

approved by STAA Cttee on 15th Jan with minor amendments May 2022 & 20th February 2024

St Thomas Allotment Holders' Association, Exeter

EXPLAINER & CODE OF PRACTICE

For registered users of the Community Growing Gardens at The Poly-tunnel, Guys & Hylton, Exeter

YOUR POLY-PLOT

The Poly-tunnel Project aims to provide a shared facility for up to 22 registered gardeners, each with a designated raised bed of between 30 sq. ft. and 40 sq. ft. (according to type) for their own use. With judicious use of string (and imagination) it is possible to exploit the space above the raised beds using the crop-bars provided to support tall plants, for 'hanging shelves' to take potted plants, or for hanging baskets.

SHARED AREAS

Gardeners in this small 'community' also have exclusive use of a shared amenity area at the back of the poly-tunnel for storage, preparation, relaxation and apple harvesting.

In addition to good maintenance and good hygiene on individual plots, gardeners' tenants are expected to help maintain and care for the common parts e.g. paths, entrance, external boundaries and the amenity area keeping them weed-free and pest-free.

SHARED VENTILATION MANAGEMENT

Gardeners will be aware of the needs of the 'community' and take responsibility for the simple ventilation programme on behalf of everyone.

Except in freezing weather: the first person in the day to visit the tunnel will open at least one end of the tunnel as soon as possible after dawn. The last person to leave in the evening will close both sets of doors. The reason for this programme, is to help avoid steep fluctuations in temperature.

- By closing-up at night, heat loss from the tunnel is slowed down; which is better for the plants.
- Opening up early prevents a rapid increase in temperature early in the day (incidentally, having watering cans full of water inside during a warm day will retain and release the heat more slowly, contributing to temperature management). It also ensures a good airflow which is important in reducing the risk of attack from moulds and other fungi.

The green ventilation panel down the long side will remain up throughout Spring/Summer/Early Autumn and fully closed during Winter. *Management of the Ventilation Panel* will be by the Approved Volunteers only. Please do not obstruct the long roller for the ventilation system.

DOORS

The rear doors are hinged and open outward; the front doors are sliding for easy access for wheelchair users.

CARE OF THE STRUCTURE

The 'skin' is the most sensitive and important part of the poly-tunnel. The best quality polythene has been provided to give the structure a long life. It is hoped the polythene, treated with care,

will not need replacing for between 5 and 8 years. To help ensure it is not damaged or punctured, there are 7 simple rules:

- No bamboo poles, metal poles or other poles more than 5ft in length to be taken into the tunnel
- No naked flames and no smoking in the tunnel
- No fixings to be made which are in contact with the 'skin'
- No pest control/weed control sprays or cleaning substances to touch the skin
- No mechanical garden tools to be used inside the tunnel; no petrol etc.
- No dogs, cats, rabbits, pets or livestock
- No children unless closely supervised by a parent/tenant
- No picnicking - except outside at the rear of the tunnel where seating is provided

Care is needed when using garden tools (forks!) or anything sharp.

In the event of an accident to the polythene, let the **STAA poly-tunnel manager** know; there is a special repair kit in hand which will cope with relatively minor tears and punctures.

Tenants may be asked to contribute towards the purchase of the next repair kit (suggested contribution of £10 depending on how much of the kit has been used).

SNOW COVER

If there is a heavy fall of snow which will put a strain on the polythene, there is a relatively simple group activity for removing it, involving a 35-foot rope thrown over the top and moved along the length of the tunnel, taking the snow off as it goes. Again, this should be a shared task.

WATER

There are rainwater harvesting systems on the poly-tunnel that tenants have access to. There is also a mains water supply is located opposite the main entrance to the tunnel.

WASTE

Each plot gardener is wholly responsible for his/her own garden and any other waste they generate from the poly-tunnel. There is a compost bin provided for use ONLY by those without an outside plot (there just isn't the capacity for everyone to use the poly-compost bin). Please take your waste to your outdoor plot (if you have one) and your outdoor compost bin.

VISITORS & INSPECTIONS

From time to time, there may be events during which we would like to show visitors the community poly-tunnel (similarly, Officers of the Association or our contractors will need access from time to time).

When gardeners are working there, we will endeavour to give reasonable notice of admission and try to avoid any disturbance.

CANCELLATION OF REGISTRATION TO USE A PLOT/GARDEN

The Association reserves the right to terminate any registration by giving 28 days notice to anyone registered with us to use a plot/garden who, in the opinion of the Association: **fails to pay the fee within the designated time of 4 weeks from registration**; or causes damage to the poly-tunnel; or who appears to have transferred regular use of the plot to someone else; or who is noisy and disruptive; or who does not observe the fundamental principles of good garden hygiene and

therefore might put the crops of other gardeners tenants at risk. You will be notified through the STAA poly-tunnel manager or a committee member.

Offers of places, and termination of them, are by decision of by the Association, and shall be final.

ANNUAL REGISTRATION PAYMENTS/FEES

To register for a plot in the STAA Guys & Hylton poly-tunnel, please complete the Agreement Form below and give it to the poly-tunnel manager or STAA Committee member, and if there is no plot vacant we will add you to the waiting list.

The Association, through the STAA poly-tunnel manager or a committee member, will advise you from time to time about the process for registration and the level of fees that will be charged for gardening as part of the poly-tunnel community.

For the year 2024 the fees remain, as before, at £30 per calendar year (or any part thereof) per plot.

This is payable on 1st January or within 4 weeks of the date of registration – by bank transfer please if you can do so.

Bank details are as follows:

ST THOMAS ALLOTMENT HOLDERS

sort code: 30-90-91

account no: 67383268

If any gardener finds payment by bank-transfer problematic, please speak to the Project Co-ordinator, or to a committee member, who will be able to accept cash or a cheque as an alternative.

The Association will endeavour to give refunds for any whole months when gardening is not possible (*e.g. in the event of closure for safety or repair*). We also have discretion to do so on a case-by-case basis, upon application (*e.g. when a gardener leaves/gives-up gardening in the poly-tunnel part-way through a calendar year*). This will only be possible if the gardener leaves the plot in a satisfactory condition.

FINALLY... we hope you enjoy poly-tunnel gardening and the company of your poly-plot colleagues. For information or queries contact an approved volunteer (*or leave a note in the Trading Shed or the Veg Box or e-mail the Association*)

Poly-Plot Garden Agreement
(allotment no: 39A Guys&Hylton)
*for the calendar year **2024** or any part thereof*

Name.....

Poly-plot no.

Address

.....

.....

Tel

E-mail

.... I opt-in to emails from the Association

.... I do not wish the Association to use my contact details except in an emergency or special circumstances, or for matters directly related to this agreement.

I/we have received a copy of the Explainer & Code of Practice and agree to comply with and carry out the principles and practice set out.

signed

dated

Please complete and return.

for office use only:

countersigned by **Poly-tunnel Manager or STAA Committee member:**

.....

name:

date:

ST THOMAS ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION, EXETER

Further Information & Contacts:

website: <https://www.stthomasallotmentsassn.org.uk/>

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/Stthomasallotmentsassn/>

e-mails:

stthomasallotmentsassociation@gmail.com & staacommittee@yahoo.com