

growing in the community

a good practice guide for the management of allotments

Second edition



Local Government Association

This good practice guide for the management of allotments is an updated version of the best-selling 2001 edition. Particularly useful for allotment officers, it provides a policy framework, up-to-date legislation guidance and practice affecting allotment gardening.

More than ever, allotments are playing a vital role in connecting people to the process of food production and healthy eating, enabling them to grow fresh, cheap food whilst reducing food miles. They provide valuable urban green space and wildlife habitats. It is a century since the Allotments Acts were passed, but they continue to provide pleasure and benefits to their communities.

In recent years, government has strengthened the protection of allotments, thereby promoting good health through exercise, good food and a stronger sense of community, reflected in a rising demand for plots.

Who this will help

Those who are responsible for managing allotments, by giving examples of good practice.

Stakeholders in allotments, by supporting both associations and individual ploholders.

Managers of allotments, drawing on examples and the experience of the Allotments Regeneration Initiative mentor network.

Anyone looking for innovative and successful ideas which can be widely imitated.

The guide includes a practical summary of key aspects of allotments law, and signposts to further information.

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“In recent years, the government has strengthened the protections around allotments within the wider planning framework, and within a wider policy of enhancing and protecting urban green spaces.

Everyone benefits from allotments and we are conscious that there is rising demand, as well as many different pressures on space in our communities.

I very much welcome the revision of this very comprehensive and inspiring good practice guide, which will help allotment officers and allotment holders alike to get the best out of their allotments.”

Baroness Kay Andrews, parliamentary under secretary of state, CLG

- 1 The second edition of this guide was commissioned by the LGA in September 2006, and substantially updates the original which was published in June 2001. The preparation of the guide has been managed by the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens.
- 2 The objective of the guide is to assist those who are responsible for managing allotments, either within local authorities or under schemes for devolved management, to work efficiently and effectively by emulating examples of good practice.
- 3 The guide will also help other stakeholders in allotments, including local authority officers in other departments, support organisations, allotment associations and individual ploholders, to understand the opportunities which allotments present for achieving multiple and inter-related benefits, and the advantages of working together to attain common goals.
- 4 The guide acknowledges the widespread renaissance in allotment gardening that has taken place since the first edition was published, including demands for new sites in some areas and growing waiting lists in others.
- 5 The guide is based upon extensive research into current good practice in the management of allotments in England and Wales. This has drawn in particular on documentary evidence, information from the internet, correspondence with allotment officers in leading-edge authorities and allotment associations, and the shared experience of the Allotment Regeneration Initiative's Mentor Network.
- 6 While the guide makes no claim to document every example of good practice in allotment management in England and Wales, it does uncover a wealth of innovative and successful ideas, which can be widely imitated.
- 7 The guide is organised in three parts: the plot, the tools, and the seeds, dealing with objectives, strategies, and practical methods respectively. Each part is illustrated with examples and case studies of good practice.
- 8 The 'plot' sets out the exciting opportunities and challenges that allotments now provide to councils and local communities, and maps out a course for getting the most out of allotments.
- 9 The 'tools' identifies allotments as a key resource in achieving a wide range of local authority agendas, including wellbeing, health promotion, cohesive communities and quality green space. It also identifies some of the key partners with whom allotment managers should be working, for mutual benefit.
- 10 A model is presented for an allotments strategy that links in with other areas of local authority work and offers a fully reasoned and resourced path to achieving good practice. Key elements of the allotments strategy include: promotion; resourcing; devolved management; effective administration; monitoring performance; and the achievement of best value.
- 11 The 'seeds' is a compendium of practical means to achieve good practice in allotments management, including: ideas for promoting allotments to convert latent demand into real users; setting rents and raising capital resources; supporting devolved management; communicating effectively with other stakeholders; provision of facilities; management of tenancies; and measures to cope with hazards and nuisances before they arise.
- 12 The guide concludes with a practical summary of key aspects of allotments law and signposts to further information.

“The many benefits of allotments are now widely recognised and this revised guide coincides with a resurgence of interest in and enthusiasm and policy support for allotment provision at a local and central government level.

There are challenges facing allotment officers and societies, which are explored in this guide.

The LGA recognises the good work done by officers and societies and is very pleased to commend this guide as a valuable resource and inspiration for all those involved with allotments.”

Clr Paul Bettison, chairman, LGA environment board

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