

**Gordon Road & Nethercourt Avenue  
Allotment & Leisure Garden Sites  
Finchley, London N3**

# **Handbook for Plot Holders**

**Finchley Horticultural Society  
2009**

## Introduction

Welcome to our allotments. This Handbook has been produced to provide all plotholders at Gordon Road and Nethercourt Avenue with essential information and advice. General advice and regulations apply to both sites, but most of the site specific information relates only to Gordon Road. Conditions imposed by the Council on allotments (bye-laws), such as ours, which are leased to the Finchley Horticultural Society but owned by the London Borough of Barnet, have been incorporated here. The sites are run on a communal basis, so please remember to be considerate and ensure that your plot, your activity on it, and its surrounding paths do not pose a hazard or inconvenience to others.

### The Finchley Horticultural Society

Every plotholder is required to be a member of the Finchley Horticultural Society. A Newsletter, issued 4 or 5 times a year, includes information on forthcoming events and activities. At least one garden visit organised each summer. The Society is affiliated to:

The Royal Horticultural Society  
The National Vegetable Society

and is a member of

The Barnet Federation of Allotments and Horticultural Societies  
The Federation of Middlesex Horticultural and Allotment Societies  
National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardens

Information/magazines from the above are available at the Gordon Road Trading Hut, in the Green Room or on request.

### Management

The General Committee of the FHS has overall responsibility for the allotments and authorises any expenditure. An Allotments Committee deals with the detailed running of the allotments sites. Members are elected to these Committees at the FHS Annual General Meeting held in the spring. Minutes of the Allotments Committee are posted on the Gordon Road Site Notice Board.

## Allotment Events

A Plant Sale is held in mid-May to raise funds and offer a wide selection of plants to members and gardeners of Finchley. Socials (barbeque, cheese/wine party) are held during the summer and in early November a Guy Fawkes Night event is held.

The site is entered every year (July) into the Borough's Allotment Site and Plot Competition. Plotholders are asked to make a special effort to ensure that their plot and paths are tidy and in the best possible condition at this time.

### Helping

These allotment sites are managed entirely by volunteers who undertake most of the essential maintenance and communal jobs to maintain a safe and pleasant environment. They keep the basic facilities going, and also run the social and fundraising events. Compost mixing and running the shop in the trading hut is organised on a rota basis. All plotholders should be prepared to contribute to the running of the sites. Allotment Committee members currently are:

Jason Bridge  
Melanie Briffitt  
June Brookes (Chair and Allotments Secretary)  
Ann Brown  
Terry Burling  
Claudine Fear  
Tony Ingram  
Janine Limberg (representing Nethercourt Avenue)  
Mary Ntim

If you see something wrong, contact the Security Officer, Tony Ingram (see back page).

## Site Information

### Plot Measurement

All allotments are measured in poles. This relates to ancient measurement methods as below:

22 yards	=	1 chain
<b>5.5 yards</b>	=	<b>1 rod, pole or perch</b>
<b>30.25 sq yards</b>	=	<b>1 square rod, pole or perch</b>
4 poles	=	1 chain
40 poles	=	1 furlong

Medieval ploughing was done with oxen, up to 4 pairs at a time. The ploughman handled the plough. His boy controlled the oxen using a stick, which had to be long enough to reach all the oxen. This was the rod, pole or perch. It was an obvious implement to measure the fields, such as 4 poles to the chain. A BBC webpage about allotments says that "an allotment plot is 10 poles" and claims that "a pole is measured as the length from the back of the plough to the nose of the ox". If you wanted to control the front ox, you needed a pole long enough to reach!

### Plot rental

Annual allotment rents and water charges are due on 1<sup>st</sup> October. Rental is valid until 30<sup>th</sup> September in the following year. Any tenant who is 40 days in arrears with rent payment and water charges automatically forfeits the allotment tenancy on the 41<sup>st</sup> day. Plotters are required to give one month's notice to the Allotment Secretary in writing if they wish to terminate the tenancy. In default of notice to terminate expiring on 30 September, the rent due on 1<sup>st</sup> October following will be payable as normal. You may not sub-let, assign or part with possession of your allotment or any part of it, without the consent of the Society. On termination of your tenancy the key or keys of the site gate(s) must be returned immediately to the Secretary of the Allotments Committee. The Finchley Horticultural Society is empowered to terminate the tenancy of any tenant who does not adhere to the rules and bye-laws.

