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## Covid 19 Emergency Measures

March 31st, 2020

**UPDATED 31/03/20** - bonfires

The government is presently advising the population to stay at home and practice social distancing, whilst being allowed to take one form of exercise a day. If working your allotment is to carry on being seen as legitimate exercise then it is imperative that plot-holders follow all the guidelines, allotment sites are as risky as anywhere else.

**We think that now is the time to consider working your plot in isolation i.e. not with household members and if you can stay away for a few weeks to do so.**

**It is vitally important that you follow all the advice about social distancing and hygiene in the points below and not gather together on site.**

Any plot-holder who is **self isolating** because a household member is ill with corona-virus should not be visiting the site.

Associations should display an advice notice on their boards. It is important that anyone attending the allotment takes care to stay the appropriate distance from others, avoid body contact and wash hands at taps, do not wash hands or use detergents in the water tanks and please pay attention to notice boards.

It is essential that no un-authorized people are allowed onto the plots for the duration of this emergency, if you do wish to bring someone to assist with work on the plot, please ensure that that this is notified either to Secretary or Site Manager. Careful consideration

should be given to introducing anyone over 70, those with underlying illness or pregnant women.

**We are aware that at the moment some police forces are advising that driving to the plot will not be viewed as essential travel if you are stopped at a check point. The Society is endeavouring to get central advice on this issue and we will post as soon as it arrives.**

Members should take the following precautionary measures :

- Keep hand sanitiser in your shed and wash your hands regularly
- Use hand sanitiser before opening and after closing any gate locks
- Wash hands when you get home
- DO NOT gather together for a chat even if you are 2 metres apart **CLICK HERE** for guidance
- Observe “Social Distancing” with each other 2-3 metres
- If you take your children to the plot, ensure that they stay within its confines and do not run around on communal paths and spaces.
- Do not share tools
- Minimise the contact with each other for example no handshakes
- Do not wash your hands in water troughs
- We recommend that all communal facilities are closed
- **Click here** for guidance if you do need to clean an area that has been visited by an infected person.

**Shops** - those Associations who operate shops should close or put an on-line scheme in place. Where goods are ordered by email, payment is electronic and goods are placed out for collection. **CLICK HERE** for an example

**Bonfires** - Could those Associations who allow bonfires all year round ask people to consider their neighbours and not burn anything during this covid19 emergency. Many sites are surrounded by houses where vulnerable people may be getting their only bit of fresh air through an open window.

- If you have livestock on the site and must visit twice a day, take a photograph on your phone of your livestock, based on what is happening in other countries you may eventually have to print off a government form to leave the house but if challenged it would be good to be able to show a photograph of where you are going.
- Plan ahead to ensure that you have food and medication delivered to you during this time

- Stay away from vulnerable individuals such as the elderly and those with underlying health conditions as much as possible
- If you display any symptoms of coronavirus stay at home and self-isolate for at least 14 days or until symptoms have passed.

I know many Associations have taken decisions to cancel plot inspections, seed swaps, association trips and annual judging; scheduled Committee meetings and AGM's should also be postponed. It is important that any plot-holders over 70 years and those with underlying health issues follow the **guidance and information** issued by the government. It would be a good idea for Associations to give out a telephone or email address for anyone with problems to allow contact. Perhaps a **Buddy System** that provided weeding and watering assistance on the plots of gardeners who cannot get to the plot due to long term self isolation could be set up.

All group NAS meetings were cancelled following the Government update on 16 March 2020 and will be reviewed on the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020. This is a worldwide unprecedented and challenging time for so many people and of course the health and safety of our members, volunteers, and staff remains our number one priority.

We are living through a crisis, the likes of which none of us has experienced before, not since war time has the community spirit that exists on allotment sites been more important. We must all consider vulnerable families, friends and fellow plot-holders and give assistance where needed. Please remember to look out for one another during these very difficult times.

Government advice about the Coronavirus is updated on a regular basis at this link.

**<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public>**

For NHS information and advice **[CLICK HERE](#)**

If you are making a poster for the allotment gate, here is a QR code that will link direct to



our latest advice.

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