



ALLOTMENT TENANTS' HANDBOOK

A handbook of useful information and advice relating to the Twyford Allotments situated in London Road and Hurst Road, owned and operated by Twyford Parish Council. It is written to ensure the application of best-practice by allotment holders not just for their own plot but the wider allotment community. The Handbook is produced by Twyford Parish Council and the Twyford Allotment Tenants' Association (TATA).



THANKS

This handbook is a development of the Wargrave Parish Council's document *Allotments: 21st Century Strategy* to whom we are grateful for the opportunity to capitalise on their good work.

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Foreword

Twyford Parish Council and TATA seek to recognise and build on a co-operative and participative approach to overseeing allotment action plans and assisting in the management of them to the wider benefit.

It is the intention that this handbook will evolve over the years allowing for changes to be made as required whilst maintaining a general direction. A process of review will endeavour to keep the aims and aspirations of this document current and relevant. The handbook collects ideas for governance and communications. It recognises that whilst the historic legislation regarding allotments has not radically changed during the past century; but expectations, usage and requirements have. The handbook will address those issues that are relevant in the present day.



1 Aims/Objectives of the Handbook

1.1 Promote the allotments facility to the wider community and especially those who wish to engage in it.

1.2 Demonstrate how allotments can contribute to the needs of the community.

1.3 Implement robust management procedures

1.4 Increase the uptake of allotments

1.5 Improve the service provision

1.6 Set the standards for the allotment provision

1.7 Fair open, equitable treatment and safe tenure.



2 Benefits/Value/Role of Allotments demand should increase and participation will widen.

Allotments offer huge potential to help create a sustainable community:

2.1 ... as a sustainable source of food

Increasing people's awareness about food and how it is made and grown can encourage people to eat more fresh vegetables and fruit. Different varieties of fruit and vegetables that are not readily available in supermarkets can be grown. There are benefits to the environment by providing a local source of food that does not have to be transported over great distances. With good gardening skills it can be free from chemicals and encourages the composting of green waste. It also provides dietary benefits at low cost to people with low incomes.

2.2 ... as a resource for health

Working an allotment offers healthy physical recreation for all people. It is increasingly being recognised for its therapeutic value. Its benefits to mental as well as physical health are being recognised to the extent that it is now being prescribed as a treatment by GPs in some areas.

2.3 ... as a community resource

Allotment gardening is a great leveller. It can bring together people from all age groups and backgrounds around a common interest. It can help foster a mentoring relationship where experienced gardeners can pass on their knowledge to younger or less experienced ones. If allotments become more important to local communities, then problems with security and vandalism should decrease,

2.4 ... as an educational tool.

Increasingly there is a need for children to be taught about where food comes from and the value of fruit and vegetables in a healthy lifestyle. Family allotment plots demonstrate this.

2.5 ... as a resource for bio-diversity.

The range of plants on allotment sites offers a varied and valued habitat for flora and fauna, as do compost and wood piles all of which create wildlife corridors.

2.6 ... as an open space.

Open space is becoming increasingly more important within our communities as the intensity of development increases in response to growing population and the demand for more households. A larger proportion of modern dwellings are less likely to have access to a garden large enough to grow produce.



3 Background

3.1 History

Allotment provision arose initially following the enclosure movements in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and their origins were almost totally rural. It was only in the nineteenth century that the idea of urban allotments took hold.

Church records show that the land we now know as the Hurst Road allotments was first rented for allotment use in 1887 by the first Vicar of Twyford - the Rev. E G Wilkinson. The land was part of the 'Hurst Estate' owned by the Palmers of Sonning, tucked in a corner between the train station, Twyford Brook and Hurst Road.

In 1913, after one particular Wade-Palmer escalated the rents, Twyford Parish Council stepped in to purchase the land and keep it as allotments for the good of the community.

The Hurst Road allotments covered 7 acres when bought by Twyford Parish Council in June 1913 and is described in the conveyance as:

'6 acres and 2 poles, now let out in allotments and known as the Twyford Allotments, and the rodded adjoining the allotments on the south west side and containing 3 rods and 38 poles, which pieces of land are bounded on the north west by a roadway leading from Twyford Station to property belonging to the G W R and to Robert Reginald Fairfax Wade-Palmer; on the south side by a certain ditch or stream being a tributary of the river Loddon; on the south-east by hereditaments belonging to Thomas Colleton Garth; and on the north east by a public road leading from Twyford to Hurst'.

Hurst Road was built by T C Garth in 1878.

