



Allotment Associations and their role in management of sites

- Devolved or self-management is the practice of devolving a share of the responsibility for managing allotment sites to the allotment gardeners themselves. The gardeners are usually organised as a constituted association with an elected committee but may be incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee or an Industrial and Providential Society.
- There are several levels of self management and it is important that an association starts off at a point at which they can manage effectively and confidently with a view to progressing in stages.
- There are many examples around the UK of successful self-management of sites.





How to form and run an allotment association

Essentials

- Constitution
- Rules
- Committee – Chair, Secretary, Treasurer
- Committed members willing to get involved
- Regular meetings



Responsibilities of the committee will vary depending upon the level of self management; the next three slides show three basic models but there any number of variations that have developed to suit local conditions.



Model 1

- There is a site representative who liaises with the allotment authority and the association/plot-holders informally accept responsibility for minor maintenance works.
- The association promotes good gardening and sustainable use of plots on the site, they may administer the waiting list.
- There might be a mechanism by which the association/plot-holders or site representatives can be consulted on capital expenditure and repairs by the allotment authority.
- There is no written devolved management agreement between the association/plot-holder and the allotment authority and no financial responsibilities.





Model 2

- The association accepts formal responsibility for a range of duties, which are likely to include.
 - Collecting rents on behalf of the landlord
 - Administering the waiting list, allocate plots and support new tenants
 - To raise funds and administer the finance allocated by the landlord
 - Routine maintenance and to take responsibility for water bills
- Financial agreements release a proportion of rental income for this purpose, but leave the local authority to carry out major works and undertake all legal formalities.
- A written devolved management agreement or license between the association and the allotment authority is held.
- This model requires a formal constitution to establish responsibilities and obligations it will also require a bank account and proper system of cash control and management.





Model 3

- The allotment association leases the site from the council, arranges agreements, collects rents and reinvests revenue (which it manages) on maintenance, repair and capital items.
- Depending upon the term of the lease, plot-holders may become the tenants of the association rather than of the local authority. The local authority retains defined oversight and strategic functions.
- A written devolved management agreement between the association and the allotment authority is held.
- This model needs a substantial investment from the council initially, as it is unlikely that the rental income will be sufficient to fund all future eventualities, especially if sites have become rundown.
- Another option would be for the landlord to provide a support grant possibly in the form of a 25 year endowment. This is an expensive option to set up but can be an effective way to secure a good site for the future.





Pros and Cons for Tenants/Association

- Pride in achievements – sense of community and friendship on site promoted
- Improved relations with local authority
- Increases morale on the site
- Prompt decision making
- Maintenance work is carried out more quickly when undertaken by the people who care most about the site
- Access to other funds – extra resources for investment e.g. rent, grant funding
- Improved sites raise profile – leads to greater take up of plots
- Is dependence on commitment and capabilities of volunteers
- Enforcing rules
- Risk of conflicts
- Legal liabilities – health and safety, adequate insurance essential
- Understanding rights and responsibilities
- Balancing finances
- People moan at you – you become the local authority.
- Can be hard work and time consuming unless responsibilities are shared





Pros and Cons for the Landlord (Local Authority)

- Empowerment of local people
- Lower cost of service provision
- Improves image of council
- Easier to deal with an association than individual plot-holders
- Can attract external funding
- Problems dealt with promptly-on site
- Better public relations
- Better community spirit
- Future of sites more sustainable
- Risk of mismanagement (either through fraud or incapacity) – council left to pick up the pieces, land is still a council asset
- Could increase demand for plots that council can't meet
- Less control over demise of site
- Disempowerment
- Loss of income from rents – offset against less management costs etc.





Example Budget

Period	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Income sources				
Plot rental	0000			
Subs	0000			
Plant sales	0000			
Key security	0000			
Compost	0000			
Other income	0000			
Total income	0000			
Expenditure				
Site rental	0000			
Water expenses	0000			
Hedge maintenance	0000			
Machine maintenance	0000			
Telephone costs	0000			
Administration costs	0000			
Total expenditure	0000			
Parish support grant	0000			





Example Service Level Agreement

The land owner shall lease to the association the allotment site for the duration on terms set out below.

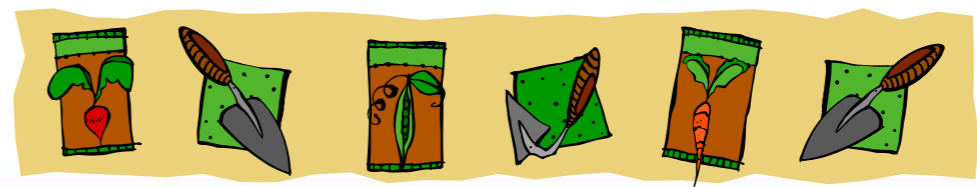
The land lord shall be responsible for the following

- Public liability Insurance for the site
- Perimeter Security for the site
- All money payable to the authorities
- Provision of water and electricity to the site but not necessarily to each plot
- Approval of annual budget and rental including support grant

The tenants association shall be responsible for the following

- Tenants access controls
- Plot letting and administration of rental
- Promoting good gardening practices

- Rental income collection and accounting
- Payment of site rental to the landlord
- Accounting for grant support expenditure
- Day to day administration and supervision of the site
- All telephone and administration costs
- Annual budget and rental
- Payment of water dues
- Payment of hedge and site maintenance dues.





Sustainability – keeping it going

- Commitment of the devolved managers and the council
- Forward planning and shared aims, anticipating problems
- Keeping plot-holders informed – notice board, meeting room etc
- Good budget management
- Good local politics and community involvement
- Accessible Committee members
- Inclusion of new members – new blood and ideas
- Ongoing encouragement for volunteers. Celebrate achievements!





Further Help and Support

www.nsalg.org.uk

The National Allotments Society

<http://ari.farmgarden.org.uk/resources/library>

The legacy website of the Allotments
Regeneration Initiative contains many useful
resources and model documents

<http://www.rvs.org.uk/>

Their role in the community is to help and
support any voluntary or community group
working in the borough of Rushmoor.

