



CONSTITUTION AND RULES

of the

ASHFORD ALLOTMENT SOCIETY

Office Address:

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Website: <https://www.ashfordallotmentsociety.org>

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Affiliated to:

"The National Allotment Society"

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1. Society Name

The name of the Society shall be the **ASHFORD ALLOTMENT SOCIETY**.

2. Official Communications

Official communications shall normally be received and signed on behalf of the Society by the Secretary, Chairperson or Treasurer, Trading Store Manager, Membership Secretary or a delegated Committee Member.

3. Aims and Objectives of the Society

3.1 The Society exists to uphold the interests and rights of Members and the allotment community.

3.2 To provide support, guidance and advice to all interested in, and committed to, allotment gardening.

3.2 To promote allotment cultivation for food production and as a leisure pursuit for health, wellbeing and community engagement.

3.3 To help new tenants cultivate an allotment and develop skills to maintain a plot to a high standard.

3.4 To establish and maintain a working relationship with Ashford Borough Council (the Landlord) with respect to all allotment matters and to improve standards and facilities at sites and to ensure ongoing availability of plots to meet demand.

3.5 For the benefit of members, through a bulk buying scheme, obtain supplies of seeds, fertilisers, potatoes and other merchandise associated with allotment cultivation at discounted prices.

3.6 Arranging visits and excursions to gardens and places of interest, including lectures and speakers, competitions and other events.

4. Powers

4.1 The Society shall have full powers to do all things necessary or expedient for the accomplishment of its objectives.

4.2 No sectarian or political questions shall be introduced to any meeting or on any media representing the Society. Any Member shall not propagate political or religious doctrines, racial or gender discrimination or take part in activities that could bring the Society into disrepute.

5. Use of Name

5.1 The use of the name 'Ashford Allotment Society' shall be used with the accompanying logo in all official communications and business letters, emails, publications, online activities, payments, or money for goods.

6. Society Membership

6.1 No subscription is required for being a member.

6.2 The Society membership shall consist of all allotment tenants of Ashford Borough Council who become members when signing the tenancy agreement with Ashford Borough Council (the Landlord)

7. Cessation of membership

Membership shall cease in the following circumstances: -

- The Members' death.
- The Members' resignation in writing or by email.
- Lapse or cancellation of tenancy agreement by the Landlord.

8. Trading Store Membership

8.1 The aim of this scheme is to obtain merchandise associated with allotment cultivation at more competitive prices through bulk buying from wholesalers. The financial benefit is for the scheme members. Any surpluses are re-invested into the scheme to provide for forecast liabilities and a proportion set aside as Capital Reserve.

8.2 Membership of the Trading Store is open to Ashford Allotment Society members.

8.3 Membership is by application to join the scheme and payment of an annual membership subscription fee.

8.4 Members of this scheme are informed about merchandise availability, prices, discounts, promotions and the hours of opening of the trading store.

9. Register of Members

The Membership Manager shall keep a register of all Members of the Society and a separate register for those members of the Trading Store. In both cases the record includes the following: -

- Name and address.
- Date of joining the Society.
- Email address.
- Phone number.
- Site and number of plot (where applicable).
- Trading Store membership number (where applicable)

10. Data Protection Policy

10.1 The Society is committed to protecting the personal data of members and ensuring compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR). As an unincorporated association nominated committee members are considered joint data controllers under UK GDPR.

The Society adhere to the following principles:

- **Lawful, Fair, and Transparent Processing** – Personal data will be collected and processed lawfully, fairly, and transparently.
- **Purpose Limitation** – Data will only be used for specified, explicit, and legitimate purposes relevant to the society's activities.
- **Data Minimisation** – Only the necessary personal data required for the society's operations will be collected and retained.
- **Accuracy** – Personal data will be kept accurate and up to date.
- **Storage Limitation** – Data will not be retained for longer than necessary.

- **Security** – Appropriate security measures will be in place to protect personal data from unauthorised access, loss, or damage.
- **Member Rights** – Members have the right to access, correct, or request the deletion of their personal data.

10.2 As an unincorporated association nominated committee members are considered joint data controllers under UK GDPR.

10.3 The nominated committee members, as joint controllers, shall ensure:

- Compliance with data protection laws
- Secure handling of personal data
- Issuance of privacy notices
- Timely responses to date subject requests

10.2 Members shall be informed of data handling practices through agreements and notices.

10.3 Members may request to opt out of receiving communications, and access their personal data held by the Society under Article 15 UK GDPR.

