

Aberdeen City Council’s Annual Allotments Report 2020-21

Introduction

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 (“the Act”) encourages local authorities to support the development of community food growing spaces including allotments. Allotments and other grow-your-own initiatives help deliver many benefits including improved health and well-being but also social interaction.

Aberdeen City Council approved [Granite City Growing](#), its food-growing strategy in February 2020. The city-wide strategy was prepared in partnership with key stakeholders setting a clear vision for the future of food growing in the city by seeking to ensure that everyone who wants to, has access to food-growing opportunities.

An allotment is defined in Part 9 of the Act as land that:

- is owned or leased by a local authority (or leased or intended for lease by a person from the authority);
- is used or intended for use wholly or mainly for the cultivation of vegetables, fruit, herbs or flowers; and
- is used or is intended for use otherwise than with a view to making a profit.

The Act places new duties and functions on public sector authorities including allotment regulations and a requirement to prepare and publish an annual allotments report. The following report is for allotments leased or managed by Aberdeen City Council for the period 1st April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

Allotment Sites

Aberdeen City Council (the Council) directly manages 21 allotment sites as listed in the table below which includes the location, size of the allotment site and the number of allotments on each allotment site. The table also shows the proportion of land on the allotment site that is not leased. These communal areas can be roadways, car parks, paths, banks, tree belts or other shared use areas.

	Site name	Site Location	Postcode	Site size (m2)	Size of land not leased (ie communal) (m2)	Total Number of Allotments per Site	Proportion of land not leased (ie communal) (%)
1	Anderson Road	Anderson Road, Hilton, Aberdeen	AB24 4HH	1479	155	5	10
2	Bankhead	Stoneywood Road, Aberdeen	AB21 9HT	5070	540	37	11
3	Bedford Avenue	Bedford Avenue, Aberdeen	AB24 3YR	1168	37	4	3
4	Cattofield	Cattofield Place, Aberdeen	AB25 3QW	832	114	5	14
5	Cults	Abbotshall Place, Aberdeen	AB15 9SE	1656	361	11	22
6	Deeside Railway	Hardgate, Aberdeen	AB10 7FF	234	0	2	0
7	Garthdee Field	Garthdee Road, Aberdeen	AB15 9FX	29956	4776	109	16
8	Gray Street	Gray Street, Aberdeen	AB10 6JJ	7538	1325	24	18
9	Greyhope Road	Greyhope Road, Aberdeen	AB11 8QX	10164	1498	45	15
10	Hilton Drive	Hilton Drive, Aberdeen	AB16 7GJ	2769	596	11	22
11	Holburn Street	Holburn Street, Aberdeen	AB10 7JQ	2977	573	12	19
12	King Street	King Street, Aberdeen	AB24 5SQ	1731	295	8	17
13	Nellfield Place 1	No.19 Nellfield Place, Aberdeen	AB10 6DE	1707	71	6	4
14	Nellfield Place 2	No.24 Nellfield Place, Aberdeen	AB10 6DB	1074	237	5	22
15	Niggfield	Nigg Kirk Road, Aberdeen	AB12 3DA	9726	1109	37	11
16	Pitmedden Crescent	Pitmedden Crescent, Aberdeen	AB10 7JB	2857	167	15	6
17	Redmoss	Nigg Kirk Road, Aberdeen	AB12 3DA	3719	582	29	16
18	Sc lattie Quarry	Sc lattie Quarry, Aberdeen	AB21 9DX	3783	378	23	10
19	Slopefield	Craigton Road, Aberdeen	AB15 9PQ	19590	4533	113	23
20	Smithfield Lane	Smithfield Lane, Aberdeen	AB24 4HH	1728	90	10	5
21	Tullos Crescent	Tullos Crescent, Aberdeen	AB11 9LA	2063	265	9	13
				111821	17702	520	16

Period of Lease and Annual Rent

The period of any lease between Aberdeen City Council and an allotment tenant is from the date of entry until 30 November each year and thereafter yearly until terminated.

When determining the level of rent, the Council takes account of the size of the Allotment Plot, the services provided by, or on behalf of, the Council to the Tenants of the Allotment Sites, site improvements and upgrades by the Council, expenses incurred by the authority in maintaining and managing the allotment site, and any other relevant factors.

