



Welcome to West Jesmond Allotments!

Many new and long-lasting friendships have been formed through being a member of our allotments. We hope that you too will enjoy gardening with us and joining our community. Here is some information to help you settle in. Feel free to contact any committee member if you feel that you need support at any time.

Background

West Jesmond Allotments CIO (WJACIO) is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) dedicated to serving the needs of our local community through the provision of an active gardening facility. We are committed to providing an environment that enables all involved to share in the many personal and social benefits arising from our activities. You can find more information about our background and further useful information on our website at westjesmondallotments.org.uk.



As an allotment holder you will have signed up as a member of WJACIO. The site is run by a committee of members, who are also trustees of WJACIO. We welcome and encourage members to get involved in and to seek election to our committee. Please let us know if you would like to know more about how committee involvement can play a part in ensuring the smooth continuation of our valuable community allotment resource.

Site Layout

There are about 160 gardeners and 110 plots, mostly half plots of approximately 40ft x 40ft, some full plots of 80 ft x 40 ft and a small number of quarter/irregular size plots. A plan of the site is emailed out to members twice a year in the newsletter, showing the plots and the names of the member(s) on each plot. You will also find the latest version posted on our website and the notice board in the hut. Committee members are highlighted on the plan so you know where you can find them.

Rules and Constitution

You will normally have been provided with a copy of our constitution and rules when you joined. In addition, the rules and constitution are displayed on a notice board in the hut and available on the website.

Further information about the rules is also given below.

Keeping our allotments trim and compliant

The committee appoint 'sector leaders' to inspect all plots regularly during the growing season to make sure rules and standards are being complied with. While the committee is flexible in its approach to issues arising, we feel it is only fair that you should be clear about your responsibilities as follows:

- Keep the plot well-tended through regular and frequent visits.

- Dedicate at least 75% of the plot to the cultivation of fruit and vegetables with the rest used for flowers or 'permitted structures' e.g. toolboxes, compost bins, water containers.
- Keep the paths adjacent to your plot mowed regularly and free from obstacles like overhanging branches and netting.
- Remove weeds, particularly thistles, docks and dandelions before they have a chance to seed. Control the height of trees and bushes to comply with the rules.
- Ensure any structures on the plot comply with the rules (if in doubt consult a committee member).

Keys

Your key will open all the gates: the hut, the lavatory, and the wheelbarrow and petrol store. During the growing season, the key will also access the garage where the mowers are kept.

Replacement keys are £10.00 from the Membership Secretary.

Water

Water is supplied via standpipes throughout the site as listed on the site plan, each shared by about four plots. Please be sure to liaise sympathetically with your shared users who may be waiting to have their turn.

Members can pay a charge as displayed on the annual membership renewal form to use their own hosepipes from the standpipe. Water is expensive and in very dry years a surcharge may be necessary to help cover exceptional costs. It is in all our interests to ensure water is used economically. Please therefore do not leave your hose running unattended and be sure to disconnect it as soon as you have finished watering. If you see an unattended hose left running, please turn it off.

The water supply is turned off during colder winter months to protect pipes and fittings.

Toilets

We have a unisex eco toilet facility behind the hut. The toilet does not flush; waste collected in the chamber beneath is desiccated by evaporation. The facility can only cope with urine, faeces and toilet paper; anything else must be disposed of elsewhere.

Wheelbarrows

Four wheelbarrows belonging to WJACIO are kept in the wheelbarrow store next to the hut. You are welcome to use them, please return them to the store as soon as you have finished with them and before you leave the site. If a wheelbarrow is damaged, please let a committee member know.

Hut

The hut can be used at any time by members and is especially useful as a shelter in wet weather. It is also used for the AGM and other meetings.

Please be sure to leave the hut tidy and take any rubbish with you.



If you have unwanted items which you think may be of use in the hut, please do not 'donate' any furniture or other items without first consulting a committee member.

The following items can be found in the hut.

- First aid kit
- Magazines and gardening books
- Association notice boards containing the site plan, AGM minutes, Rules and Constitution

Garage (machine shed)

The garage is used for the storage of mowers, strimmer, barbeques, tables and maintenance supplies. The mowers are accessible to members during spring, summer and autumn. In winter the garage is double locked for security reasons and access not available to members.

Mowers

If you require a strimmer in areas where the grass is too long or the mower blades may otherwise become damaged, contact a committee member who will make arrangements to help.

