

## Interested in an Allotment at Sunningdale?

### Background

Sunningdale Allotments (off Church Road) are owned and run by [Sunningdale Parish Council](#). They have been in existence since the late 1870s. There are currently 55 plots of varying sizes on the site: the smallest is 2 poles and the largest 10 poles; while the average is just under 5 poles (one pole is roughly equivalent to 25 square metres). The site has a locked gate, partial fencing, reasonable car parking facilities and 7 water outlets. There is a site map at the end of this document for your information.

[The allotment page of the Parish Council website](#) contains site news, information on Sunningdale conditions plus links to various articles on cultivation for novices and on the historical aspects of allotments and growing.

### What Effort Does it Take to Look After an Allotment?

Allotmenting is both very enjoyable and rewarding. However, if you are a novice – newbie seems to be the “in term” these days – it is important not to underestimate the effort that is required to look after a plot. Do not be seduced by today’s TV gardening programmes which tend to make it look easier and quicker than it is in practice. While such programmes may contain useful nuggets of information, and indeed be very entertaining, in terms of assessing the effort required it is prudent to take them with the proverbial “pinch of salt”.

The first point of note is that when you are offered a plot there is no guarantee that it will be in pristine condition. Approximately 75-80% of plots are overgrown to some degree when they are given up by the previous allotment holder; the extent naturally varies from plot to plot. If you do not fancy the effort involved in clearing the plot that is on offer you face the danger of going back down to the bottom of the waiting list. However, if you are not afraid of hard work and can demonstrate that you are making steady progress you will be given the necessary time to transform the plot. For example, an extremely overgrown plot may take a couple of years to completely clear and get under cultivation. So in the first year you may simply concentrate on clearing and cultivating a portion of it. If the plot is only moderately overgrown perhaps you will manage to do it all in the first year, depending on the time that you can dedicate to the task – many people have other pressures on their time, e.g. work and family. And if it is not overgrown at all ... then you are one of the lucky ones!!

How much effort is required to prepare, sow, plant, weed and harvest once you have the plot in some sort of shape? The answer is that it varies throughout the year and it depends on the size of your plot. Let us assume for argument’s sake that you have a 4 pole plot (approx. 100 sq metres). The following are very rough rules of thumb:

- May – September (the main growing season). Allow a **minimum** of 45 minutes per week per pole. This equates to 3 hours per week for our 4 pole plot
- October - April. You will tend to work in stretches of several hours at a time while clearing in the autumn, digging in the winter or early spring, or preparing the beds for the coming season in spring and sowing. So here the concept of a weekly allowance is not really relevant. Assume a total of 8 hours per pole to complete these tasks. This adds up to 32 hours for our example 4 pole plot. If you really want to compare this with the figures for the main growing season then it works out at roughly 15 minutes per week per pole, or one third of what it takes during the summer.

If there is one big, single piece of advice that we can offer you ... it is that **some help is a must** unless you have lots of time on your hands, be it your partner, a friend or a family member.

### Who Should Not Apply?

If any of the following amusing anecdotes which appeared in [Allotments4All](#), arguably the most popular UK allotments forum on the web, could apply to you then perhaps you should think twice before applying for an allotment ...

“We did have somebody who after coming to the top of the list about this time of year (autumn) said that they only wanted a summer allotment ... another said they don’t remember putting their name down”.

“We've also had someone who took on a plot but didn't do anything although they appeared several times to look at it - eventually they asked 'when will my plot be dug and ready for me to plant' - and when it was explained they had to dig it, we got a reply along the lines of 'well I'm renting this off the Council, surely they will dig it for me to start with, they can't expect me to dig all that”

“There was the tenant who replied to my request that she tidy up her overgrown plot by saying: ‘don't be ridiculous! We're surrounded by nature and what you call weeds are just wild flowers!!’ She had nettles, thistles, dock, brambles, cow parsley .... etc etc”.