The annual fees to rent an allotment plot from 1 December 2020 to 30 November 2021 are as follows:

Plot	Size (approx.)	Annual fee	Concession
Full	300m ²	£88.07	£44.04
3/4	225m ²	£66.02	£33.01
1/2	150m ²	£43.98	£21.99
130m ²	130m ²	£41.00	£20.55
110m ²	110m ²	£33.78	£16.89
100m ²	100m ²	£31.42	£15.71
80m ²	80m ²	£25.13	£12.57
50m ²	50m ²	£14.32	No concession
<50m ²	<50m ²	£12.67	No concession
Micro plot	<50m ²	£12.67	No concession

Waiting Lists

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 requires local authorities to take reasonable steps to ensure the number of applicants on their allotment waiting list is no more than half of the total number of allotment plots and that an applicant is not on the waiting list for a continuous period of more than 5 years.

Recently there has been a significant increase in the number of applications for allotments with one factor identified as being the consequence of the Coronavirus lockdown restrictions. It would appear that lockdown has resulted in more people wishing to be outdoors in the natural environment.

In March 2020 there were 278 applicants on the allotment waiting list for 517 plots (a ratio of 54%). This has since dramatically increased to there now being 899 applicants on the allotment waiting list. The current number of allotment plots is 520 (some plots have been split) which means the ratio has increased to 172%, significantly exceeding the Act's trigger ratio of 50%.

Therefore, the Council will take the following measures to address this matter;

- 1) make best use of the information and resources available; including the 'Granite City Growing: Aberdeen Growing Food Together 2020' food growing strategy to redirect existing resources and access new resources;
- 2) work with partners and communities to co-create new opportunities.

The above measures include identifying and investigating the suitability and affordability of new allotment sites and potentially reinstating former sites. One such site is Smithfield Lane that was previously an allotment site and proposals are being considered to reinstate this site.

Another option is to identify existing plots that are considered too large for one person and may be split to meet the needs of two or more applicants. The allotment waiting list will continue to be monitored.

There are the three people who have been on the waiting list for over 5 years and wish to remain on the list until their preferred site choice is available. Two out of the three applicants are working temporary micro plots until their preferred size of plot is available.

Our waiting list database has a section that allows us to hold sensitive data relating to personal conditions and or disabilities. This information is used to discuss upcoming plots with applicants as to their suitability for the site and/or the plot. Over the last year, the council did not receive any requests to carry out adjustments to meet the needs of a tenant who is a disabled person. It is considered that the Council's allotment sites are accessible by a disabled person and that accessibility to individual plots would vary depending on the person's individual disability.

Income and Expenditure

During the financial year from 1.4.2020 to 30.3.2021, in connection with allotment sites, the council received income of £20,231.00 and incurred expenditure of £32,565.70

The income includes fees for rent and the expenditure includes officer's time in the administration and management of the allotment service.

Benefits of allotments

The benefits of allotments are cross-cutting with implications for health and well-being, diet, food poverty, place-making, reducing 'food miles', intergenerational engagement, waste reduction, outdoor education, physical activity, soil management, adaptation to a changing climate, mental health, greenspace management, recycling of resources and biodiversity.

In Aberdeen the Local Outcome Improvement Plan stretch outcome 13 states 'no one in Aberdeen will go without food due to poverty by 2026'. The 520 allotment plots added to the food security of the allotment-holder households themselves. Additionally, during this reporting period [The Allotment Market Stall](#), a local charity, collected surplus produce from the allotments and either donated it or sold it through its summer stalls held in city parks.

Engagement

Where tenants wish to take on more responsibility within their allotment site, the Council encourages and supports the creation of constituted allotment associations. Allotment associations in Aberdeen nurture and foster strong community involvement in allotments e.g. Slopefield has a thriving community plot and a plot worked by the local school children; Garthdee Fields has a plot worked by the local University; and Bankhead has a community bee keeping plot.

The Council encourages tenants on each allotment site to appoint an allotment site representative to engage and provide feedback to the Council on their behalf. Out of the 21 allotment sites, 20 actively

engage with the Council via site representatives. The Council also encourages site representatives to participate in the Allotment Representatives Network that are arranged and chaired by the Council.

Further Information

Further information and guidance on allotments in Aberdeen including private allotments, allotment regulations and the Council's Food Growing Strategy can be found on the Council's website here:-

<https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/leisure-culture-and-parks/allotments>