South Harpenden Allotments and Gardens Society

Health and Safety Policy

Introduction

All activities carry an element of risk and allotment gardening is no exception. Good gardening is safe gardening. In developing this policy we have taken note of advice from Harpenden Town Council and Hertfordshire Fire Brigade and adapted documentation provided by the Allotments Regeneration Initiative.

The aim of the policy is, as far as is reasonably possible, to prevent accidents and provide adequate control of health and safety risks.

Our policy, summarised in this document, is implemented through our rules, newsletters, notices, website and an introductory leaflet issued to plot holders.

We will do our best to ensure that plots leased to new plot holders will be free from hazards as far as is practically possible. They will be advised of this policy and their responsibilities for health and safety when they sign the letting agreement (see separate document).

An assessment will be carried out annually and appropriate action taken to minimise hazards and risks and, if required, to update this policy.

A copy of this policy is kept in the Ted Allen room, the shop and is on our website.

Our obligations

Everyone needs to take health and safety seriously and make themselves aware of health and safety procedures and guidelines. Although unlikely, a claim could be made for negligence if an individual suffered an injury because we didn't take reasonable precautions. It is not possible in English law to exclude liability, for example by way of a notice.

As a Society, we have a communal duty to ensure that common areas, such as car parking areas and main access paths are safe. The law requires that in all these areas we exercise at least a 'reasonable' level of care regarding safety.

Under civil law, and as set out in the Occupiers' Liability Act 1957, all plot-holders have a duty of care to anyone accessing their plot, and the pathways for which they are responsible. This includes both authorised and unauthorised visitors.

Responsibilities

All Society members are responsible for their own safety and should adopt good, safe working practice on site. Plotholders should report concerns about health and safety on their plot, incidents, accidents, near misses etc. to their Site Representative who will report it to the committee via the Secretary. A record of reported incidents will be kept in the Ted Allen Room

The management committee will oversee Health and Safety issues and review the policy annually.

As the Society has direct management responsibilities it is best placed to carry out risk assessment and will inform members of issues that are directly relevant to them.

As the landlord HTC also has a responsibility to ensure that its role in health and safety on the sites is implemented.

Plot holders are responsible for ensuring visitors / non plot holders comply with the Society's policy. All third party visitors (groups or individuals) to the sites over the age of 18 are responsible for their own safety or, if applicable, parent/guardian or carer; visitors under the age of 18 are the responsibility of their parent/guardian or carer. (see separate leaflet for arranged visits).

Risk assessments

A risk assessment will be carried out once a year. Every effort will be made to carry out the risk assessment before the AGM so that if any decisions are required they can be made at the meeting.

The risk assessment will be carried out by two people using the Allotment Site Hazards checklist. Every effort will be made to walk on paths and avoid walking on plots.

Plot holders will be informed in advance of the date of the risk assessment.

A record of risk assessments will be kept by the committee and will be made available to anyone who requests it

Site Representatives will note any high risk hazard during the plot inspections in the summer and inform the committee via the Secretary.

(see separate forms for the risk assessment and the hazard checklist).

Remedial action

Once the risk assessment has been completed it will be taken to the committee who will decide on how to deal with identified risks.

For individual plot holders, who have an identified hazard on their plot, a 'notice to remedy' will be sent with a deadline for action and, if ignored, ultimately a notice of termination will be sent in accordance with the tenancy agreement.

Communal Machinery

All communal machinery is used at the users own risk.

Plotholders should make themselves aware of the safe use and storage of the Society's machines and tools. Visors are provided and it is recommended that these should be worn. No person under the age of 18 is allowed to use the communal machinery powered tools even under adult supervision.

Servicing records for the machines are kept by the Machinery Manager.

Emergency procedure

In case of an incident where the emergency services are called the name of the site and the postcode will be posted on the site gates.

First aid kits

A basic first aid kit is kept in each site shed with a small selection of plasters, antiseptic ointment, tweezers for removing thorns and splinters, and a gauze or lint pad to stop bleeding . There is also an accident record book for completion as soon as possible after the accident .

Fire Risks A notice of risk about the use of fuel is posted in each site shed.

Fire extinguishers are placed in the shop and in the Ted Allen Room. These are serviced each year.

COSHH Statement All chemicals bought from the allotment shop should have a COSHH assessment and must stored and used in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions.

September 2014

Approved by the Committee September 2014