



SPROUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL

ALLOTMENTS HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

Policy Reference: SPC/AP/H&S/01

Adopted: 11/08/2026

Review Date: 11/08/2027

Responsible Body: Sproughton Parish Council

1. Policy Statement

Sproughton Parish Council is committed to providing and maintaining allotment sites that are safe, healthy, accessible and enjoyable for all users. The Council recognises the significant recreational, environmental, social and health benefits that allotments provide to the community and is committed to promoting a culture of safety and wellbeing throughout the allotment site.

The Council acknowledges its duty of care to allotment tenants, visitors, volunteers, contractors and members of the public. Whilst gardening activities inevitably involve some degree of risk, the Council will take all reasonably practicable steps to identify hazards, assess risks and implement appropriate control measures to minimise the likelihood of injury or harm.

Health and safety is a shared responsibility. The Council, allotment holders, visitors and contractors all have a role to play in ensuring that the allotment site remains a safe and pleasant environment.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Promote safe working practices on the allotment site.
 - Reduce the risk of accidents, injuries and ill health.
 - Clarify responsibilities for health and safety.
 - Ensure compliance with relevant legislation and recognised good practice.
 - Encourage tenants to take responsibility for the safe management of their plots.
 - Provide a framework for identifying and controlling risks.
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3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All allotment tenants.
 - Family members and authorised guests.
 - Volunteers working on the site.
 - Parish Councillors undertaking inspections.
 - Council employees.
 - Contractors engaged by the Council.
 - Any person visiting or undertaking activities on the allotment site.
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4. Legal Responsibilities

The Council recognises its obligations under relevant legislation, including:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.
- Occupiers' Liability Act 1957.
- Occupiers' Liability Act 1984.
- Environmental Protection Act 1990.
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH).
- Equality Act 2010.
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

The Council will seek to follow guidance issued by the National Allotment Society and recognised best practice for allotment management.

5. Responsibilities

Sproughton Parish Council

The Council will:

- Undertake periodic inspections of communal areas.
- Carry out general health and safety risk assessments.
- Maintain communal infrastructure under its control.
- Ensure public liability insurance is maintained.
- Investigate reports of hazards and incidents
- Arrange appropriate repairs and maintenance where practicable.
- Keep health and safety policies under review.
- Ensure contractors are appropriately qualified and insured.

Allotment Tenants

Tenants must:

- Take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of others.
- Keep their plots in a safe, tidy and manageable condition.
- Report hazards, accidents, damage or unsafe conditions promptly.
- Ensure that structures are safe and properly maintained.
- Store tools and materials safely.
- Ensure children and visitors are adequately supervised.
- Comply with the terms of the tenancy agreement and site rules.

Failure to comply with this policy may constitute a breach of tenancy conditions.

6. Risk Assessment

The Council will periodically assess risks in communal areas of the site.

Areas considered may include:

- Access routes and pathways.
- Boundary fencing and gates.
- Water points and communal facilities.
- Storage areas.
- Shared spaces and communal infrastructure.

Individual tenants are responsible for assessing and managing risks associated with activities on their own plots.

Examples of common hazards include:

- Uneven surfaces.
- Sharp tools and equipment.
- Bonfires.
- Water storage facilities.
- Hazardous substances.
- Falling objects.
- Unsafe structures.
- Manual handling activities.

Appropriate action should be taken to eliminate hazards where possible or reduce risks to an acceptable level.

7. Site Inspections

The Council may inspect the allotment site periodically to ensure compliance with allotment rules and health and safety requirements.

Inspections may identify:

- Unsafe structures.
- Fire hazards.
- Hazardous waste.
- Obstructed pathways.
- Vermin infestations.
- Dangerous materials.
- Poor plot maintenance affecting safety.

Where hazards are identified tenants may be required to take remedial action within a reasonable timescale.

8. General Site Safety

All users of the allotment site must:

- Keep pathways clear and unobstructed.
- Avoid leaving tools unattended.
- Store materials safely.
- Dispose of waste responsibly.
- Wear appropriate clothing and footwear.
- Consider the safety of neighbouring plot holders.

Particular care should be taken during wet, icy or windy weather conditions.

9. Slips, Trips and Falls

Slips, trips and falls are one of the most common causes of injury on allotment sites.

To minimise risks, tenants should:

- Maintain clear pathways.
- Remove unnecessary obstructions.
- Store equipment safely.
- Repair obvious hazards promptly.
- Exercise care on uneven ground.

Suitable footwear with good grip should always be worn.

10. Manual Handling

Allotment work frequently involves lifting heavy items such as:

- Compost.
- Manure.
- Timber.
- Water containers.
- Paving slabs.
- Sacks of produce.

Tenants should:

- Consider the weight before lifting.
- Use wheelbarrows or trolleys where possible.
- Seek assistance with heavy or awkward loads.
- Use safe lifting techniques.

No person should attempt to move loads beyond their physical capability.

11. Tools and Equipment

All tools and equipment brought onto the site remain the responsibility of the tenant.

Equipment should:

- Be maintained in a safe condition.
- Be used according to manufacturers' instructions.
- Be suitable for the task being undertaken.
- Be securely stored when not in use.

Particular care should be taken when using:

- Strimmer's.
- Lawn mowers.
- Rotavators.
- Power tools.
- Saws and cutting equipment.

Appropriate personal protective equipment should be worn where necessary.

12. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Users should wear suitable PPE appropriate to the task being undertaken.

This may include:

- Gardening gloves.
- Safety footwear.
- Protective eyewear.
- Hearing protection.
- Dust masks.
- Weather-appropriate clothing.

The responsibility for providing PPE rests with the individual user.

13. Chemicals and Hazardous Substances

Chemicals such as weedkillers, pesticides, fertilisers, fuels and preservatives must be used responsibly.

Tenants must:

- Follow manufacturers' instructions.
- Store chemicals securely.
- Use only approved products.
- Prevent contamination of neighbouring plots.
- Prevent pollution of watercourses and drainage systems.
- Dispose of containers safely.

The Council encourages environmentally responsible gardening methods wherever possible.

14. Storage of Materials

Materials stored on plots should be:

- Secure and stable.
- Free from sharp protrusions.
- Stacked safely.
- Kept within plot boundaries.

Accumulations of waste or materials that present a hazard may require removal.

15. Structures

All sheds, greenhouses, poly tunnels, cold frames and storage facilities must be:

- Structurally sound.
- Securely anchored where appropriate.
- Maintained in a safe condition.
- Constructed in accordance with allotment rules.

Any structure considered dangerous may be required to be repaired or removed.

16. Asbestos

Older structures may contain asbestos-containing materials.

Where asbestos is suspected:

- Work must cease immediately.
- The material must not be disturbed.
- The Council should be informed.
- Disposal must be undertaken in accordance with current regulations.

The unauthorised dumping of asbestos on the allotment site is strictly prohibited.

17. Fire Safety and Bonfires

Bonfires should be avoided wherever practical and composting encouraged as the preferred method of disposing of green waste.

Where bonfires are permitted:

- Only dry garden waste may be burned.
- Fires must be supervised at all times.
- Suitable extinguishing materials must be available.
- Fires must be fully extinguished before leaving the site.
- Weather conditions must be considered.

The following must not be burned:

- Plastics.
- Rubber.
- Treated timber.
- Household waste.
- Upholstered materials.
- Chemicals or hazardous substances.

The Council reserves the right to prohibit bonfires during periods of increased fire risk or where repeated nuisance is caused.

18. Water Safety

Water storage facilities can present risks, particularly to children.

Users should:

- Ensure water butts and tanks are stable.
- Fit covers where practicable.
- Repair leaks promptly.
- Prevent standing water from becoming hazardous.

Children must not be left unsupervised near water storage facilities.

19. Wildlife and Pests

The Council encourages wildlife-friendly gardening practices and biodiversity.

However, tenants should be aware of hazards associated with:

- Bees and wasps.
- Rodents.
- Ticks.
- Toxic plants.
- Thorny vegetation.

Any significant vermin infestation should be reported to the Council.

20. Waste Management

Tenants are responsible for waste arising from their plots.

They must:

- Compost suitable material where practical.
- Remove non-compostable waste from site.
- Prevent fly-tipping.
- Dispose of hazardous waste lawfully.

No waste may be deposited on communal areas.

21. Children and Visitors

Allotments are working environments and may contain hazards.

Children are welcome but must:

- Remain under the supervision of a responsible adult at all times.
- Be prevented from accessing hazardous equipment.
- Respect neighbouring plots and property.

Visitors remain the responsibility of the tenant who invited them onto the site.

22. Lone Working

Many allotment holders work alone on their plots.

The Council recommends that users:

- Inform someone where they are going.
 - Carry a mobile phone.
 - Avoid high-risk activities when alone.
 - Seek assistance for heavy lifting.
 - Exercise caution when using ladders or powered machinery.
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23. Contractors and Volunteers

All contractors working on behalf of the Council must:

- Hold appropriate insurance.
- Be competent for the tasks undertaken.
- Comply with current health and safety legislation.
- Work in a manner which does not place site users at unnecessary risk.

Volunteers undertaking organised activities shall receive suitable instruction and supervision.

24. Severe Weather

Users should take additional care during:

- Extreme heat.
- Heavy rainfall.
- Snow and ice.
- High winds.
- Thunderstorms.

Work should cease where weather conditions present an unacceptable safety risk.

Adequate hydration, sun protection and weather-appropriate clothing are strongly recommended.

25. First Aid

The allotment site does not routinely provide trained first aid personnel.

Tenants are encouraged to:

- Carry a basic first aid kit.
- Keep tetanus vaccinations up to date.
- Clean and cover cuts promptly.
- Seek medical advice where appropriate.

26. Accident, Incident and Near-Miss Reporting

All accidents, injuries, dangerous occurrences and near misses should be reported to the Parish Clerk as soon as practicable.

Reports should include:

- Date and time.
- Location.
- Details of the incident.
- Persons involved.
- Any action taken.

The Council will maintain records and review incidents to identify improvements that may help prevent future occurrences.

27. Emergency Procedures

In the event of a serious emergency:

1. Dial **999**.
2. Request the appropriate emergency service.
3. Provide the location as: **Sproughton Parish Council Allotments, Sproughton, Ipswich, Suffolk.**
4. Provide clear directions if required.
5. Do not put yourself at risk.
6. Notify the Parish Clerk as soon as reasonably practicable.



28. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed:

- Every 1 year.
- Following any serious incident.
- Following significant changes in legislation.
- Following major changes to the allotment site or its management arrangements.