuming.
- If termination of tenancy is a likely outcome and if it is appropriate an EGM can be called.