Please notify the Allotment Secretary if you change your address or phone number.

### Site Security

Do not keep valuable items on site. It is essential to ensure that the gates to the sites are locked on entering and leaving the site. This includes the side entrance gate off Gordon Road. If you use the mowers at Gordon Road make sure the garage door is locked when you have put the mower away. Approach strangers on the site with caution and get help if in doubt. All unauthorised persons on site should be asked to leave and if they refuse contact Golders Green Police Station: telephone 020 8733 5562 (up to 10pm). For 24hr contact telephone Colindale Police Station on 020 8200 1212.

Report all break-ins, thefts, vandalism, breaks in the boundary fence and any other incident to the Security Officer. Tools should be marked with your post code. The Society does not accept responsibility for the theft, loss or damage to tools, crops, structures, sheds, or greenhouses, which are the responsibility of the plot holder concerned.

### Ground Rules

Plot numbering stakes are the property of the Society and must not be removed from existing positions.

Only tenants, their families and friends, and members of the Finchley Horticultural Society are allowed on the site. It is the responsibility of the tenant to keep his or her children and his or her visitors under control. Visitors who are not allotment tenants are restricted to the main path, but may enter other parts, provided they are accompanied by an allotment holder. Dogs are not allowed on the site, except on a lead, and must not foul any footpath or cultivated area.

You may not take away any soil, mineral, gravel, sand, or clay from the site.

You may drive a vehicle on to the site using the main paths. When parking please make sure access is left clear to side paths. Vehicles, including trailers, must not be driven onto or within the boundaries of any plot and must not be left on the site overnight.

### Chemicals

Use chemicals sparingly to protect the environment and wildlife. Take care to confine any spraying to the intended area within the confines of your plot. Avoid spraying on a windy day.

### **Good Housekeeping**

Plotholders are personally responsible for the up-keep of their allotments. Plots leased to tenants must be cultivated (the physical working of the ground for the production of crops, defined as vegetables, flowers, fruit bushes, fruit trees and herbs).

Please note:

- No bees, chickens or other animals may be kept on the sites.
- Sheds, greenhouses and polytunnels must be within the approved sizes (see page 12).
- You may not use barbed wire on any part of the allotment site.
- Plotholders may not use carpet as a ground or path covering.
- Hedges must be regularly trimmed.
- Timber trees must not be cut or pruned without permission of the Society.
- Fruit trees must not exceed 12 feet in height and must be prevented from overhanging adjoining plots.

### **Paths**

Communal pathways around every plot should be kept tidy, and not less than 24 inches (61cms) wide. Weedkiller must not be used on communal paths, which must remain as growing grass. Share the maintenance of joint pathways with adjoining plotholders and keep joint pathways free from obstruction at all times.

Piles of ordered manure must be removed from paths and driveways within 21 days of delivery.

Don't leave tools lying around when you are not on your plot. They may cause an accident or be stolen. Keep canes and hoses tidied away when not in use.

The Allotments Committee, from time to time, carries out an inspection of plots and the site. Any adverse report will be notified to the plot holder in writing and a time given to rectify any complaint.

### **First Aid and Accidents**

First aid kits (box with a black cross) are kept in the large poly tunnel and in the Green Room. All accidents should be recorded in the Accident Book, kept with the First Aid Kit.

### **Rubbish/Green Waste disposal**

The allotments must not be used as a place to dump rubbish. Domestic waste, which may encourage rats, must not be brought on to the site. A skip is provided once a year for larger items of rubbish. Never use the skip for green waste. This should be composted. Do not place any garden refuse/plant waste anywhere other than on your own plot, with the exception of pernicious weeds/blighted vegetation which may be placed in the green wheelie bin by the garage at Gordon Road. Do not include soil, rubbish or plastic bags. This is not a bin for general garden waste – pernicious weeds include the following: dandelion, bindweed, couch grass, nettle, dock, ground elder, honey fungus and diseased material such as blighted tomato or potato plants.

