

Golders Green Allotment Association

A plot holders' guide

2015

Amended March 2016

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You will find at the end of this booklet a copy of the Terms & Conditions of Tenancy and a Summary of Rules.

In the Trading Hut you will find a copy of GGAA Constitution.

And at the back of the booklet you will find some useful contacts.

Short History of The Golders Green

Allotment Sites:

We consist of 3 sites. The main site (same side as Tesco) consisting of approx. 180 plots and known as the West side. The other part of the site is across the Hendon Way, opposite and consists of 32 plots, this side is known as the East side. We also have incorporated a site comprising of 5 plots, called Tretawn Gardens and is located in Mill Hill. Short explanation about Tretawn Gardens site. When we were negotiating the leases with Barnet there were a number of very small sites who would not be able to manage themselves for obvious reasons so some bigger sites, like ourselves took them in under our wings. If we hadn't done this these smaller sites would have been lost forever.

Some of you may know the main site as the Hospital Fields Allotment Site; the reason for this is simply that from 1896 the site was home to The Fever Hospital. This was an isolation hospital treating the local residents suffering from TB and other infectious diseases.

Strangely as late as 1928 with the hospital still admitting patients there was also a sewage works occupying the site with the filter beds sited very close to the hospital. Nice!

With suburban sprawl impacting on what had been the village of Golders Green there was a growing demand from residents for open spaces and this led to a section of the Hospital Field being set apart for allotment gardens.

The allotments were duly laid out by the Borough Surveyor and finally opened for cultivation in October 1915. By the beginning

of November 1915 a staggering total of 13 people had applied for plots. Pretty underwhelming as growing demands go really.

Allotments came into their own during WW1 and public opinion demanded that all available land adjacent to the original allotment site be given over to allotments and this southward extension led to an increase numbering 105 by wars end.

Bylaws were passed to safeguard the new plots such as rules against trespass and damage to plots and sheds.

The East side of the site, originally known as 'The Potato Field' has shrunk since first laid out in that in 1929 the Hendon Electric Supply Company was granted permission to build a sub-station which still stands today.

In that same year Hendon Council began work to convert the Hospital buildings into a works depot and again allotment land was lost to this conversion.

During WW2 and the need to 'Dig for Victory' the site was on the move again and encroached onto the adjacent Clitterhouse Park site; at its peak the site comprised over 350 individual plots.

According to archive committee meeting minutes dating from WW2 the meetings were held in Wessex Gardens School and not surprisingly the minutes record issues ranging from untidy plot letters, evictions, over ordering of stock, specifically potatoes, security, one major concern was unruly school children let out from Wessex Gardens and crossing the allotments to get to Clitterhouse Park; oh and competition results, they were

very big on competitions. What happened there...

The rest is history; allotments and the need for them declined post WW2. This in part due to the availability of cheap intensively grown food and the increase in leisure time spent doing things other than digging, weeding and spreading manure; really can you honestly think of anything, anything at all that you would rather be doing than standing ankle deep in mud or sweating under a baking sun, spade in hand, oh that, Ok, well obviously that of course. Anyway; thank goodness for fashion because allotments and the need for them appears to be on the up and due to the growing demand the current waiting list for plots is back to the 1915 levels of a staggering total of 13 names some of which date from that time. Not really, the waiting list, rather like the weeds on my plot, is ever growing.

So; if you ever wonder why your plot is smaller, bigger, more prone to flooding than your neighbours spare a minute to consider the history of the site and the changes that have taken place since those first 13 intrepid allotmenters first broke ground.

2015 will mark 100 years of continuous cultivation on the site. Today we keep our allotments going for more or less the same reasons that motivated those first plot holders.

The Association has secured from The London Borough of Barnet a 38 year lease on the site and 2014 marks the first year of self-management - Another landmark in the history of the Hospital Fields Allotment Site.

Introduction:

This booklet has been written to provide some information and guidance to the tenants of allotments at the Golders Green Allotment Association (Hospital Fields) and Tretawn sites.

We have tried to bring together, in an informal way, important information about the sites, how we are managed, some rules and regulations relating to the use of the sites hopefully in a more user-friendly version of your Terms & Conditions of Tenancy (T&Cs).

It does not replace the T&Cs, which are part of your tenancy agreement and if in doubt you should always refer to that document. In various places throughout this document we have indicated relevant paragraphs in the T&C for example (T&C 1).

This guide outlines things you need to know about how having a plot works and what is expected of you. This guide goes together with your tenancy agreement and if you ever have any questions, suggestions or problems, who to direct those to.

