Plot Inspections and Notice Procedures

Plot inspections are carried out at least twice a year. The plot inspections are carried out by a minimum of 4 people, to include members of the Allotment Advisory Group, the Clerk/Deputy Clerk and/or Grounds Maintenance Manager. At the start of your tenancy, a photograph will be taken of the allotment plot. This will act as a guide and will remain on file for the duration of your tenancy.

Here is what we are looking for on inspections:

Cultivation

- We will look at the entire plot to see if most of it is being cultivated. If this is not happening, this will likely lead to receiving a cultivation improvement notice letter.
- As per the tenancy agreement, the tenant should have at least 75% of the plot under cultivation of crops.

Cultivation – When taking on a plot

a. We will expect within

3 Months – at least 25% to be cultivated with crops
6 Months – at least 50% to be cultivated with crops
9 Months – at least 75% to be cultivated with crops

This starts from the date on your agreement.

Weed Growth

- Where there are large areas of weeds, a tidy up notice will be issued.
- We will also look at uncontrolled areas of perennial weeds such as brambles, nettles and unmanaged grass. Beds with established and seeding weeds alongside crops will also be liable to a weed improvement notice.
- Seasonality will be considered when we inspect. At mid-summer, most of the plot should be used for growing crops.
- Plots mostly covered in weed suppressing material will be liable for notice, as may a plot given over mainly to cut grass, without permission.
- During the autumn and winter months, we will be looking to see that plots which have become weedy in the late summer are being cleared and improved, however, this does not mean you need to be sowing crops.
- If you are using the winter months to improve your plot by clearing waste and increasing cultivation, then this will be considered.

Waste and rubbish

- The level of waste will be assessed on the plot.
- The tenants is expected to keep the materials they bring onto their plot to a minimum.

Other

We will also look at hen houses to ensure animal welfare needs are being met and that no cockerels are on the plot.

Notice of Improvement

The letters issued to plots requiring work are either a 'Tidy up', Weed Notice, Waste Notice or a 'Notice of Non-Cultivation' depending on the state of the plot.

Most notices are issued for poor cultivation or weed-infested beds, but they can also be issued for overgrown boundaries, plots infested with brambles and long grass, dangerous structures, as well as tenants having excessive waste on their plot.

Tenants sometimes bring materials or green waste from their home onto the allotment. Any materials brought onto the allotment that are not being used to cultivate crops could be liable to a waste notice. If you have a notice, then we will expect you to remove all materials that are not being used for cultivation from the plot.

If allotments are found not to meet the requirements of the tenancy agreement plotholders will be issued with a notice of improvement which requires the plotholder to ensure that their plot is brought up to standard within 28 days.

Re-inspections are undertaken 28 days from the date printed on the letter. Normally, when we are making the re-inspection, we will expect to see a considerable improvement.

Unfortunately, if there is no sign of improvement then the plot holder's tenancy is terminated and they are given 14 days to remove their tools etc from the plot. The plot then becomes available for new tenants to rent.

I have received a notice, but I am struggling to keep up with the work. I'm worried I might lose my plot, what action should I take?

If you have a large plot, then you should consider having your plot split. A smaller plot is ample for growing crops and is often more manageable if you are experiencing problems.

If you are struggling, please contact the Clerk or Deputy Clerk to discuss this on 01643 707213 or email admin@mineheadtowncouncil.co.uk.