### **Bonfires**

There is a communal bonfire area at the bottom of the site (see map) which is under the charge of a specified volunteer (Ann Brown, see contacts) who manages this area and is in charge of the fires lit here.

Bonfires are permitted between November and April. No bonfires are allowed in May and June; in July, August and September they are permitted on the first Wednesday in the month, and in October after 4pm (Council regulations, not ours!). Check the notice board for up to date information.

### **Wildlife**

There is a communal wildlife plot (Number 8A). This has a small pond, wildflowers, open compost heap, slow worm refuges and bird feeders. Take care not to unduly disturb the wildlife here. Do not plant or introduce anything without consulting the plotholder who manages this plot for the Society (Ann Brown, see contacts).

Slow worms are frequently found on the Gordon Road site. These snake-like reptiles (actually legless lizards) are not venomous and are totally harmless. They are beneficial to gardeners as they eat slugs. Please do not harm them. They are a protected species – it is an offence to handle them.

Wildlife is being put in danger by gardeners' continuing use of peat-based products and compost. If you have to use peat, please try to use as little as possible.

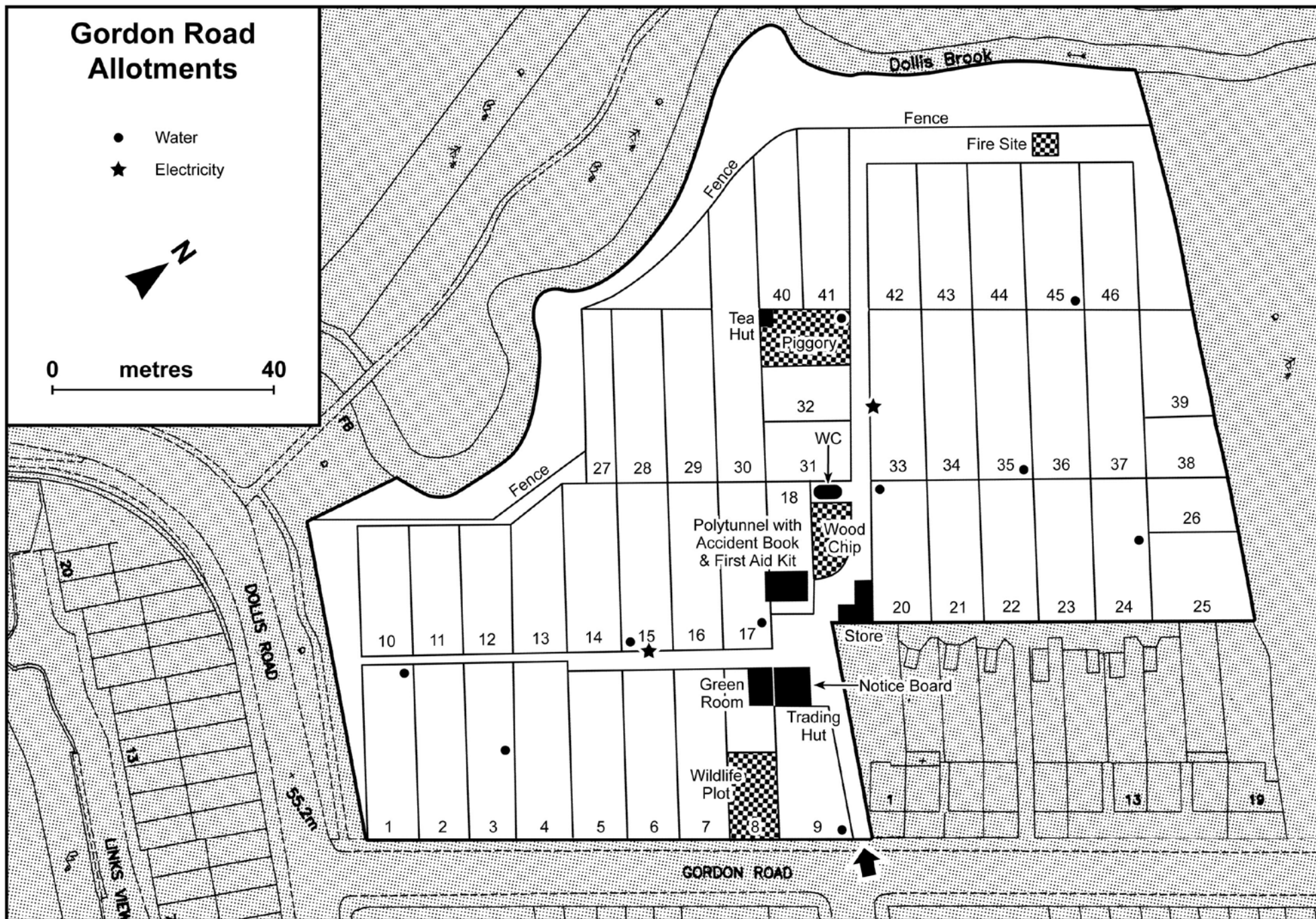


# Gordon Road Allotments

- Water
- ★ Electricity



0 metres 40



## Site Facilities

### Tools and Equipment

The following are available at the Gordon Road site for communal use:

Wheelbarrows  
Lawnmowers

### Trading Huts

The Gordon Road hut is open for sales from 10.30 am – 12.30 pm from mid March to mid October. A wide range of horticultural supplies, fertilisers, site-mixed seed and potting composts are available at competitive prices.

### Refreshments

The Piggory (the raised area with overhead awning, chairs and tables in the centre of the Gordon Road site) is a communal seating area with nearby hut containing tea-making facilities (spring/summer only). Please leave as you find it. You will need to bring your own milk. A barbeque area is also available next to the Piggory – apply to the Allotments Secretary for personal use.

