**Chinnor Allotments Environmental Policy**

This policy should be seen as an addendum to the overall Chinnor Parish Council Environmental Policy (2020), given that the CPC accept they have management involvement for Chinnor Allotments.

See CPC website:

<https://www.chinnorparishcouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/120/2022/06/Environmental-Policy-Nov-2020.pdf>

**Aims of the Chinnor Allotments Policy**

* To promote the careful management of the allotments so as to make the site more sustainable and help improve the environment
* Avoid specific damage and degradation for the benefit of future plot holders
* Provide support for the green infrastructure of Chinnor as well as provide health and wellbeing for its members

To help achieve these aims we have developed a set of guidelines we believe will improve the outcomes, but these are voluntary and rest with each member and plot holder’s choice and circumstances.

**Waste Management & Bonfires**

* Best Practice, is to compost as much green organic material as possible and to use it to re-enrich the soil once it has bio-degraded fully.
	+ Compost bins should be used wherever possible
	+ Pernicious weeds and brassica material can be shredded, bagged up and left to rot for two or three years before re-using.
	+ We have applied for support to purchase a shredder which can be used for this purpose. The result of the application should be known in January 2024
* Bonfires, are a last resort way of getting rid of waste material.

However, they are polluting, can be antisocial for neighbours as well as dangerous to health and safety.

We have developed a communal “bonfire site” to facilitate the disposal of non-organic material, such as wood/pallets etc.

Plot holders are encouraged to avail themselves of this facility rather than allow junk to pile up on their allotments – this is both a social eyesore as well as a burden on other members who will eventually have to clear the site.

* We will organise to burn fit material under controlled conditions when it is dry and the wind will least effect neighbours and traffic
* We will not burn plastic material, household or industrial waste and plot holders should endeavour to bag it up and removed it from the site.
* Chemical Use.

Products such as fertilizers, herbicides & weed killers, wood preservatives and pesticides are toxic substances:

* Non organic fertilizers, pesticides and herbicide weed killers are toxic materials and care should be taken in their use and disposal. Together with wood preservative they should be used with care and in keeping with the manufacturer’s usage instructions.
* Avoid contact by children and pets.
* Use only as instructed on the packaging
* Check before use that it will do the job required by controlling the problem

Best Practice

* Reduce the use of inorganic fertilisers and chemicals by using organic substitutes wherever possible.
	+ Store chemicals in a cool, dry place out of direct sunlight.
	+ Never dispose of surplus pesticide or weed killer down drains or in watercourses.
	+ Avoid over buying and keep in original containers
		- Avoid buying more than you use in a year
		- Always keep chemicals in the original containers: where this is not practical, we will endeavour to retain usage and quantity information at the point of sale. Please ask for this information when purchasing.

**Ground cover /mulch for weed clearance and control**

Best practice – use recycled plant material from allotment, cardboard, newspaper, commercially produced loose mulches, wood chips. This also contributes to reducing landfill.

* Acceptable – use biodegradable mulch fabric, inert material such as gravel, permeable and non-permeable synthetic material such as polythene sheet.
* Practice disallowed on allotment site – using carpet as a mulch.

This is because:

* + Harmful chemicals, such as organotins, permethrin and brominated flame retardant, will leach into soil;
	+ Weeds will grow through the carpet as it weathers and rots and it will fall apart as soon as you try to pull it up, leaving fibres and stringy nylon in the soil, which causes problems to gardeners and wildlife alike.

**Microplastics in soil**

Avoid using plastics that break down into small fragments.

Although plastics do not rot away like organic materials, they do physically break into smaller pieces with exposure to light and weathering. These secondary microplastics – fragments that have broken down from larger objects – can be harmful in soil.

Research has already shown that microplastics are ingested by earthworms causing them to lose weight, and reducing their biological fitness and lifespan.

**Water use**

Water is a precious resource and excessive use should be avoided.

* Collect rainwater from building roofs and in water butts where possible.
* Maximise water holding capacity of soils by incorporating organic matter and mulching.
* Water plants in the early morning and late evening.
* Water butts should be used wherever possible

**Biodiversity**

Many varieties of plants thrive on allotments, which contribute to the bio-diversity of the area and also provide vital habitats for many species. Many good allotment sites have special areas which are left virtually untouched allowing wildlife to thrive.

It is good practice to increase biodiversity on the allotment and to avoid practices that which reduce it.

To increase biodiversity:

* Classic crop rotation principles should be incorporated to prevent soil erosion and increase soil fertility
* Use bird and bat boxes, bug hotels where facilities allow.
* Where appropriate, grow pollen rich and indigenous wild flowers, shrubs and trees to support pollinators and insect diversity.
* Create a small “pond” to encourage greater diversity

Practices to avoid:

* Avoid the use of pesticides which do not discriminate between beneficial creatures and damaging pests.
* Where possible, avoid the use of peat in growing media.
* While it is remains legally and commercially approved for sale, both peat and peat-free composts will continue to be made available to allow choice and plot-holder preference.

**Chinnor Allotment Facilities & Equipment**

Chinnor Allotments benefit from a Distribution Centre with toilet and kitchen facilities for the benefit of plot holders.

In addition, plot holders can avail themselves of seeds, compost and general materials used for their plots. Associated members in the wider Chinnor, (though not restricted) community have access to the “shop” facility by becoming Associated members for an annual fee.

Chinnor Allotments will endeavour to pursue an environmental policy in the general upkeep and maintenance of the Distribution Centre.

Best Practice will be pursued for:

* Lower energy consumption, using renewables wherever possible and incorporating measures to reduce carbon footprint
* Efficient use of water resources – water butts and recycling
* Stock organic fertilisers for sale and monitor chemical usage
* Lower consumption and usage, packaging and increase recycling of paper and cardboard products
* Cleaning materials and products

Chinnor Allotments Environmental policy will be reviewed and updated as required on an annual basis and included as part of the AGM agenda.