This is the first time the Golders Green Allotment Association (GGAA) have put together a guide for you so if there are any gaps, please let us know.

Site Management:

Our Association (GGAA) is now totally responsible for the management of our sites. This includes the collecting of all the rent, all aspects of the site's maintenance, the letting of the plots, setting the rents and other charges, payment of the water bills, the Health & Safety of the sites, ensuring that you abide by the rules and observe the terms and conditions of your tenancies. All this is done in conformance with the conditions of our site lease from Barnet. So in other words we do everything now with no interference from Barnet.

Constitution: We adopted our constitution at our AGM on 14th March 2013. You can find a copy of this on our Website or you can look at a copy kept in the Trading Hut or request a printed copy.

Membership: All plotholders are automatically members of the Association.

AGM: We hold an AGM every year and you will be notified 2 weeks in advance. The committee may organise an additional general meeting.

The GGAA Committee: The routine management of the site is done by a committee of 8. These people are elected annually at the AGM. The committee officers are chosen at their first meeting after the AGM. These will include the chair, secretary, plot secretaries, site manager, treasurer and trading hut secretary. The committee meets at least 10 times per year. You can find copies of the minutes in the Trading Hut.

The committee is there to help. A list of its members can be found on the notice boards and the website. If you have any questions, suggestions, problems etc please talk to one of them or hand a note into the trading hut or email the address given at the end of this booklet.

Participation of members: is vital and all members play a part in helping to run the site as the committee members shouldn't be expected to do everything! It does state in your terms & conditions of tenancy that you contribute some of your time and effort to assist with the running and management of the site! The committee always needs help with the following tasks:- assisting with deliveries, keeping the site in general free from litter, maintenance of buildings, fences and roads, taking part in working parties, organising social events etc! so please be prepared to offer a few hours of your time a year if asked and please volunteer if you see a

notice on the board for help perhaps with a big delivery arriving.

Records & Data protection: We keep records of information about members on paper and/or electronically. This information is essential factual information about you that we need for the management of the site and for communication with you. It includes, DOBs, addresses, phone numbers, email address's and the number of your plot/s. None of this information will be given to another plot holder (T&C 54) unless you are asked first. It is very important that this information is kept up-to-date. You must let us know of any changes.

Communication to the members: This is essential. We use email, post, the website and notice boards. For economical reasons we would like to use email to communicate with and we probably have about 50%. Email is also the best way to communicate with us. We have two notice boards; one by the trading hut and one by the Amber Grove car park please look at them from time to time. Our website is also a useful tool to look at.

Communicating to the committee: It is also essential that you communicate with us should something change in your life e.g. your address, your email, your phone number. To tell us you are unwell and cannot cultivate. This is your responsibility and a very important one. (T&C 11)

Complaints and comments: if you have a complaint or comment please either email it to us or put it in writing and hand it into the trading hut or to a committee member. All complaints will be treated in confidence. We will endeavour to reply to your complaint in 5 working days and may want to talk to you further about it. If you have a complaint about a committee member then you can email or write to the Barnet Allotment Federation who's email is listed in Useful

Contacts. If you are not happy with any decision made by the committee then you can contact the Barnet Allotment Federation for further advice.

Affiliated organisations: together with 40 other allotment associations in Barnet we are a member of the Barnet Allotment Federation. The Federation provides a framework for mutual support for all of us. They have a very useful website which you can find in Useful Contacts.

Lettings: we always have a long waiting list for plots and just because you have a plot does not mean you will get preferential treatment if your friend wants one.

Probation Period: plots are let on a 3 month probationary period and if after that time the plot is not being cultivated to the satisfaction of the plot secretaries, the tenancy will be revoked with a two week warning. You will be notified if this applies to you.

Tenancy agreements: when a new plot holder signs up for a plot they will be given two copies of a tenancy agreement, one must be signed and will be kept by the Association, the terms and conditions of an allotment tenancy and a rent invoice. As well as the above all new plot holders pay a £50 deposit returnable only when the plot is vacated and after inspection and the plot is found to be in a good condition. We will keep the deposit if the plot is not found in good condition and may re-charge you any additional costs for making the plot lettable.

Gate keys: are available for sale in the trading hut for existing plot holders and new plot holders with a charge. These keys are not allowed to be copied.

