



Elgin Allotment Association (EAA) Membership Handbook

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1. Introduction

This handbook brings together the essential documents regarding membership of Elgin Allotment Association (EAA).

We are a self-managed site, which means that our Association manages the site, under the terms of a lease between the EAA and Moray Council.

The Tenancy Agreement is based on a standard agreement used by a number of UK Allotment Associations. The Tenancy Agreement is the document tenants are required to sign to accept that they agree to the tenancy terms and conditions, which include agreeing to the rules of the EAA.

EAA committee meetings are held about 6 times a year. All tenants have the right to attend; and should contact a committee member, preferably the Secretary, if they would like to do so. Self-management does not mean that just the committee runs the site; more often than not it is ordinary members volunteering, using their own skills, experience and initiative to get things done. Please help in whatever way you can. This is the way of getting the most out of EAA membership

2. EAA Constitution

The EAA Constitution can be found via [the EAA website](#).

3. EAA Committee Role Responsibilities and Descriptions

Chair and Vice Chair

Purpose - Ensure the committee functions properly

Duties include:

- To plan and run meetings in accordance with our Constitution.
- To ensure matters are dealt with in an orderly, efficient manner.
- To bring impartiality and objectivity to meetings and decision-making.
- To facilitate change and address conflict within the Committee.
- To review governance performance and skills.

Secretary

Purpose - Ensure responsible administration and to facilitate efficient communication between committee and members.

Duties include:

- To prepare agendas in consultation with the Chair.
- To receive agenda items from other committee members.
- To check that quorum is present.
- To minute meetings and circulate the draft minutes to all committee members.
- To circulate calling notice, agendas and minutes of committee meetings, the annual general meeting (AGM) and any special or extraordinary general meetings.
- To distribute the approved minutes.
- To make arrangements for meetings.
- To deal with general EAA correspondence.

Treasurer

Purpose - maintain an overview of the association's financial affairs, ensuring its viability and ensuring that proper financial records and procedures are maintained.

Duties include:

General financial oversight.

- To oversee and present budgets, accounts and financial statements.
- To ensure that appropriate accounting procedures and controls are in place.
- To ensure compliance with relevant legislation.
- To ensure any recommendations of the auditors are implemented.
- To ensure accounts meet the conditions of contractual agreements with external agencies such as funders and statutory bodies including OSCR.
- To present financial reports to the secretary and committee.
- To make a presentation of the accounts at the annual general meeting (AGM).

- To advise on the Association’s reserves policy and investment policy.
- To advise on the financial implications of the Association’s strategic and operational plans.

Membership Secretary

Purpose - To ensure up-to-date records are kept of association membership Duties include:

- To establish and maintain an up-to-date database of members’ details.
- Provide regular updates of membership to EAA Committee.
- To liaise with the Secretary and Treasurer as required

4. EAA Data protection and privacy policy

EAA is the data controller for the personal information we hold. We are committed to protecting your personal data and handling it responsibly in accordance with UK data protection law (UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018).

What information we collect

We collect basic personal information including:

- Name
- Address
- Phone number
- Email address

This information is provided by you when joining our waiting list or becoming a plot holder.

How we use your information

Your data is used solely to:

- Manage the allotment waiting list
- Allocate plots
- Contact you regarding allotment matters (e.g. availability, tenancy, committee meetings or issues)
- Respond to any enquiries or complaints you raise
- Make contact in an emergency

We do not use your data for marketing and do not share it with third parties, except where required by law.

Lawful basis

We process your personal data on two lawful bases depending on your relationship with us:

- Waiting list applicants — legitimate interests, as it is necessary for the effective management of the allotment waiting list

- Plot holders — contract, as processing is necessary to fulfil and administer your plot tenancy agreement

How your data is stored

Your information is stored securely using digital systems with access restricted to authorised committee members only (the Secretary, Treasurer and Membership Officer). We use secure third-party services (such as MS Office) to store data. This may involve processing outside the UK; where this occurs, MS Office relies on standard contractual clauses approved by the UK Information Commissioner's Office to ensure your data remains protected.

Keeping your data accurate

We aim to keep the information we hold accurate and up to date. We may ask you to confirm or update your details periodically, for example when renewing your tenancy. If any information we hold about you is incorrect, please contact us and we will correct it promptly.

