

Friern Barnet Central Allotment Holders' Association Ltd

(Register No 9714R)

Registered Address: The Trading Hut, Crescent Road, London N11 3LA

Telephone 07931 421 019 (*answer phone*)

NEGLECTED PLOTS AND EVICTION POLICY

Renting an allotment is a pleasure but it is also a responsibility. Allotments are very sort-after and the Friern Barnet Central Allotment Holders' Association expects its plot-holders to make good use of their allocated plot, cultivating vegetables, fruit, herbs and flowers during the growing season, and keeping their plot in good order all year round.

A close eye will be kept on new members as experience shows us that people discover very soon whether they can cope with an allotment or not, and the majority of neglected plots occur with new members. Account will be taken of the state of the plot when the new plot-holder takes it over and the time of year. However, new members are expected to begin clearing and maintaining the plot within one month of taking it over. If nothing has been done within three months the eviction process will begin.

Where neglect is an issue, the Lettings Officer or any other Committee delegate has the authority of the Committee to contact plot-holders whose plots look neglected to find out why.

The Association will offer advice, loan of machinery when available, and occasionally the assistance of other plot-holders to help new members make a start on their allotment. Products, plants and seeds are available in the Trading Hut, as are gardening books and personal advice. The Association is very happy to help new members as much as possible although the organisation is run entirely by volunteers who may not always have a great deal of spare time.

Stage 1 Information Gathering, Initial Contact and Review

- 1 The Association regularly reviews the condition of all plots, informally all year and formally in the late Spring and late Summer. on both The Crescent and Hatley Close sites. This is done by members of the Committee, its appointed delegate(s) or other plot-holders, informing the Lettings Officer which plots look neglected. The Lettings Officer then visits the neglected plots and looks at what is being done. The Lettings Officer will then contact the plot-holder to find out why the plot is being neglected.

FBCAHA Management Committee Policy Paper

- 2 Where possible, contact in the first instance will be in person or by telephone or email to see whether the plot-holder has been ill, away, or had other personal issues. This will be noted and taken into consideration. When joining the Association, members are encouraged to inform committee members of circumstances that may have an impact on their ability to work their plot, rather than wait to be contacted.
- 3 If the Lettings Officer has been able to speak to the plot-holder, s/he will then suggest a way forward and encourage the plot-holder to cultivate a certain percentage of the plot by a given date, with clear guidance as to what will be considered 'cultivation'. This plan will take into consideration any illness or change in circumstances that the Association has been told about, with the intention of enabling the plot-holder to bring the plot back into cultivation as soon as possible. A note of this discussion and the plan will be made by the Lettings Officer and placed on file for Committee information.
- 4 If the Lettings Officer has not been able to speak to the plot-holders a formal letter will be sent informing them that their plots have been identified as neglected. The Lettings Officer will outline the concerns and ask them to contact us to tell us when they intend to cultivate the plot. The plot-holders will be given a date by which they must respond. Failure of the plot-holder to respond to this letter by the deadline date will cause Stage 2 of the eviction process to be initiated.
- 5 Within 3 months of the date of the review which identified the neglected plots, the relevant plots will be revisited to ensure that the needed work has been carried out. The Lettings Officer will report to the Committee where sufficient improvement has occurred and no further action is needed and will inform the plot-holder. If little or no cultivation has taken place the Lettings Officer will again try to contact the plot-holder to find out why. In most circumstances s/he will then move to the eviction process. At this point, the Lettings Officer may decide to extend the time allowed for improvement if the plot-holder has appealed for more time. The Lettings Officer may resolve this request alone if s/he thinks such an extension will resolve the problem without the need to initiate the eviction process, or the Lettings Officer may consult the rest of the Committee on this matter. The Lettings Officer will then prepare a report to the Committee of her/his findings and recommendations.

Stage 2 Warning of Eviction

- 6 The Committee notes and approves the Lettings Officer's report to take no further action, or to issue a formal warning of eviction.
- 7 A letter is sent to the plot-holder where little or no work has been done, setting out the timescale and actions that must be undertaken if s/he wants to avoid being evicted.

Stage 3 Plot Restored to Good Condition or Appeal

- 8 The plot will be re-visited when the deadline set for improvement in the warning letter is reached. If the level of improvement set out in the warning letter has been achieved, the Lettings Officer will advise the Association Secretary to suspend the eviction process. A letter or email will be sent to the plot-holder to let her/him know.
- 9 If the plot-holder has not taken the agreed actions to improve the condition of the plot and has not raised any reasonable extenuating circumstances for the failure to do this, the Lettings Officer will advise the Association Secretary to issue a formal eviction letter. The letter will also tell the plot-holder about her/his right to appeal the eviction and the deadline by which time the appeal must be made to the Committee. If no appeal is made, the eviction stage is initiated.

Stage 4 Appeal of Eviction

- 10 If an appeal is made, the Lettings Officer will forward all the relevant correspondence to the Association's President and a date agreed with the plot-holder for an appeal's hearing. The President is not a member of the Committee and so will not be party to previous discussions with regard to the neglected plot.
- 11 The President will review all the evidence, including the case put to her/him by the plot-holder at the appeals hearing. S/he will send a letter or email to the plot-holder to let them know her/his decision. If the appeal is upheld, the President will require the plot-holder to provide evidence of their intention to work their plot and give require timescales for improvements. These requirements will be made clear in the correspondence with the plot-holder. Failure to meet these requirements within the timescales will lead to eviction.

12 If the appeal is unsuccessful, the plot-holder will be given an eviction date.

Stage 5 Eviction and Plot Clearance

13 Plot-holders who are being evicted will receive a formal letter to this effect.

14 In the event of an eviction, the plot-holder will be given a reasonable period to take away her/his tools and belongings and any produce growing on her/his allotment. This is normally 10 working days from the date of the eviction letter. Anything left on the plot or on the Association's allotments after this time becomes the property of the Association and to be disposed of as it sees fit.

15 If a plot-holder is evicted s/he must return all keys to the Trading Hut and must not trespass on the allotment sites at any time.

In exceptional circumstances, a plot-holder who feels that they have not been treated fairly by the officers of the Association may gather 20 signatures from members of the Association and ask the Committee for an extraordinary meeting of members to hear their case.

Membership of the Association may also be terminated for:

a) Non-payment of rent

b) A serious breach of the Association's Terms and Conditions of Membership