Rents and charges: each year you receive your rent demand for the forthcoming year. This includes payment for water charges. Any increase in rent notice will be given at the

AGM for the following year. If you are over the age of 65 there is a 50% discount on the first 10 poles but this discount does not apply on water charges and we need to see proof of age. We send out our rent letters mid November and your rent is due to be paid by 31st January. If you have not received your rent letter you should email or inquire in the trading hut. We chase up late payers but obviously would rather not. If your rent has not been paid by 31st January then you will be in breach of your tenancy agreement and liable to a month's notice to quit unless you have contacted us to explain any problems. (T&C 41) The rent period is from 1st January - 31st December.

Security: the Association will do all it can to protect the sites from intruders by maintaining the boundary fences. Please let us know if you see any damage or breaches in the fences. However it is very important that you always close the gate when you arrive and leave except for when the trading hut is open. This is also a rule (T&C 36). Do not let anyone into the site that you don't know.

Visitors should always be met by the person they are visiting at the gate. If you do see anyone suspicious don't challenge them unless you think it safe to do so and/or call the police (101). It is inevitable that intruders will gain access occasionally however careful we are. Plot holders should always be vigilant and report any intruders or obvious break-ins to the Police and also to the committee.

Unfortunately the Association is not covered nor is responsible for your personal possessions or damage to. If you have produce stolen you should tell a committee member immediately. If you know who has taken the produce tell the committee. This is an immediate eviction action but proper proof has to be shown.

Trading hut: we run a shop for your benefit and convenience. We have a fantastic range of seeds, composts, other horticultural goods, onion sets and seed potatoes available. Our prices are below normal shop prices and it is

also a place to get knowledge from others. Our shop is not open to the public but garden members may use it. The shop is located in the main car park. The opening times are on the notice board but you will often find it open outside of those hours. We are always looking for volunteers to help with serving in the shop at busy times. There is also a good First Aid kit in there should you need one.

Insurance: the Association pays for public liability insurance cover for the members. The full details of our cover can be read in a copy kept in the trading hut.

Water: water is provided to the site and is available from approximately 1st April until 31st October. It is turned off and drained outside of those months. It is safe for drinking. Please use it wisely! The tanks are good for dipping watering cans into but not for washing up in. If you ever find any broken taps please let the committee know immediately. The use of hand-held hosepipes is allowed unless a ban is in operation. You must not leave a hose unattended and sprinklers or irrigation systems are not allowed (T&C 33). The taps are shared so please be aware if others are waiting and try not to use the tap for more than 15 minutes if others are waiting. Never leave a hose on over night. We are only allowed to use the gun type watering head and they are available in the trading hut. Nossle heads are not allowed – this has come from the water board not us!

The water is metered and is one of our biggest expenses so if our usage exceeds what we have charged you, the water charges will go up in the next year. Please be sensible and do not waste water. If possible it is best to water at the base of the plants in the early morning or evening. Watering in the middle of the day in the summer does as much good as nothing as most of it will evaporate before it gets to the roots of the plants.

Car parking: we have one car park on the East site and two on the West site. Please park sensibly. Parking is not allowed on *any* of the main grassed paths.

Equipment available: the Association has some equipment like strimmers and mowers. Mowers and strimmers may be borrowed by members to keep the paths mowed.

Rules and Regulations: as required by the lease and in the interests of all members, there are rules and regulations, which you must observe. The formal version of the rules are in your Terms and Conditions. Some are included because they are required by the lease but others are our own rules as agreed by the membership.

If you're found to have contravened the Terms and Conditions, you will normally be sent a written warning requiring you to put matters right. You are expected to do so immediately and carry out any required works (T&C 9). If you consider there are good reasons, such as illness, that would prevent you from doing so, you must let us know in writing asap. If after due warnings you have still not done as asked, your tenancy will be terminated.

Cultivation: the rules say "allotments are to be wholly or mainly cultivated by the tenant for the production of vegetables or fruit crops for consumption by the occupier and his/her family" (T&C 4). This does not mean that part of the plot cannot be used for growing flowers or have a small leisure area so long as the growing of fruit and vegetables is the main purpose (at least 80%). A plot may not be used to store rubbish or materials unrelated to the cultivation of the plot or have large grassed areas.

It also means that you are expected to undertake the majority of the work, but may be assisted by family and friends. If you are not well enough to manage your plot then you may arrange for friends, family or another plot

holder to temporarily look after it but please let us know. It is unacceptable for your plot to be mainly cultivated by someone other than yourself. If you are found to be sub-letting your plot your tenancy will be terminated (T&C 10).