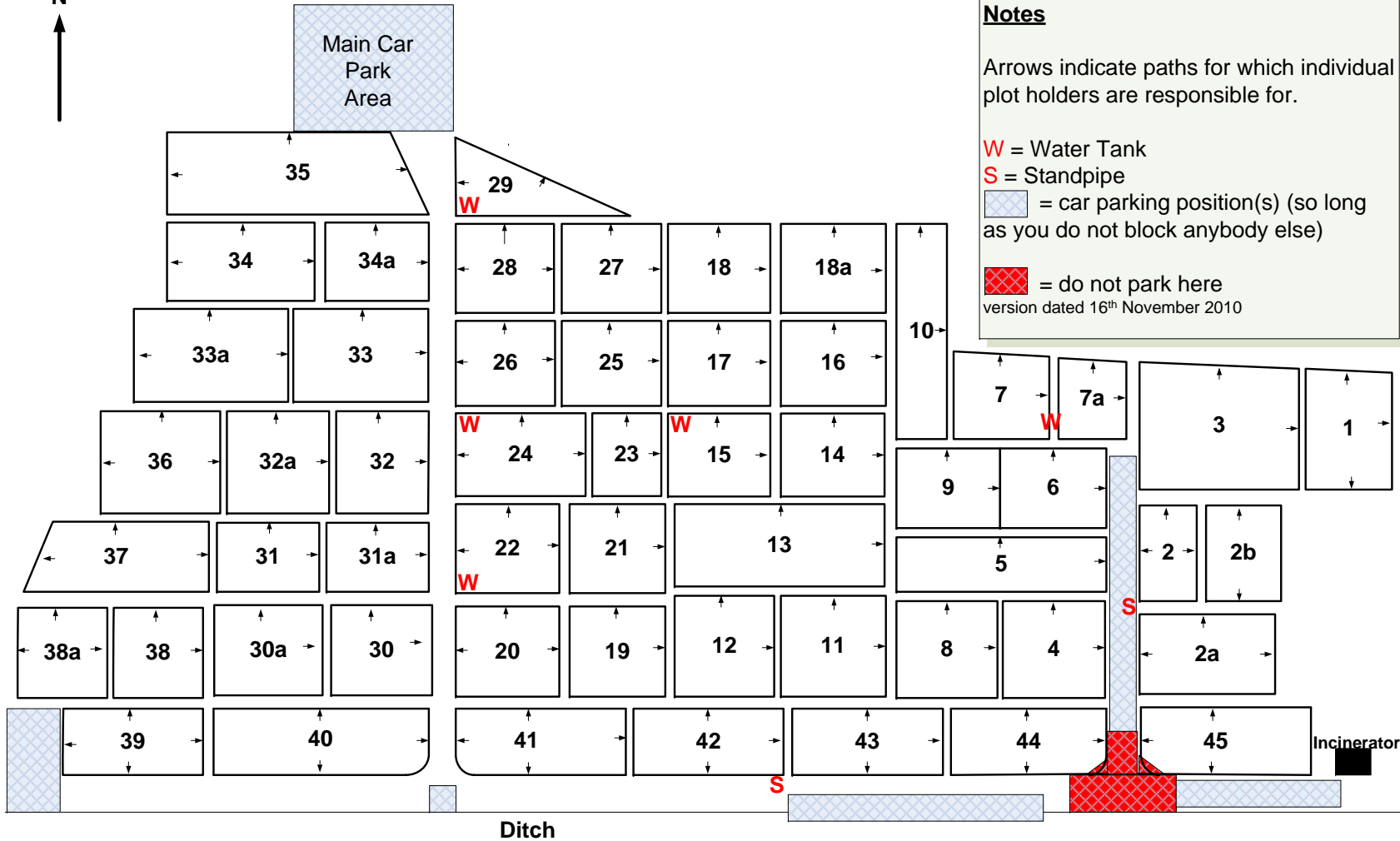
“A woman took on half a plot in October one year and visited it a few times to begin with but did very little to it. The following spring I asked her when she intended to start digging and planting and she said that she had a week's holiday coming up in August and would start then.”

“One new plot-holder had a couple of men build some sturdy raised beds. She did a bit of work and then disappeared on us. By chance I met her next-door neighbour while we were dog-walking, so I asked if she was OK. The reply was that she was fine, and was loving the allotment: she'd got it all planted and at the end of the summer was going back to harvest it all!”

### **What Next?**

If we have not managed to dampen your enthusiasm contact Anne Martin, the clerk to the [Parish Council](#), and get yourself on the waiting list ASAP. We look forward to meeting you on your plot in due course.

# Sunningdale Parish Council Allotment Site Map





## Notes

Arrows indicate paths for which individual plot holders are responsible for.

W = Water Tank

S = Standpipe

 = car parking position(s) (so long as you do not block anybody else)

 = do not park here

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