SELF-MANAGEMENT OF ALLOTMENT SITES – INFORMATION SOURCES FOR TENANTS AND ASSOCIATIONS

There is a wealth of internet sites for tenants thinking about forming an allotment association and wanting to get involved in the management of their sites. Helping to manage your own site can be rewarding. It can be the most cost-effective way of ensuring allotment sites are run for mutual benefit and it can help foster a sense of community spirit through social gatherings, social enterprise and fund-raising.

The following links illustrate different models of self-management and set out what it takes to reach the level of self-management your site is after. Each association is different and most keep on developing new ways of working and novel activities. Some of these links simply show what Associations get up to, while others are a resource for tenants looking for the fine detail about self-management.

<https://www.nsalg.org.uk/allotment-info/allotments-management/>

Whether as an allotment association, a tenant or a landlord, members of the National Allotments Society benefit from the country’s leading provider of allotment support and guidance. Contacts for the NAS Southern Region can be found via this page. <https://www.nsalg.org.uk/about-us/southern-region/>

<https://www.nsalg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/growing-in-the-community_bookletA4.pdf>

This 66-page booklet may be over 10 years old, but it is still relevant. It was commissioned by the Local Government Association, but do not assume that is written for Councils as landlords. The main thrust is to find the right way for tenants and landlords to manage their site.

<https://www.barnetallotments.org.uk/self-management/>

Though London-based, this link provides detailed information and ready-made templates about setting up and running your own organisation, including legal, financial and fund raising. An absolute gem of a site.

<https://www.audlem.org/newsroom/formation-of-allotment-federation.html>

<https://www.fedaga.org.uk/constitution.html>

As sites begin to form their own association or society and head towards self-management, some have found it useful to join up as a Federation of allotment associations. The two links above don’t tell you how to set up a Federation, they just provide contacts who might be able to advise about how to do it.

<https://elderstubbscharityallotments.org/>

<https://www.restore.org.uk/restore/the-elder-stubbs-recovery-group>

An example of a charity-owned allotment site in Oxford where the sky is the limit. Elder Stubbs now hosts two charities who use gardening and growing to support vulnerable people, plus a festival that attracts 2000 visitors, along with their wallets and purses.

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| **LEVELS OF SELF-MANAGEMENT** | **CHARACTERISTICS OF LEVELS**  There is scope to mix and match activities between the levels. |
| 1 Informal | * Tenants act as site representatives voluntarily * Liaison and coordination of tasks between landlord and tenants. * Tenants are the eyes on the ground who may notify landlord of newly vacant plots & site issues. * Tenants might help to administer waiting list. * Tenants promote good practice. * No written management agreement or budget devolving responsibility to tenants. * Tenants organise social functions and ad hoc fund-raising. * Tenants and Landlords invested in supporting each other’s efforts. * Landlord retains budgetary, lettings, major maintenance of communal areas. * Tenants might carry out tasks not limited to their own plots. |
| 2 Allotment Association with no Management Responsibility | * Association needs a formal constitution, officers, a bank account and some form of financial management system. * Association arranges events and services for benefit of members. * Association may organise informal work parties to carry out minor works normally undertaken by landlord. * Tenants have a collective say in consultations with landlord on major proposals. |
| 3 Allotment Association with Management Responsibility | * As 2 above. * Association can take on some or all of tasks including rent collection, waiting list administration, allocating plots, supporting new tenants, payment of water rates. * Landlord retains responsibility for legal duties (rights of way, evictions, etc) and major works. And remains the ‘landlord’. * Landlord may devolve some funding to the association. * Formally constituted associations can apply for charitable funding. |
| 4. Fully Devolved Self-Management | * Fully constituted Association as per 3 above leases site from the landlord. Lease enshrined in a written devolved management agreement. * Association sets, collects and retains rents to reinvest in maintenance, repairs, capital works, water bills, waste disposal etc. * Tenants are tenants to the Association, not the landowner. * Landowner retains ownership, strategic role and possibly some aspects of major capital projects beyond means of the association. These responsibilities are clearly defined in the lease and management agreement. * Association may choose to take on some legal duties from landowner. * Landowner may monitor of association’s governance and standard of operation. * Longer lease allow time to model income/expenditure over several seasons |
| 5. Joint Management between different sites. | * No matter which level of self-management a site chooses, there are benefits to sharing resources and expertise with other allotment sites by forming a Federation. * A similar structure exists in Reading Neighbourhood Network (formerly RFTRA). RNN acts as an umbrella outfit supporting the associated groups.   <https://rgneighbours.net/member-list/> |

PLEASE COMPLETE THE ONLINE SURVEY AND SEND ANY EXTRA COMMENTS OR OBSERVATIONS TO [allotments.reading@reading.gov.uk](mailto:allotments.reading@reading.gov.uk)