10.4 Where Ashford Borough Council facilitates society membership or data sharing, a formal Data Sharing Agreement (DSA) is established to define:

- Roles and obligations of both parties
- Data minimisation principles
- Security safeguards and breach protocols

10.5 The custodian of data is the Membership Manager.

10.6 The data protection policy and practices shall be reviewed annually.

11. Allotment Tenancy Terms, Conditions and Rules

The Society does not lay down or issue Allotment Tenancy Terms and Conditions. These are issued by the Landlord. In the case of Ashford Borough Council these form part of the tenancy agreement, a legally binding agreement between Tenant and The Council.

12. Payment of Allotment Rentals

The Society does not collect allotment rents. Rents are decided by Ashford Borough Council and collected by them.

13. Officers of the Society

The Society shall consist of the following officers:

- Chair.
- Vice Chair.
- Secretary.
- Treasurer.
- Trading Store Manager.
- Membership Manager.
- Media Manager.
- Site Managers.

14. Election of Chairperson and Secretary

14.1 Election for Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Secretary takes place at the Annual General Meeting. Members of the Society elect these officers. The tenure is for three years. If the current post holders are willing to stand unopposed, then they shall be duly elected for a further three years.

14.2 If there are other nominations for the Chairperson, and Vice Chairperson, the Secretary shall first declare the names of those willing to stand and a vote is taken of those present at the AGM and a simple majority shall uphold the decision on a show of hands. The Chairperson is then able to confirm his/her appointment and will then continue with the official business of the meeting and if relevant, to elect the Secretary.

15. Election of Committee officers

15.1 Election of the officers is made by the full committee at any meeting.

15.2 The tenure is for two years.

15.3 Each committee member can propose and second an individual tenant as an Officer of the Society.

15.4 Should more than one individual be nominated as Site Manager then there shall be a ballot of tenants of that site by email or via the site notice boards.

16. Midterm Vacancies

The Committee shall fill any vacancy that arises during the year, and any Member thus appointed shall have full voting powers.

17. Voting

Except for the Chairperson who shall exercise a casting vote, each other Member of the Committee shall be eligible to vote on any proposed and seconded motions as presented at the Committee Meetings. A simple majority will carry a motion.

18. Co-option

The Committee may co-opt any other Member of the Society to assist in its work. These members shall not have voting powers.

19. Powers of Committee, Governance and Day-to-Day Management

19.1 Governance of the Society shall be invested in the Committee and its Officers.

19.2 The Chair and representative number of Committee Members shall have full power to supervise and manage the day-to-day work of the Committee according to its objectives and Rules for its purpose.

20. Attendance at meetings

It is expected that members of the Society's Committee will not miss any more than two meetings per year and that if unable to attend, the Secretary should be notified prior to the meeting date.

21. Removal from the Committee

The Committee may remove any officer or committee member from the said committee by a simple majority vote following an open discussion of the relevant issues, during which time the individual member will have an opportunity to put his/her point of view. If required, the vote may be held in private, but the voting numbers shall be recorded in the minutes.

22. Society Committee Meetings

22.1 Meetings are held each year, usually in January, April, June and September.

22.2 The January meeting will be designated as an Annual General Meeting.

22.3 Dates, venue and times of meetings will be arranged by the Secretary with an Agenda distributed two weeks in advance.

22.4 The September meeting will be focused on the Trading Store Scheme, Treasurer's Report, and Trading Store Manager's Report. This meeting is only open to Paid Members of the Trading Store, who will have an input and a vote.

22.5 Members of the Society who are not Committee members are welcome to attend any meeting as observers. They may not vote or take part in discussions unless in exceptional circumstances and agreed by the Chairperson.

22.6 If a site Manager is unable to attend any meeting, he/she may nominate a replacement for that meeting.

22.7 Meetings may be held more frequently or at other times as required.

22.8 If the Chair is unable to attend a meeting, an acting Chair is elected at the start of the meeting and presides at that meeting. Usually, the Vice Chair will be nominated.

22.9 If in the event of an urgent situation or if an emergency arises then the Chairperson and/or the Secretary and/or Treasurer may take executive emergency action, and this must be reported to the Chair at the earliest opportunity and recorded at the next Committee Meeting.

23. Agenda Items/Minutes.

23.1 At least 14 days' notice shall be given for any Committee meeting and an agenda published by the Secretary. Minutes of meetings will be circulated to all Committee Members via the website.

23.2 Last minute Agenda Items may be added at the discretion of the Chair under AOB.

Note: Such issues should be brought to the attention of the Chairperson in advance of the meeting.

24. Extraordinary Meetings and Special Meetings.

24.1 Extraordinary Meetings can be held if required, usually to discuss a specific issue of interest to all Committee Members and which would directly affect Members and their allotments. No other business other than that stated in the notice will be transacted. Notices of such meetings will be circulated via email and posted on site notice boards and resulting Minutes made available to all members.