Before using a mower for the first time, please read the operating instructions on display in the garage. Remember, **your mower will not start if you tip it on its side! If you need to get at the underneath, tip the mower backwards to avoid flooding the engine.**

Mowers are kept in the garage and are available for members to use. Petrol can be accessed from the dedicated store cupboard next to the garage. Mowers should be fuelled on the paving stones beside the fuel store to prevent spillage on the grass.

When finished, please return refuelled mowers to the garage with the collection bag empty.

We ask members to mow the paths around their plots regularly in order to allow safe movement around the site.

If you experience any problems with a mower, please inform a Committee Member who will initiate repairs.

The mowers are an expensive resource and must be handled with the care you would apply if they were your own. Remember, it is one of your fellow members who has to spend time and effort to keep the mowers running for all of us!

Greenhouses and Sheds

Greenhouses can only be erected on the two greenhouse lines (see the Association rules for further details on the location of the greenhouse lines and size and materials for greenhouses).

Sheds are not permitted on our site. Most members therefore use toolboxes.

A benefit of these rules is that our allotment has a very pleasant, open aspect and the entire allotment can be seen from end to end when you stand at the gates at Forsyth Road or the Cemetery Road.

The Committee advises that if you are considering putting up a structure to check first with one of them; this avoids having to be asked to take things down later which are not compliant.

Manure and wood chips

Manure is available from communal heaps at either end of the main north-south path. Prices are regularly reviewed and are published in the Spring and Autumn newsletter and on the site gates. Members can pay in advance when renewing their subscriptions and/or keep a tally of what they use and pay periodically using bank transfer or cash/cheque to the Treasurer. If manure is getting low, please inform a member of the committee.

It is permitted for members to arrange private deliveries of manure. This can be dropped at any gate (including the one behind the Hut) but cannot be driven onto the site. In our experience a trailer load can be moved by 5 people using 4 wheelbarrows in about 2 - 2½ hours.

Wood chips are delivered by a local tree surgeon and are available at the Forsyth Road and Cemetery Road gates at each end of the main path and behind the garage. It is useful for mulching beds and keeping weeds down on internal paths. Wood chip prices are also on gates and in newsletter. If wood chip supplies are getting low, please inform a member of the committee. We cannot guarantee availability of woodchip as it is dependent on supply which varies throughout the year.

Fires

Fires are currently only allowed between 1 November and 31 March. We strictly enforce this to maintain good relations with our neighbours, to protect the environment and to comply with Council rules.

Please take care to avoid fires when conditions will cause nearby houses to be significantly affected. During the burning period please only burn dry, natural material. Please do not burn anything which will produce toxic smoke or that will smoulder for a long period.

Organic Gardening

The committee encourages organic gardening and to avoid using harmful chemical weed killers and pesticides. Organic slug killers are available to buy.

Rats and Wasps

Rats, mice and wasps are present on the allotment, which we attempt to manage using appropriate controls.

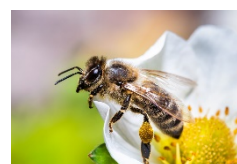
Such pests are an inevitable feature of the environment and it is unrealistic to expect our efforts to eliminate them completely. As gardeners we have a responsibility to discourage them and other pests by keeping our allotments tidy, disposing of rubbish carefully and turning any compost heaps regularly. It is each gardeners' responsibility to minimise access for rodents to sheds and shelters and ideally to keep bird feeding activities away from our allotments.

Information is available on the latest newsletter about who to contact to work with you if you have pest infestation on your plot. It will be helpful if you can identify where the rats are nesting i.e. if see a rat hole or a rat in a compost bin.

Bees

We have a small number of bee hives at the North end of the allotment.

Advice on who to contact if there is a swarm is posted at the garage and in the hut.



Tables by gates

There are tables by the gates to place unwanted items, i.e. produce, seeds, seedlings, equipment. Members can place things on the tables for others to take on a donation basis. If you do leave something on the table, please check to see if it has been taken. If the item is still there after a week, please remove and dispose of it.

Annual General Meeting

The AGM is usually held in October in the allotment hut. All members are encouraged to attend. Formal notification and the agenda are sent to all members prior to the meeting.