It's interesting to note the changes in rent. The Church Year Book for 1912 records that for many years the annual rent was £7-10s and that it had been possible to give prizes, out of the income from the allotment rents, at the Twyford and Ruscombe Horticultural Flower Shows. In 1906 the rent was raised to £12 and in 1908 to £16. In September 1911 notice to quit was given to tenants and the rent raised to £20, while the Parish Council tried to secure the land for the parish.

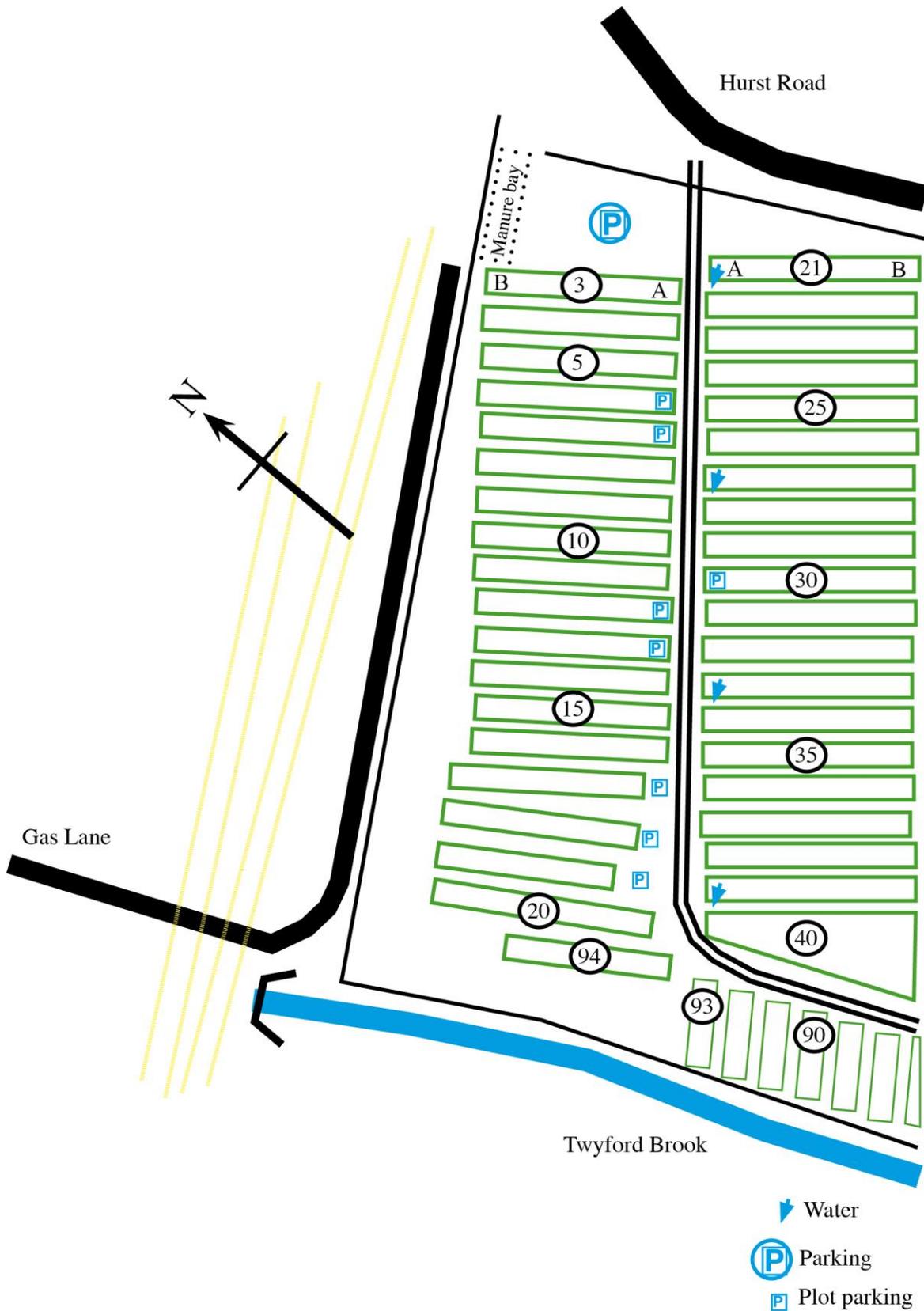
There are references to the London Road allotments in the History Society Journal 74. These were located along the London Road close to the sewer beds and were famed for growing the best tomatoes! Polehampton Junior School was built close by in 1939 and the Roman Catholic Church, Health Centre and Horticultural Trading Store was also built later on what was previously allotment land.