How long we keep your data

We only keep your data for as long as necessary:

- Waiting list entries are reviewed regularly and removed if no longer required
- Plot holder data is kept for the duration of your tenancy and for a reasonable period afterwards for administrative purposes

Your rights

Under UK GDPR, you have the right to:

- Request a copy of your personal data
- Request correction of inaccurate or incomplete data
- Request deletion of your data where appropriate
- Object to or restrict processing in certain circumstances
- Request that your data be provided to you in a portable, machine-readable format so it can be transferred to another organisation

Please be aware that in some circumstances exercising certain rights — such as requesting deletion or restriction — may affect our ability to provide allotment services to you.

To exercise any of these rights, please contact the committee at: eea08@outlook.com

You also have the right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) at www.ico.org.uk if you believe your data has been handled improperly.
Contact

If you have any questions about how your data is handled, please contact:
eea08@outlook.com

5. Gardenshare Site Rules

Keep the site a friendly place to be

Respect everyone's plots and the site as a whole and ensure your family and visitors do the same.

- Show consideration for other plot holders, others who are working on the site and for those who live nearby.
- Children are welcome on site. Welcome them, and encourage them to be respectful of other plots and plot holders.
- Keep your dog on a lead at all times and ensure it does not annoy others
- Use the diary, notice board and message book that sits in the shed for allotment-related notices and community events.

Look after your plot and the site

- Keep your plot (and shed, tools etc.) in good order.
- Follow the organic guidelines.
- If you need to be away, let the association know, and try to arrange for someone to maintain your plot.
- Keep gates and building locked when leaving the site.
- Help out with communal work as required.
- Compost waste using the communal compost area. instructions on composting are in the shed, please take time to read them.
- Take home non-compostable waste.

Ask and receive permission before:

- Keeping bees or chickens/poultry.
- Putting up any structure on your plot (e.g. polytunnels, glasshouse, cold frames, scarecrows).

A few Do Nots!

- No fruit or other trees to be planted on site.
- No pesticides or weed killers should be used or stored on site.
- No livestock (including dogs) to be kept on site (except chickens/poultry with permission as stated above).
- No bonfires to be held on plots.
- No hosepipes to be attached to taps - watering cans only.

Legal and financial

- You are responsible for your plot - you cannot let it to anyone else.
- Disputes between plot holders can be brought to the association for arbitration.

- Pay your rent on time. Let the association know if you are having difficulty in paying. If we do not hear from you and rent is still unpaid after two reminders, the association can end your tenancy.
- Your allotment produce is intended to be for you and your family. You are welcome to barter or sell surplus produce as long as your allotment does not become primarily a commercial enterprise.
- If you do not keep these rules, a simple majority of the association's committee can choose to end your tenancy. This will only happen in extreme circumstances.

Enjoy your plot and the produce that you grow!

6. Pinefield Rules

Membership and lease

1. All allotment users of the Pinefield site must be members of the EAA. Organisations will also maintain a membership with the EAA.
2. Each allotment shall be let annually – from 1st July – 30th June each year.
3. The rent shall be paid annually by the end of June each year, or the allotment may be allocated to someone on the waiting list.
4. Sub-letting of the plot is prohibited.
5. Any person wishing to cease their membership of an allotment is required to notify the secretary.
6. Members should advise the Committee if they are to be absent from the allotments for a significant period due to illness, work etc. This is to allow the Committee to support the member.
7. All new members who have been allocated an allotment must undertake an induction with one of the Committee and pay the rent prior to starting work on the allotment. Membership does not commence until both these steps have been taken.

Communication and interactions

8. Members must act in a respectful and responsible manner towards other members and their allotments, they are also to ensure their family and visitors do the same. Children are to be welcomed and encouraged and must be always supervised.
9. It is expected that all plot holders will act in a manner so as not to cause offence to others and that most issues will be solved by negotiation between individuals rather than resorting to official proceedings. However, there may be times when a member wishes to lodge a complaint. This should be done in writing to the secretary who will bring the issue to the attention of the committee for consideration and determination.