Rent Renewal

A renewal form is sent to all members each September in respect of rents which come up for renewal on 1st October. At the same time, members are asked to consider making a voluntary donation toward the cost of major works such as infrastructure repairs and replacements. Funds raised this way are a huge help in keeping our site in good order.

Seed Orders

WJACIO has access to a discount scheme organised by The National Allotment Society (NAS) with Kings Seeds, a leading supplier of quality vegetable and flower seeds, organic seeds, herbs, seed potatoes, onion sets, plug plants, bulbs, as well as fruit trees and bushes. During September, we email details and ordering instructions to members to enable ordering online. We also provide Kings catalogues in the hut for those who prefer not to order online.



Members enjoy a considerable discount against retail prices for Kings seeds ordered through this scheme; in some cases as much as 50%. In addition, WJACIO may receive a cashback against the order value which is added our allotment funds.



Newsletters

A newsletter prepared by the committee is emailed to members each Spring and Autumn. Copies are also placed in the hut.



Events

Several social events are organised during the year by the committee such as :

- A bonfire is built on the 5th of November; members and their children are invited to attend and to bring food and drink, but no fireworks.

- An open day & plant sale is organised for which members are encouraged to bring spare plants, seedlings and other produce. Any money raised is credited to allotment funds. Members are also encouraged to make scarecrows for their plots for the day.
- A barbecue is organised each summer on the lawn and members, friends and families are all invited to attend and bring food and drink. There are usually two barbeques lit, one exclusively for non-meat items.
- A summer lunch for members, their families and friends. Attendees bring food for themselves and to share.

Working parties

Working parties are organised at least once a year in November and occasionally also in the Spring, over a couple of days. We need your support to make these days a success. Please come and join in, even if only for a couple of hours. These are works for the 'common good' such as repairs to hut, fence works, path clearance and rubbish removal.

Allotment Shop

There is an allotment shop at Little Moor Allotments at the junction of Jesmond Dene Road and Ilford Road, which offers a limited range of gardening supplies, plants and seeds. It is open to the public on payment of a small annual fee. The shop is usually open Saturday, 10-11am, March to May, Sunday, 10-12pm all year round.

Support, Help and advice

The allotment site is broken down into four quadrants (north east, north west, south east and south-west) in order to make contact and communication more practicable. Each quadrant has a 'Sector Lead' appointed by the committee, responsible for providing mentoring advice, guidance and support to members. Sector Leads are also required to monitor and make regular reports to the committee on the condition of allotment plots in their quadrants.

The Membership Secretary will introduce you to your Sector Lead whose contact details are available in the newsletter.

For wider help and advice, you will find your neighbours have a wealth of knowledge and advice as well as looking things up online and using the many books and magazines in the hut.

Make a point of walking around the site to see what other allotmenters are up to.

You will find members are usually happy to share advice, offer spare seeds, seedlings and cuttings.

If you are stuck about something or have some particular concerns, especially relating to Safeguarding or Health and Safety, feel free to contact a committee member who will try to resolve your query or put you in touch with someone who can; contact details are in the newsletter.

We know that there will always be ups and downs in gardening even for the most experienced gardener!

Health and Safety

We want everyone to stay safe on our site and to take responsibility for both themselves and others. Some of our rules, like keeping paths mown and clear are intended to promote safety. In particular please:

- Be aware that there are ponds on the site; this is particularly important if you are supervising children.
- Take care when using tools and especially power tools and use appropriate protective clothing.
- Use the mowers in accordance with instructions and wear sturdy footwear.
- Make sure that fires are extinguished completely before leaving the site.
- Take care when opening lids of compost and other storage containers and ideally give a warning knock to warn off any unwelcome inhabitants.
- Report any hazards or concerns around safety as quickly as you can.

[Safeguarding and Diversity](#)

We expect members to treat fellow members with respect and we will not tolerate discriminatory behaviour, bullying or anti-social behaviour.

Our Safeguarding data protection and Diversity policies are available to read in the Hut.

[Parking](#)

Parking on the road leading to St Andrews Cemetery is unrestricted.

On weekdays and Saturdays you can park for four hours in any of the four long bays on Forsyth Road to the north of the site. On other nearby roads to the East of the site residents' bays are usually available except between 9.00 and 11.00 and 2.00 and 4.00, but do check the signs as these can vary from bay to bay. You can extend your stay on Forsyth by moving your car to a different bay. On Sundays there are no restrictions.