The rules state “tenants must keep their allotments reasonably free from weeds and rubbish, and otherwise maintain them in a proper state of cultivation to the satisfaction of the society” (T&C 14).

But what is meant by “cultivation” and more importantly “non-cultivation”. It can mean different things to different people and can be interpreted in many ways. If you look around the site you will see many different styles of cultivation and certainly this does not mean you have to have straight lines of vegetables everywhere! What is important is that your plot should be cultivated in a way that does not interfere with the enjoyment of your neighbouring ploholders and some key elements include:-

- Removal of weed seed-heads before the seed has set
- Control of pernicious weeds
- Removal of long grass
- Maintaining structures in good order
- Not allowing trees to exceed the maximum height or planting them too close to the boundary, main or side paths or a neighbours plot
- Keeping paths free of hazards and obstructions – keeping them level and trimmed at all times.

Trees: you may plant fruit trees or bushes (T&C 25). They may not be planted within one meter of roads or any paths, nor overhang roads or any paths and may not exceed 5 metres in height (T&C 26). You should also think of your neighbours when planting fruit trees and try to ensure they are located so that when full-grown they cast the least shade on their plot.

Paths: paths between two plots are the responsibility of neighbouring ploholders (T&C 28, 29). Paths must be kept clear for access at all times by any ploholder and should not create a health and safety situation for anybody. Paths may not be concreted and must be mown regularly. The minimum width for paths is 18” but it is preferable for them to be at least 24”, this allows for easy passage for a wheelbarrow. This is still narrow and we would recommend at least 27” wide wherever possible. These paths must be grassed. We are all responsibly for the main wide paths and a mower can be borrowed to help to keep these mowed.

Sheds and other structures: no permanent structures may be built on your plot (T&C 18). This means that bricks, blocks and concrete etc cannot be used.

However temporary structures may be erected, this means the structure can be dismantled and removed in a couple of days. Permission from the committee should be sought prior to erecting any temporary structure, including sheds, polytunnels and greenhouses. The location of such structures should be at the top end of your plots and not right on the edge of your shared path. The maximum area that can be taken up by *all* your temporary structures is 20% of the area of your plot (T&C 18). However a shed should not occupy more than 5% of the plot area and should not be more than 2.5 metres tall or 8 x 10” in floor area.

A shed must be constructed using appropriate materials and be safe and sound with a finish in keeping with the surroundings (T&C 19). There are no hard and fast rules as to colour but green or brown or pale blue would be acceptable. Bright reds or oranges would not be. Please make sure that the underside of your shed is inaccessible to rats and other rodents.

On termination of your tenancy you might be required to remove any structures that are on it (T&C 23, 24) or you might want to sell it on at a reasonable charge to any new incoming tenant.

Plot inspections: the two plot secretaries inspect the plots, paths between them 2 or 3 times a year to decide whether they are being cultivated to their satisfaction and that the rules on sheds, tree's etc are being kept to. If they find that on your plot some rules have not been observed, you will be sent a written warning. It is in your interest to reply to that letter saying how you intend to rectify the problem outlined in the letter. If there are particular reasons such as illness, being the reason why your plot has not been cultivated, you must tell us, preferable before you might get a letter. If a follow up inspection shows that no real improvement has been made the committee will terminate your tenancy by giving you one month's notice in writing (T&C 41). In addition, if you paid a £50 deposit we will keep that and in addition could charge you for any expenditure incurred in restoring the plot to a lettable condition and that includes the cost of the removal of rubbish (T&C 41).

Behaviour: members should feel able to cultivate their plots without being disturbed or threatened by other members (T&C 10). Racist or sexist or other discriminatory language or behaviour on the site will not be tolerated, nor the use of violence or threatening behaviour. Serious or repeated incidents could lead to the expulsion of the perpetrator from their plot and the site. Incidents should be reported immediately to the committee in writing with the names of witnesses wherever possible.

Sale of produce: legally our plots are allotment gardens, which are defined in the Allotments Act 1922 as “an area used wholly or mainly for the cultivation of vegetable or fruit crops for consumption by the occupier or

his family”. This means that the selling of produce is not allowed and would be a breach of your tenancy agreement (T&C 4, 5). It also means that you cannot grow crops/flowers for use within any business that you might own or be associated with.

Vehicles: Vehicles may be driven only on the asphalted roads and car parks. They must not be driven on the wide green main paths. The only exception on the main site (West) where we have 2 additional gates on the Hendon Way boundary is to use those paths for the sole purpose of delivery of manure etc – not for parking your cars on!

