Roding Farm Allotments
PLOT INSPECTION PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of the Association plot inspection process is to undertake a regular check of cultivation levels across the whole site to ensure plots are being maintained in accordance with the Site Rules & Code of Conduct, which all members are required to adhere to.
The site rules relating to cultivation, upkeep of paths and ditches and maintenance of structures are in place to ensure plots do not deteriorate over time and that the condition of plots does not adversely impact upon others.

Criteria

Non-cultivation inspections assess whether :

- Plots are actively cultivated and used to grow vegetables, fruit or flowers during the growing season with at least 50% of the total area in active use for growing and no significant portions of the plot left long term uncultivated.
- Plots are kept largely and routinely weed free and do not have excessive levels of rubbish present.
- Paths around plots are being regularly mowed to keep the grass short, are not narrowed and are not damaged by laying materials or woodchip on the grass.
- Structures are well maintained and safe, and are being appropriately used.

Inspection Procedures

- Inspections are conducted in a consistent manner using a standard reporting form.
- Inspections are carried out by a group of Committee members appointed by the committee to carry out the task throughout the year.
- Inspection results are reported to all committee members and discussed at monthly committee meetings, where all decisions relating to non-cultivation action are agreed.
- Plot inspections commence in March or April with a preliminary information gathering inspection to identify those plots which have clearly not been 'worked' or prepared for the coming season, and/or which require work to clear weeds and rubbish.
- Monthly formal inspections are then conducted from April until October.

The procedures ensure consistency of inspection across the site, a clearly manageable process and full involvement and participation of all committee members in decision making.

Non-cultivation Action

- Where a plot has been reported to the committee following inspection and a decision has been made by committee that action regarding non-cultivation is needed, the following steps will normally be followed :
  - Step 1 – Formal written contact, giving details as to the issues identified at inspection and invitation to contact the Committee to discuss and submit plans for improvement.
  - Step 2 – Formal 28 day written warning where satisfactory improvement has not occurred following step 1.
  - Step 3 – If no satisfactory improvement has occurred by the end of the 28 day warning period given at step 2, and no other grounds to pause action exist, Notice of Termination of Tenancy will be issued.

  Should the committee consider there may be grounds for adopting an informal approach due to concerns that health or personal considerations may be impacting cultivation, an informal approach will first be taken to gather information to inform future committee decisions.

- Satisfactory improvement will be defined as sustained and continuous progress towards meeting the inspection criteria. Where this has occurred, written acknowledgement will be sent.
- Letters or emails will be written in plain language as far as is possible and will give a clear description of the non-cultivation issues affecting the plot.
- Where applicable, members may be asked if they wish to consider downsizing their plotholding.
- Notices of termination of tenancy will not usually be withdrawn once issued unless sufficient exceptional grounds for doing so come to light.
- The default method of communication regarding non-cultivation will be by email. Where the Association does not hold an email address, letters will be sent by post to the home address provided by the plotholder. Notices of Termination will be sent by both post and email.
- Associate members who have provided an email will be cc'd at steps 1, 2 and 3, but will not be automatically copied into all correspondence with plot tenants.