A communal meeting room ‘The Green Room’ for ploholders is adjacent to the Trading Hut. This also has a water supply all year round and tea making facilities (a contribution is requested if you use the tea/coffee/biscuits). Please leave it as you find it including washing up any used crockery. Ploholders can open the Green Room by using the security access code C0587Z and turning the handle anti-clockwise

### Special Deliveries

Ploholders may not use communal areas for personal storage or for their own deliveries.

**Straw** may be purchased in bales once a year for delivery in the spring (current price per bale is approx £2). Watch out for a notice at the Trading Hut for ploholders to place their orders.

**Manure** can be purchased by the load (approx price £30 per load) or half load. This is usually delivered in November. It must be promptly moved off paths and on to plots.

**Wood chip** is provided free of charge and is available on a regular basis from heaps placed just off the main path. Take care to keep this pile from spreading on to the paths.

**Compost** is provided free of charge. It is made from municipal waste and is kindly supplied by London Waste Limited under the auspices of the North London Waste Authority. It is made at the EcoPark in Edmonton from kitchen and garden waste and contains no artificial additives.

### Toilet

At Gordon Road site there is a permanent, environmentally friendly, composting toilet just off the central pathway. Please keep this clean and tidy.

### Electricity

There are two electric supply points situated on the main paths at Gordon Road. These can be used for tools but not heaters. Seventy metres of electric cable is available for use at the Gordon Road site. You must not use electrical tools on the site without a Residual Circuit Breaker. Take care to follow safety precautions and manufacturers instructions. Be particularly careful of trailing cable.

### Water

Numerous water points are provided for ploholders use. No water sprinkling device or hose pipe may be used unless hand held. **Any leakage from pipes and taps must be reported as soon as possible.** Do not throw or allow children to throw debris into the tanks. Always check that all taps are turned off and hoses disconnected before leaving the site. Containers or watering cans used for poisons, insecticides or fertilizers must not be cleaned or dipped into the water tanks. The water supply is turned off in winter. Hosepipe bans and other water use restrictions will be posted on the Notice Board from time to time.