Machinery: all machines such as strimmers, rotavators etc should be used with appropriate personal safety equipment and with consideration for the safety of others. They must not be left running unattended.

In order to respect our residential neighbours who live all around us we would ask that you do not use noisy machines before 8am on Monday – Saturday nor before 9am on Sundays and public holidays, nor after 7pm on any day.

Bonfires: are only permitted at the following times:

May to September: 1st Wednesday only

October to April: Any time.

They may only be used to burn plant material and any old timber that might have accumulated on your plot. Other materials such as plastic or rubber create toxic fumes and poison the soil so must never be burnt. Dry garden waste may be burnt, but it makes more sense to compost it in a bin or heap on your plot. However you should never compost diseased plant matter such as blighted tomato or potato plants and it's best to burn them. Whenever considering a fire pick a time when the wind is not blowing in the direction of any neighbours. Remember we get more

complaints from people about our bonfires than anything else.

Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 it is an offence to emit smoke, fumes or gases which are a nuisance. Allowing smoke to drift over nearby roads may also lead to prosecution under the Highways (amendment) Act 1986 if it endangers traffic.

Rubbish: (T&C 35) do not use your plot as a place to store things that might be useful one day - all those useful things do is pile up and are best described as rubbish! It is your responsibility as a tenant to take all rubbish off the site. We cannot take responsibility for the removal of rubbish of any kind. However we will get 2 or 3 skips a year but this is for the removal of inherited rubbish or things you've dug up.

Chemicals: be considerate if you have to use chemicals such as pesticides etc. Many allotment holders use only organic methods and these chemicals have potentially toxic and harmful effects on people and wildlife and we would rather you didn't use chemicals if possible.

Asbestos: Barnet have carried out a survey on our site for asbestos and we have none on our site that is dangerous. However some of the old concrete sheds have asbestos roofs, which are in a reasonable condition and can be left in place. However they will need to be removed if the condition of the material deteriorates. Never break up asbestos sheets. If you suspect you have some which needs removing then please let the committee know or contact Barnet Environmental Health department 020 8359 2000 for advice.

Poles: We have 3 sites totalling 2005 plots. Golders Green East, Golders Green West (main site) and Tretawn Gardens with 5 plots. Most plots are what we call full plots, 10 poles, some are 5 poles and a few are slightly different sizes to the normal.

A pole is an ancient unit that is still used to define the areas of allotments because it appears in allotment legislation like the Allotment Acts. It also refers to this term in your tenancy agreement. Its use is made more confusing by the fact that the word pole is also used to describe a length of 5 ½ yards so an area of one pole is 5 ½ yards square which is equivalent to 30.25 sq yds. So a 10-pole plot has an area of 302.5 sq yards, which is approximately 253m².

Plot numbering: each plot has a number, which is shown on your tenancy agreement. Please can you ensure that your plot number is clearly displayed on your plot, either on your shed or on a post somewhere visible?

Livestock: please read the T&Cs 31. We do allow some chickens on our site. If you wish to keep chickens you must seek the permission from the committee first. We do not allow beehives to be kept on individual plots. However if you are an experienced beekeeper please speak to the committee for another siting.

Visitors: friends and relatives are welcome to visit the site. However we are not keen on lot's of people being given keys and letting themselves in and out as they please. If you see a stranger, ask them what they are doing and escort them out if necessary. Tell your plot neighbours or the committee if a friend is going to look after your plot if you are temporarily unable to cultivate – for example on holiday or unwell for a short while.

Children: Allotments are wonderful places for children however they are not playgrounds and can be very dangerous places so you must keep children under control and not allow them to cause a nuisance to other tenants. An adult must accompany those under 12 at all times. You must ensure they stay on your plot and do not stray onto anyone else's.

Dogs: you may bring dogs onto the site, but you must act responsibly. They must be under control at all times (T&C 37). You should keep them on a hand-held lead when walking through the site and ensure that they stay on your plot. Any fouling must be cleared up immediately and they must not ever urinate on someone else's plot.

Rats: rats are always present on the allotment site. Please report to the committee if you find any evidence of them on your plot. Rat bait is available free of charge from the shop. However it must be used in such a way that cats, foxes, hedgehogs or any other wildlife cannot eat it.

To minimise potential nesting places keep your plot clear of rubbish and do not allow access to the space beneath your shed. Do not put out meat or other waste animal products for the foxes; it is much more likely to attract rats!

