



COLNE TOWN COUNCIL

Allotment Allocation Policy

(As Amended March 2019)

1. Aims and Objectives:

The Council manages twenty-one allotment sites totalling over 140 individual plots in various locations around the town. There is considerable demand for these allotment plots when they come available with consistently around 50 people on the waiting list at any one time.

The Council makes allotment plots available with the objective of providing space for the growing of fruit and vegetable crops by household within the town who might not otherwise have space to grow them. It recognises the benefits of providing space for cultivation in reducing household food cost and improved health and wellbeing.

The Council aims to provide a framework by which residents can apply for an allotment plot and an understanding of how their application will be managed. The principles behind allocations being that:-

- Allotments are provided for the growing of vegetable and fruit crops for personal consumption.
- Applicants receive offers only for the allotment areas they have chosen.
- Applications are considered in date order of receipt.
- Applicants who constantly refuse reasonable offers may have their application suspended for a period of time.

This allocation policy sets out the basis on which the waiting list will be maintained and offers of plots made.

2. The Waiting List:

The Council operates separate waiting lists for the sites it manages. Applicants may select one or as many of the allotment sites as they wish. They may also specify the general size of the plot they would prefer and any specific requirements they may have.

To qualify to be placed on the waiting list the applicant must;

- a) Be over the age of 18 or above the age of 16 with a guarantor,
- b) Submit a completed Allotment Application Form to the Allotments and Administrative Officer of Colne Town Council.

Priority will be given to applicants who are ordinarily resident within the dwelling that is registered for council tax within the Colne Town Council geographical boundaries. Applicants not fulfilling this requirement may be added to the bottom of the list but will only be considered where:

- a) There is no applicant currently fulfilling the criteria, registered on the waiting list for the plot being allocated and,

- b) The total percentage of none resident plot holders is less than 10% of all town council plot holders.

Applicants from outside the Colne Town Council boundaries will be required to pay plot fees at 120% of the standard charge rate in recognition of the contribution made from the precept to the cost of providing the allotment service.

On receiving a completed application, the officer will:

- a) Record the date of application,
- b) Place the details of an approved application on the allotment waiting list,
- c) Send an appropriate confirmation of receipt to the applicant.

To maintain their application on the waiting list applicants must:

- a) Advise the officer of any changes of address or contact details,
- b) Provide documentation to support their application if asked to do so.
- c) Renew their application on request, every two years.

3. Allocation of Plots

Allotments are to allocate by the officer on behalf of Colne Town Council. Plot holders may not assign or sublet plots and on termination of their tenancy, they must return them to the Town Council with vacant possession.

When the Town Council is informed that a vacancy has or is likely to arise, the officer will arrange for the plot to be inspected and determine its optimal letting potential.

The allocation of plots will be considered in the following order:

- a) Special Allocations
- b) Management Transfers
- c) General Allocations

Special Allocation.

Where the vacancy arises due to the death or ill health of the previous allotment holder, the allocating officer may without prejudice, choose to consider a request for an assignment to a close family member of the allotment holder where:

- a) The request is received within fourteen days of the notice to terminate the existing plot holders interest.
- b) The applicant has until recently shared the management of the allotment plot with the previous plot holder.
- c) The applicant lives within the Colne Town Council boundaries
- d) The allotment has in all respects been kept in good order and in accordance with the allotment conditions.

Management Transfers.

The allocating officer may consider allocating a plot to an existing plot holder where such a transfer would enable either:

- a) works to be carried out by the Town Council
- b) release a larger plot in an area of high demand which can be split into a number of smaller individual plots, or
- c) to assist an existing allotment holder of good standing, who for reasons of age or ill health, has requested a move to a smaller plot.

In addition, a Management Transfer may be undertaken where the Council has previously agreed to the transfer as part of an interim plot allocation. In such cases, the transfer applicant must have previously indicated a specific preference for the currently vacant plot but had agreed to work an alternative plot until such time as their preferred plot became available. Entering such an agreement is at the discretion of the allocating officer and must be:

- b) entered into prior to the allotment holder taking up their initial tenancy and evidenced by an agreement signed at the time of taking up their initial tenancy.

General Allocation

The allocation of plots designated for use as general allotment will be from the waiting list. The officer will make arrangements for each designated plot to be offered to the candidate in priority order and who has been registered on the waiting list for the longest period of time and where the:

- a) Applicant has indicated a preference for the location and size of allotment plot to be let.
- b) Plot offered complies with any specific requirement, as indicated by the applicant at the time of application.
- c) The applicant is not from a household which already holds an allotment (except in areas determined as areas of low demand for allotment plots).
- d) Applicants application is not currently suspended at the time the offer is due to be made.

4. Offers of Allotment Plots

Where an applicant is selected to receive an offer, they will normally be given five working days in which to reply giving their intention to either accept the offer or refuse it. In exceptional circumstances, such as holiday periods or where the applicant has extenuating circumstance, a longer period may be negotiated, but this will not extend beyond ten working days provided this is negotiated before the initial offer period expires.

Where the offer of an allotment is accepted, the applicant will be invited to sign an allotment agreement once an appropriate start date has been agreed. The waiting list application will then be removed from the waiting list.

Should the offer be rejected the next appropriate applicant will be selected from the waiting list.

5. Refusal of Offers

Applicants may reasonably refuse an offer if it does not comply with the plot location preferences or specific requirements indicated by the applicant at the time of making their application.

Where applicants refuse more than one reasonable offer, their application will be suspended. The period of suspension will be:-

- a) One year where this is the second refusal of a reasonable offer.
- b) Two years where this is the third or more refusal of a reasonable offer.

Applications which are suspended will only be considered for vacancies during the period of suspension if there are no other applicants for a vacancy.

In the first instance, the determination of reasonableness will be made by the officer appointed to let the allotment plot. If after consideration the officer finds that the offer was appropriate, they will contact the applicant informing them of their decision and advising them of their right to lodge an appeal within fourteen days by writing to the CEO of Colne Town Council at the Town Hall.

On receipt of a written appeal, the CEO will have fourteen in which to review the details of the offer that had been made and inform the applicant of their decision. The CEO decision will be final.

If no reply is received to an offer from the applicant within the time given, the offer will be withdrawn, and their application removed from the waiting list. The plot will then be offered to the next appropriate person from the waiting list.

The Council will keep a record of all offers made and the responses given.

6. Terminations and Transfers

An allotment plot holder on termination of their interest, may in limited circumstances, request that their original application for an allotment to be reinstated. Requests will only be considered where they or a close family member are experiencing ill health making it difficult for them to continue to maintain their existing plot at that time and:

- a) an application to assign the plot had not been approved or outstanding.
- b) The allotment had in all respects been kept in good order and in accordance with the allotment conditions.

Such reinstatement will be at the discretion of the CEO. The reinstatement would be subject to the allotment holder terminating their interest in their current allotment.

General transfer applications will be managed through the normal allocations procedure and considered in date order of application. Allotment holders wishing to transfer will be required to relinquish their interest in any current allotment they hold on the agreed date for the transfer to the new plot.

Allotment holders are not permitted to exchange or assign their allotment plots.

In exceptional circumstances the CEO may arrange a special transfer where the existing plot holder agrees and such a transfer would:

- a) Facilitate improvement works to the allotment site,
- b) Make better use of allotment plots.

Related Documents

- I. Allotment Waiting List Application Form
- II. Vacancy Offer Record Sheet.
- III. Application Form Processing Flow Chart
- IV. Allocation of Allotment Plots Flow Chart

FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT: Eugene Dennison