## **Buildings and Structures**

### **Erection of Structures**

Written permission must be obtained from the Society in order to erect a structure on your plot. Once permission is granted, it is the plot holder's responsibility to keep structures in good repair and condition. Broken glass in greenhouses should be replaced as soon as possible. Broken glass should be placed in the wheelie bin labelled and provided for this purpose.

### **Temporary Growing Structures**

These are defined as structures erected at the beginning of the growing season and dismantled at the end – eg supports for climbing crops. Structures for the protection of plants (eg chrysanthemums, dahlias etc) must not exceed 8 feet (244cms) in height. Screens (overhead and sides) must be removed at the end of the growing season and stored neatly.

### **Permanent Structures**

These remain in place from one year to the next – such as blackberry supports, compost bin, fruit cage, crop cage. Permanent structures are not allowed to cover more than half of an individual plot.

### **Sheds, Greenhouses and Polytunnels**

Only one shed and one greenhouse per plot will be allowed.

The maximum size for any one shed, greenhouse or polytunnel is 7.43 sq metres (80 sq feet) per 25.08 sq metres (10 pole plot).

Any shed, greenhouse or polytunnel should not exceed 2 metres (6 feet 6 inches) in height to the eaves and a maximum of 2.4 metres (8 feet) to the ridge. In the case of a flat roof, the maximum height is not to exceed 2 metres (6 feet 6 inches).

The location of the shed, greenhouse or polytunnel has to be agreed with the Allotments Committee. The permission granted is not intended to imply any form of planning permission and it is the responsibility of the plot holder to check and comply with any planning/building regulations.

The Allotments Committee encourages plot holders to purchase a prefabricated shed, greenhouse or polytunnel. However, if the plot holder wishes to build their own from suitable material it must comply with the above measurements and be safe and sound. The finish must be in keeping with the surroundings, treated with a suitable preservative or painted dark green or brown.

The plot holder may be required to remove any structure on termination of their tenancy. The Society cannot arrange or be responsible for the sale or otherwise of any structures.