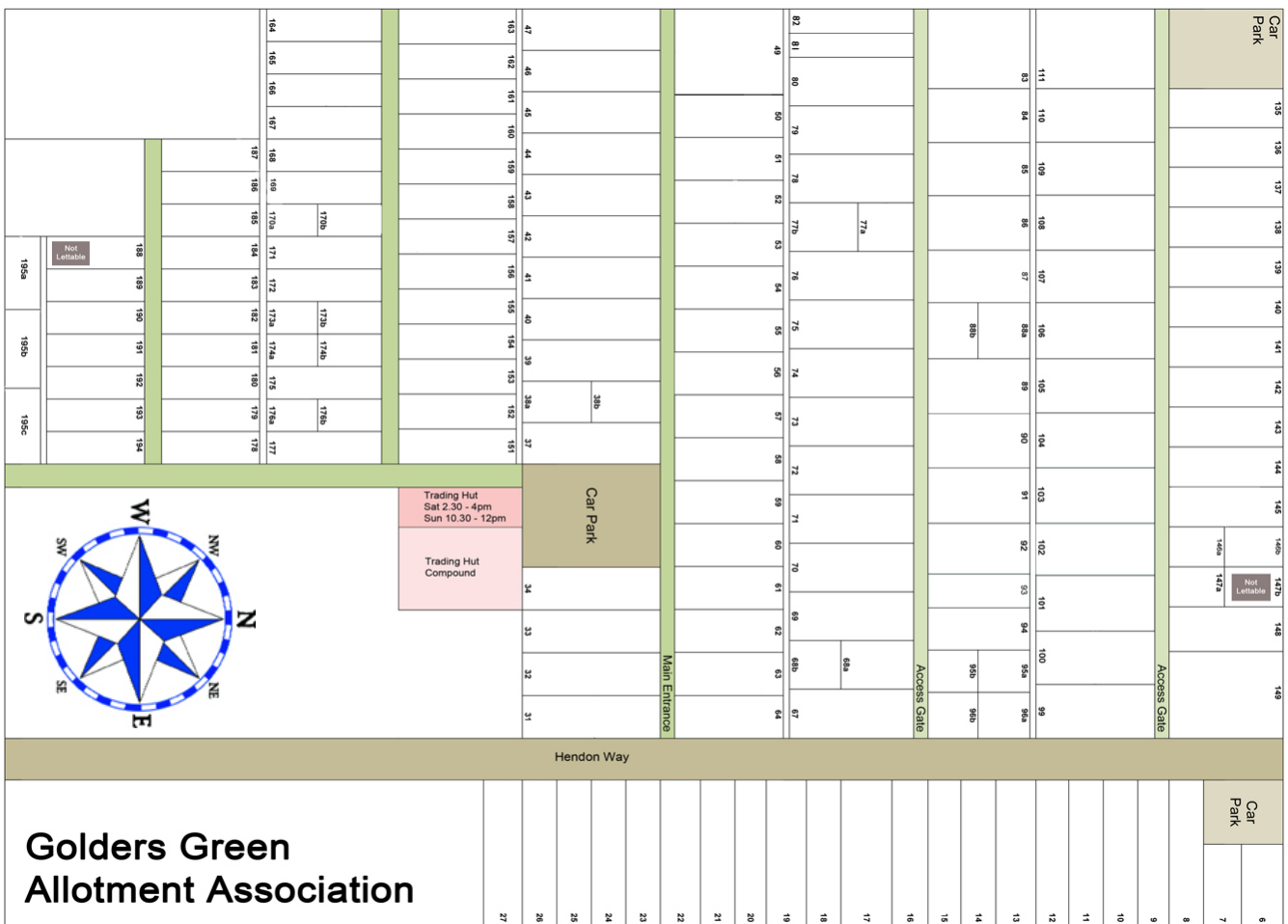
Terms and Conditions of Allotment

Tenancy: anyone who signs a tenancy agreement agrees to abide by the following terms and conditions of allotment tenancy. They are part of the tenancy agreement.

The T&Cs were agreed by the Association at its AGM held on 26th March 2014.

Site Map

shows the main site known as GGAA West and across the Hendon Way GGAA East. Tretawn Gardens consist of 5 plots and is not depicted on this map. Please note that this map is not accurate in relation to sizes of plots!



Useful Contacts:

GGAA Email: goldersgreenallotments@gmail.com

GGAA Website Address: www.ggaa.org.uk

Barnet Allotment Federation Website: www.barnetallotments.org.uk

Please feel free to email us with any comments on this handbook or if you need to contact us urgently.