24.2 Special Meetings may also be held if the Committee feels it is expedient, or if the Secretary receives a written request signed by at least 5 Members of the Society.

24.3 From time to time the Committee may nominate a Sub Committee of three or more Members of the Society to advise the Committee on various specific matters.

25. Financial Matters

25.1 The Treasurer shall keep a formal record of all income and expenditure related to the Society's financial transactions. All expenditure must be supported by a receipt or appropriate evidence which shows the date, amount and purpose of the purchase.

25.2 A membership number will be issued and will act as a receipt for the annual membership fee for the Trading Store and a record kept of these Members.

25.3 The Trading Store Manager shall keep a record of all transactions pertaining to the Trading Store including membership fees in conjunction with the Treasurer and Membership Manager.

25.4 The Treasurer shall open a Basic Bank Account with online access with a Bank or Building Society. Any access to these accounts shall be made by the Treasurer alone, or in the case of signing a cheque used for payments, two authorised signatures are required.

25.5 The Treasurer may make payments of expenses such as postage or printing costs from a cash float of £25. Amounts above this should be withdrawn from the main account by the Treasurer.

26.5 When special projects are to be considered they should be costed as far as possible, and the Treasurer will then advise the Committee on possible funding.

26.6 No Member can make purchases on behalf of the Society without prior permission from the Treasurer.

26. Annual Accounts.

26.1 A simple income and expenditure account and a balance sheet shall be prepared for each meeting annually in April. Other activities involving expenditure shall be presented separately.

26.2 The accounts should be annually audited by any person/s who is not an Officer of the Committee.

26.3 Committee members may make a request to see the accounts of both the main account and the Bulk Buying account.

26.4 The Treasurer shall make a verbal report at each meeting, and this report shall be recorded in the Minutes.

27. Amendments to the Constitution and Rules

Amendments to the Constitution and Rules may be made by resolution at the AGM. If a Special General Meeting is called specifically for this purpose any changes must be proposed and seconded and are subject to a two-thirds majority vote by those members present.

28. Voting at General Meetings

Every Member present shall have one vote. If the votes cast are equal, then the Chair shall have the casting vote.

29. Arbitration

In cases where a dispute arises between the Society and any Member of the Committee, or in the case of any complaint against any member, an application shall be made to the Committee for redress.

Should the Committee be unable to bring the matter to a conclusion, or if the parties fail to agree on the matter in dispute, then the matter shall be brought to Arbitration.

One Arbiter shall be nominated by each of the parties concerned and one from another Allotment Society. The judgement of these Arbiters shall be final. Any costs incurred shall be settled with the arbiters.

30. Dissolution of the Society

The Society may at any time be dissolved by at least three quarters of the membership, as testified by their signatures on an Instrument of Dissolution.

31. Dissolution of Trading Store Scheme

At an EGM called by the Committee or by 5 members of the Trading Store Membership to discuss a motion to dissolve the scheme. This shall be put to a vote of all scheme members. The vote shall be by ballot and if carried by three quarters of the scheme membership at the time of being called, then the Committee shall begin the dissolution process. Upon satisfaction of all debts and liabilities, remaining equity will be converted into cash and surplus will ultimately be distributed equally between members who were paid up members at the time of winding-up. The members may decide to distribute their contribution, or part thereof, to a charitable cause supported by the Ashford Allotment Society namely:

Pilgrims Hospice Ashford
Hythe Road
Ashford,
Kent TN24 0NE

32. Roles of the Society Officers

32.1 Chairperson

- 1 In conjunction with the Secretary, to arrange meetings—4 per year (January, April, June, September), including the AGM.
- 2 Chair meetings.
- 3 Liaise with Ashford Borough Council.
- 4 Liaise with all members of the Committee.
- 5 Serve as the primary point of contact for all tenants and Site Managers.
- 6 To liaise with the Media Manager and Media Assistant to produce a press report for local publications and publicity for forthcoming events.
- 7 To oversee and agree with all press releases and content in conjunction with the Media Manager and other Committee members where possible.
- 8 Assist in the smooth running of the Trading Store.
- 9 Judge plots for the Summer Show and arrange the award of certificates.

32.2 Vice-Chair

1. Deputise and support the Chair in all matters relating to the Committee, and roles outlined above.
2. Arrange date and venue for the Annual Show.
3. Arrange and organise Judges.
4. Lead the producing of paperwork (schedule, entry cards, prize cards, etc.) for the Annual Show.
5. Arrange prizes, raffles and associated matters.
6. To arrange commercial exhibitors and trade stalls as required. Produce a Show Report.
7. Co-operate with other Garden Societies in the local area to promote allotment gardening.
8. To encourage local Schools to grow flowers, fruit and vegetables.
9. To oversee and agree with the Media Manager all content of the website, Facebook, and other media accounts as required.
10. Organise and manage visits to gardens and local places of interest. Produce the annual newsletter.
11. Organise visiting speakers and arrange produce and donations to charities.