Cultivation and plot maintenance

10. The member shall cultivate the allotment and shall use it only to produce fruit, vegetables, and flowers for domestic consumption by themselves and their family and friends. Allotments must not be allowed to become uncultivated and overgrown with weeds.
11. Members shall take reasonable steps to control and eradicate any disease, vermin, or pests, using organic methods.
12. The allotment shall not be used as a storage facility for items not used directly for the cultivation of the allotment. Trailers must not be left on the site.
13. Each allotment is supplied with one shed. It must be painted and kept in good condition. Each shed must have a water butt to collect rainwater.
14. Dogs taken onto the allotment site must be always kept on a lead and they must not cause a nuisance.
15. Barbed wire or anything else likely to cause injury must not be used.

16. Carpet must not be used as weed suppressant.
17. Tyres must not be used on site.
18. Any waste generated by the plot holder must either be recycled, composted, or removed from the site and disposed of by the individual.
19. Fires on site must be requested via the Committee and adhered to with respect to para 3.1.16 of the Sublease.
20. Each full plot is allowed to erect a polytunnel up to 10m x 3m. For any other buildings permission must be granted in writing as discussed in para 3.1.12 of the Sublease.
21. Ponds are allowed on individual plots and will be no bigger than 6ft round or 6ft square. It will be no deeper than 12 inches. Please notify the Secretary if a pond is being built.
22. All structures must be erected in such a way that they are easily removed when membership ceases.
23. These structures will have to be removed when membership ceases, unless in the case of a greenhouse or polytunnel the construction is sold to the next subtenant. EAA may remove any such structure left behind on the plot and any cost incurred will be billed to the former member.
24. Temporary structures such as fruit cages and cold frames are permitted.
25. Any tools etc. left by the member after termination will be removed and will become the property of EAA and placed in the Community tool share.
26. No items should be removed from any other allotment whether occupied or otherwise without prior permission.
27. If a member wishes to move to another allotment, they cannot move until their original allotment is in a tidy state.

Communal Areas / Working Groups

28. In order to share the workload involved in the upkeep of the site amongst all the plot holders, we manage a rota during the growing season for all standard upkeep tasks.
29. We have 3 general groupings, as follows:
 - CLEANING AND TIDYING - keeping any shared buildings, property and areas clean and tidy (i.e. the toilet, shed, and possibly a portacabin in the future), management of communal compost bins and ensuring nothing is left for over 2 weeks on concrete areas etc.
 - SITE MAINTENANCE – maintenance of structural integrity of the site i.e. construction and maintenance of any paths, fences, communal dung heaps.
 - GROUNDS – grass cutting, strimming, weeding and caring for any plants in all the public areas on site.

30. If any more significant work is required beyond that listed above, this should be referred to a committee member for a group decision on the most appropriate action.

31. All plot holders are expected to undertake the relevant tasks as allocated via each group as and when your plot number is due to participate on the relevant rota. There is some manoeuvrability on any rota, and the person organizing it will endeavour to allow for and accommodate all reasonable issues. However, any plot holder not engaging or failing to perform the allotted duties will be treated in the same way as someone neglecting their plot, and subject to the same compliance process – as set out in this handbook.

Health and safety

32. The EAA is not liable for any costs, damage, injury incurred, or lack of performance caused by vandalism, theft or acts of God on the allotment site.

Communal tools

33. Equipment may be borrowed from the Community shed for personal use at home. The equipment will be booked out on a register that will be provided and it can only be borrowed for a single day.

Site security

34. All site users are responsible for the security of the site. If you are last to leave the site, you are responsible for locking the main gates.

Compliance process

35. If a member is breaking the rules, then the EAA will write telling the member what must be done to correct the situation.

36. Where a member is consistently failing to meet the required standards, an enforcement letter may be sent to the member as set out in para 5 of the Sublease and detailed in the following paragraphs.

37. Any person not adhering to site rules, sublease or other instructions that may be given will make the plot holder subject to the compliance process (see below).

Plot holders are responsible for the behaviour/actions of their guests as per Clause 3.1.13 of the Sublease and as such, the compliance process refers to plot holders throughout, irrespective of who may have triggered the process.

Stage 1. Wherever possible, plot holders will first be advised of the rule breach by discussion/s. Wherever practical/suitable, advice and support will be offered to the plot holder.

Stage 2. If behaviour/action/inaction persists, then a letter will be sent to the plot holder explaining the issues (either electronically or via post). It is important that plot holders ensure that their records are kept up to date with Elgin Allotment Association and any claims that letters/mail have not been received by the plot holder due to failure to update will not be considered justification for inaction.

