

Autumn Plot Survey

15 September 2024 to 30 October 2024

The Autumn plot survey will last for six weeks. **This means your plot can be surveyed at any time during this period.**

The majority of accidents and injuries on our site are due to paths that are overgrown or not properly maintained. Although major path problems are being addressed by the Paths project, plotholders are still responsible for making sure their paths are properly maintained by

- Regularly cutting grass
- removing overhanging vegetation
- keeping the paths level and
- not extending your plot into the path.

This includes not building any structures or planting trees within 50cm of the plot boundary, so that even on the smallest paths plotholders can push a wheelbarrow with elbows extended.

Our byelaws include the following instructions:

'Paths and roads must be kept clear from obstruction. The main paths should be a minimum of 1.2 meters (4 feet) wide and the smaller paths must be a minimum of 60cm(2 feet) wide. The grass on interplot paths should be regularly trimmed and the edges kept near. No weed killer is permitted on these paths and nor should the top growth be removed down to the roots with sharp tools leaving the path bare. The pathways must not be used for burning rubbish'

The Survey Team are considering making a proposal at the next AGM to bring in penalties for plotholders where path issues raised through the survey process are being repeatedly ignored.

The period between the Autumn Survey and the Spring Survey is the ideal time to fix any problems you may have with your paths while the ground is soft and pliable from the wetter weather.

If you receive an email from us asking you to fix your path, please do so. We will be following this up with two-monthly checks before the Spring Survey to make sure that your paths are as safe as they can be. Where paths have over time become less than the required width, the Paths project team will be in touch when appropriate to help widen paths where necessary.

Please read the guidelines below which explain what the plot surveyor is checking when they come to look at your plot.

1. 75% Cultivation

The following counts as cultivation for Autumn

- Overall 75% of the plot should still be maintained and not overgrown with perennial weeds although it is acceptable that the plot will look more messy with crops coming to an end of their growing and more dying vegetation left on the ground.
- Areas of your ground that are grown with green manure are acceptable as cultivation.
- Bare ground (covered and uncovered) that has been dug over and prepared is counted as part of cultivation.
- Ground and beds that are empty because crops have been recently harvested are counted as part of the 75%

The following WILL NOT be considered as cultivation.

- Ground that has been left to become overgrown with perennial weeds since Spring and Summer will not be accepted as part of the 75% cultivation
- Ground that has been left covered and unworked throughout the year will not count towards cultivation.

If you did not pass the required 75% cultivation from the Summer Survey it is important that you pass this 75% cultivation for the Autumn Survey. A second cultivation failure will result in an Eviction Notice.

2. Paths

- Grass on all 4 paths around the plot should be cut and edges are neat. Main paths are either 122 cm (4ft) or 183 cm (6ft) wide. All other paths should be at least 60 cm (2ft) wide.
- There are no bushes, shrubs, large plants or tree branches sticking out into the path and getting in the way.
- The plot borders are free of sharp objects such as metal pipes or supports, sharp edged plastic, slate, anything that could cause injuries.

3. Plot Number

- Your plot number must be displayed in the corner of the plot that is nearest to the community building.
- Your sign must be large enough and clear enough to be easily visible from the adjoining path (i.e. numbers at least 6cm in height)

4. Hedges, fences, windbreaks no taller than 1 metre high

- As required by our lease with Dulwich Estate all plots should look open and not fenced in.
- Fruit bushes and brambles on the edges of plots are pruned and trained so that they are not growing onto the path.

5. Trees are maintained and are not overgrown or shading neighbours

- Only crop bearing trees are allowed to be planted.

- Fruit/nut trees must be on dwarf rootstock, and planted and kept pruned or trained so are no higher than approximately 3m (10ft) and do not encroach any paths.
- Trees should be at least 50cm in from the plot edge. Mature trees are being kept under control and in shape by regular pruning and are not causing excessive shading to other plots.
- Saplings & suckers from trees should be cut and removed.
- Branches under 2.5m in height should not overhang other plots, paths or boundary fences

6. Shed or greenhouse

- There can be one greenhouse or one shed (but not both).
- Greenhouses and sheds must not be bigger than 6ft by 8ft and not higher than 7ft.
- Water butt or equivalent must be attached to collect rain water.
- Greenhouses and polytunnels used solely for the purpose of storing things will not be considered as part of the 75% cultivation.

7. Ponds

- All ponds should be at least 50cm from the edge of the plot with a low fence like structure on the path edge such as a small dead hedge to avoid people or small children falling in.
- Ponds should not be larger than 1m x 1m and 60 cm in depth.
- They should have a sloping beach like edge created with rocks or stones to allow small animals or bathing birds to make an easy exit and avoid being easily drowned.