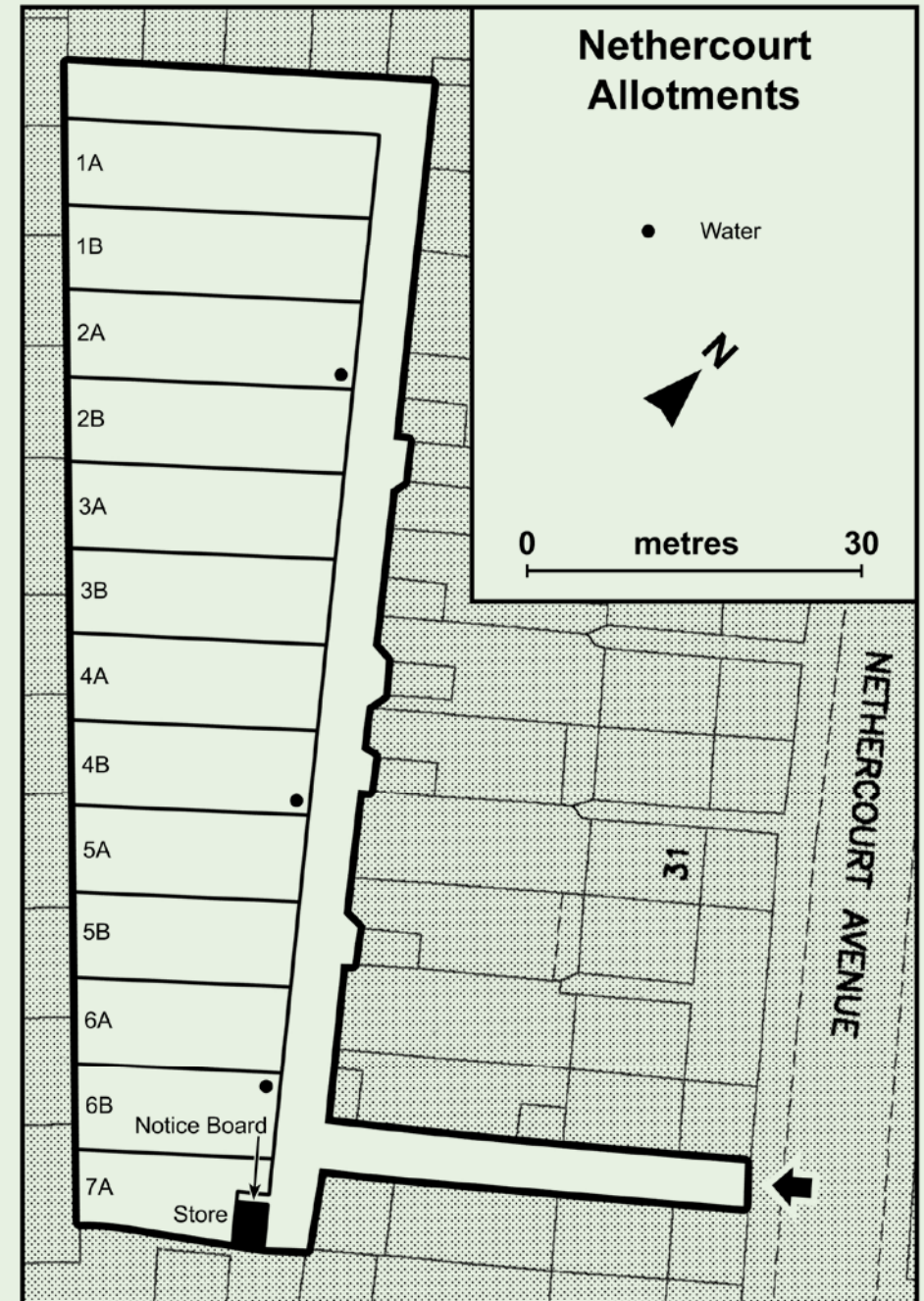


## Complaints Procedure

Complaints must be submitted in writing to the Allotments Secretary. Verbal complaints will not be acted upon. Complaints will be referred to the next Allotments Committee meeting. Further details may be requested. Minor issues may be sorted out verbally. The Allotments Committee can:

- a) Give a written reply of their decision to the plotholder;
- b) Consider the matter to be outside the scope of the Committee and refer the complaint to the Society's General Committee, whose decision will be final;
- c) In the event of a serious complaint being upheld, the Society, at its discretion, may terminate the plotholder's agreement.

Note that complaints sent directly to the Barnet Federation of Allotments or London Borough of Barnet will be referred back to the Society.





# Contacts

## FINCHLEY HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

**Chairman:** Catherine Schmitt

Tel: 0208 346 4359

Email: Catherine@schmitt1.demon.co.uk

4, Falkland Avenue, Finchley, London N3 1QR.

**Newsletter:** Helen Green

Tel: 0208 346 4845

Email: helenjuni@ntlworld.com

## GORDON ROAD

**Allotments Secretary and Plant Sale:** June Brookes

Tel: 0208 349 2253

Email: jayemjaybee@btinternet.com

395 Nether Street, Finchley, London N3 1QQ

**Security Officer:** Tony Ingram

Tel: 0208 349 1265

Email: tonyingram@aqp.co.uk

9 Gordon Road, Finchley, London N3 1EL.

**Wildlife Plot and Fire Site:** Ann Brown \*

Tel: 0208 346 5011

Email: ann@falklands-nature.demon.co.uk

1 Princes Avenue, Finchley, London N3 2DA.

**Plant Sale:** June Brookes (see above)

**Machinery:** Terry Burling

Tel: 07815 022137

**Compost/Wood Chip Delivery:** Melanie Briffitt

Tel: 0208 922 1573

Mob: 0788 9994348

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**Manure/Straw Delivery:** Chris Ouseley

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## NETHERCOURT AVENUE

Janine Limberg

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## FEDERATION OF BARNET ALLOTMENTS

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\* Contact by e-mail if you would like an electronic copy of this Handbook