Stage 3. A second letter will be sent where no action has been taken. This letter will grant the plot holder up to 14 days to rectify the situation. Elgin Allotment Association reserves the right to vary the terms of this letter in exceptional circumstances only and at the board's sole discretion.

Stage 4. Failure to adhere to the requests of the second letter will result in termination from site. A final letter will be sent asking the plot holder to return their plot to Elgin Allotment Association and relinquish their membership to the Association. At this point, the plot holder will be given 30-days to clear the site of their belongings and ensure it is brought up to standard as per sublease. Any belongings left on site after this final 30-day period will be removed/disposed of. If a site is left in unsuitable condition for re-let, the plot owner may be billed for any works required to be undertaken by Elgin Allotment Association in order to bring it up to standard. If the action (or inaction) of a plot holder has required their removal from site, no reimbursement of site fees will be given other than in exceptional circumstances and at the Boards sole discretion.

If a plot holder reaches stage 3 of the compliance process more than twice in a 12-month period, or reaches stage 2, four or more times in a 2-year period, Elgin Allotment Association reserves the right to review said plot holders membership and lease of the Association.

In extreme cases, including, but not limited to, theft or physical assault of Board members or other site users for example, then Elgin Allotment Association reserves the right to begin the compliance process at Stage 4 with eviction of the plot holder from site.

7. Pinefield Site Inspections

Aims

To ensure plots are being cultivated and maintained in accordance with the lease's terms and conditions.

Objectives

Undertake regular site inspections to:

- Identify plots, polytunnel bays and box beds not being cultivated, not wanted or in temporary neglect,
- Improve the standard of cultivation at the allotment site,
- Ensure plots, polytunnel bays and box beds are appropriately managed such that if the tenancy ceases, the plot does not present an undue burden on potential incoming tenants.

Who

The site inspections should normally be conducted by a minimum of 3 people, including the Site Manager, one from the management committee and one non-committee member. The inspection is open to any other committee member. This ensures a balanced view of the condition of the plots when identified as needing further attention.

When

Four site inspections will be carried out each year (one per season); additional ad-hoc inspections will be carried out as and when deemed necessary. Tenants will be informed via email when site inspections are due, giving at least 2 weeks' notice. Tenants are encouraged to be in attendance for site inspections

Criteria

1. Is at least 75% of the plot including greenhouses and raised box beds (but excluding paths, sheds, and compost bins) showing signs of cultivation? For new tenants there should be at least 25% cultivation in year 1, 50% in year 2, and 75% in year 3 onwards.
2. Excluding paths, is the plot free from perennial or annual weeds that have the potential to cause problems for other tenants, or interfere with the cultivation of other parts of the site, for example are the weeds being left to go to seed?
3. Excepting those directly abutting the outer boundary fences, are trees being grown on dwarf stock and pruned to below 2 metres, and are perennials / shrubs being pruned so as not to overhang adjacent plots or communal paths?
5. Is the plot free from rubbish and kept tidy?
6. Are all paths and boundary fences well maintained?
7. Are sheds, greenhouses, polytunnels and other structures in good condition?
8. Is there evidence of chemicals or other materials being incorrectly stored?
9. Does the plot have water capture facilities?

Outcomes

Where problems and breaches are found, letters will be issued via email to plots holders in accordance with the plot lease.

If you receive a notice and have found that you are struggling to keep up with the work or are unable to take action because there has been illness or other mitigating personal reasons, then please inform either the Chair or Secretary know by email. In exceptional circumstances, such as a medical condition or family bereavement, then the tenant may be allowed extra time to resolve the issues. If you need more time to move large quantities of materials then extra time can be arranged to allow you to remove waste, but this must be by agreement with us.

Appendix 1 - Protocols for use of the Pinefield Composting Toilet

Basics

- The key for the toilet is in the shed. After use, lock the toilet
- There is no water supply, so no flushing. The waste will either decompose or evaporate.
- The composting pile (under the toilet) must be used only for human waste and toilet paper - nothing else must be put down the pan
- Small children should not use the toilet unattended, though the attendance may only need to be waiting outside.

Solids

- Whenever the toilet is used for defecation, a handful of sawdust from the bin provided
- Only toilet paper can be disposed of in the toilet. Sanitary products and non-compostable items must be taken off site.

Urine

- Always sit down when using the toilet for urinating. Soak material is not required.

Leave the lid down after use.

Always leave the toilet clean and tidy