32.3 Secretary

- 1 The Custodian of the Society Records.
- 2 Arrange meetings for the committee in conjunction with the Chairperson.
- 3 Take Minutes at meetings and distribute to Committee Members.

32.4 Treasurer

- 1 Keep a record of all income and expenditure.
- 2 Responsible for the bank account and petty cash.
- 3 Make payments for the Trading Store Scheme.
- 4 Pay expenses.
- 5 Produce a report for Committee meetings.
- 6 Recommend capital reserve to the committee to vote approval.
- 7 Produce annual accounts and arrange independent audit.

32.5 Trading Store Manager

- 1 Have responsibility for all day-to-day running of the Scheme.
- 2 Assign a volunteer to be Relief Manager or Trading Store Assistant.
- 3 Appoint other volunteers to run the trading store.
- 4 Manage all orders (including potatoes, composts, sundries, etc. to provide members with competitively priced supplies).
- 5 Arrange deliveries. Produce pricelists.
- 6 Takes responsibility for all cash/accounts, income and expenditure in conjunction with the Treasurer.
- 7 Organise Annual stock take.

- 8 Attend open sessions at the Trading Store.
- 9 In conjunction with the Membership Secretary, produce a list of members of the Scheme.
- 10 Produce a Report for Committee meetings. Determine opening dates and times.
- 11 Keep, and issue membership number as required and notify Membership Manager for their record.

32.6 Membership Manager

- 1 Keep contact details of all Tenants (inc. email addresses) as available.
- 2 Keep records of all members of the Trading Store.
- 3 Produce reports as needed.
- 4 Distribute information to members, about merchandise and prices.

32.7 Media Manager

- 1 Manage the existing web site and keep all information up to date.
- 2 Produce articles and information for the website as requested by the Committee/ABC.
- 3 Ensure that all content of the website and press release is approved by the Chair in conjunction with one other Committee member, and ensure it shall not be used for personal ideological or commercial promotions.
- 4 Encourage new ideas and promote helpful tips for new and existing members.
- 5 Include posting of all minutes of meetings etc.
- 6 Develop new and innovative ways of communication with Society members, e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.
- 7 Produce a report for Committee meetings.

32.8 Site Managers

- 1 Regularly attend the site and be available to quickly resolve issues.
- 2 Maintain site noticeboards with up-to-date information.
- 3 Provide appropriate contact details to the plot holders.
- 4 Arrange to meet prospective Tenants and introduce them to the site.
- 5 Encourage new Tenants with freely given help, knowledge and advice and collect their details for the Membership Manager.
- 6 Inform new Tenants of the Trading Store and member discount scheme.
- 7 Demonstrate good practice.
- 8 Help to keep the overall site tidy
- 9 Oversee the use of water and encourage water conservation.
- 10 Check site security.
- 11 Oversee cultivation of plots.
- 12 Report damaged fencing, faulty locks and gates to the Council Allotment Team.
- 13 Report break-ins, vandalism, fly-tipping etc. to the Council Allotment Team and/or the Police.
- 14 Report any uncultivated or poorly cultivated plots to the Council Allotment Team.
- 15 Attend all committee meetings and give a short report on the good and the bad.
- 16 If unable to attend a committee meeting, send apologies and if possible, arrange a deputy.

- 17 Attend site visits and inspections as and when these take place.

33. Volunteers

Volunteers may be appointed from time to time by the Trading Store Manager and the Media Manager to assist in their area or responsibility. A description of their roles is shown below. Whilst volunteers do not have a vote on the committee they are encouraged to attend meetings, and their involvement is seen as an opportunity to widen the pool of talent for future succession.

33.1 Media Assistant Reporting to the Media Manager

1. To produce all publicity/posters etc.to promote events run by the Committee.
2. Distribute the posters in the local area.
3. Make useful contacts with local newspapers/magazines/local publications to promote allotment gardening in the Ashford Borough area.
4. Ensure that all press releases sent on behalf of the Committee have been agreed by the Chairperson and at least one other Committee member prior to release.

33.2 Trading Store Assistant Reporting to the Trading Store Manager

- 1 Assist in running the trading store at opening times.
- 2 Provide cover for the Manager during their absence.
- 3 Attend the trading store to assist with deliveries.
- 4 Report on any safety, maintenance and security issues.