3.2 Legislation

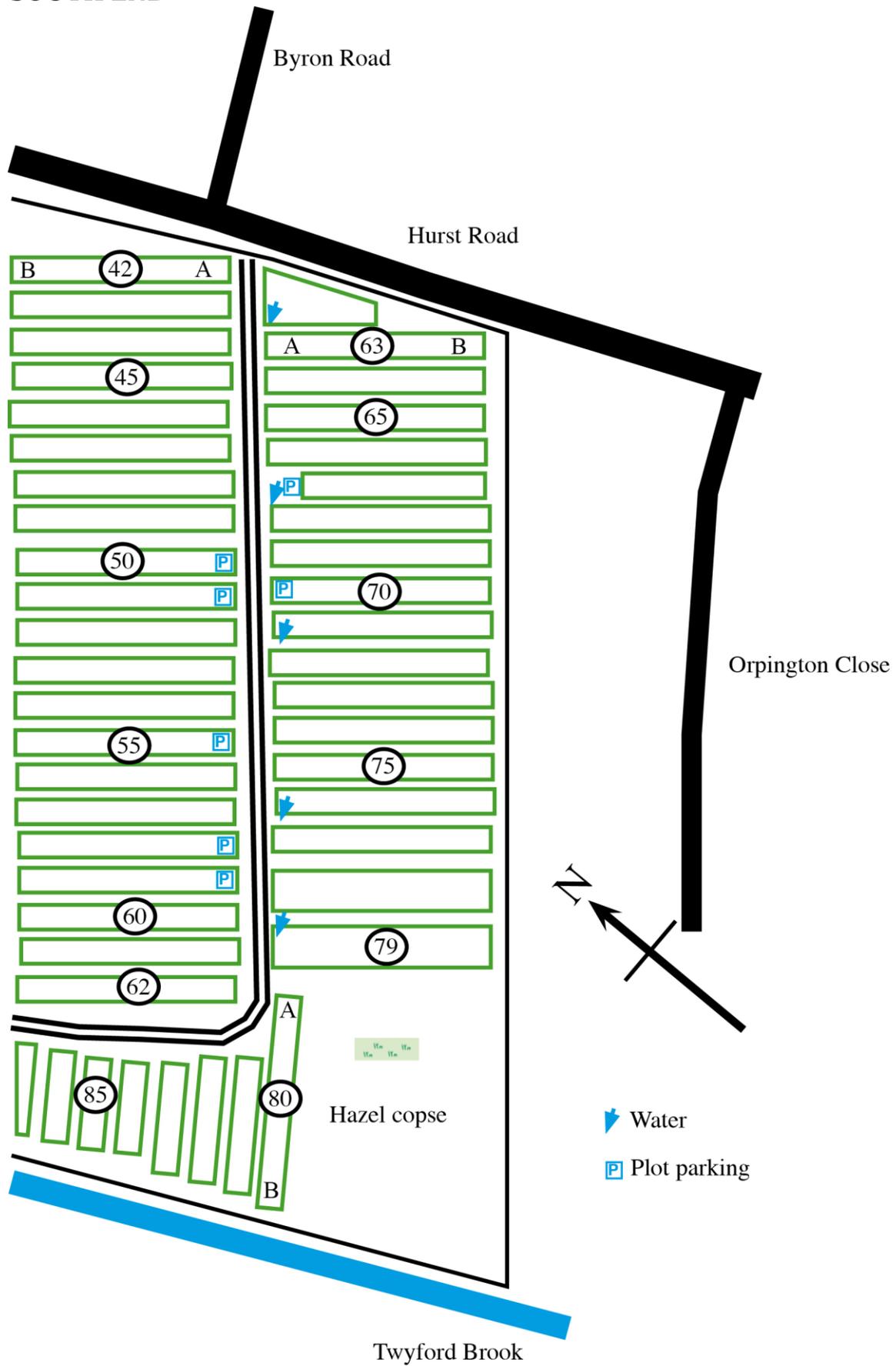
There is a complex legislative and regulatory basis surrounding allotment provision and maintenance. It was only in the nineteenth century that the idea of urban allotments took hold and this culminated in the Allotment Acts of 1887 and 1890, which made the provision of allotments compulsory on any Local Authority where a need was shown to exist. The Smallholdings and Allotments Act 1908 consolidated these measures and remains the principal Act for allotments to the present day. The Allotment Acts of 1925 and 1950 added further regulation.

3.3 Hurst Road Allotment Site Plan

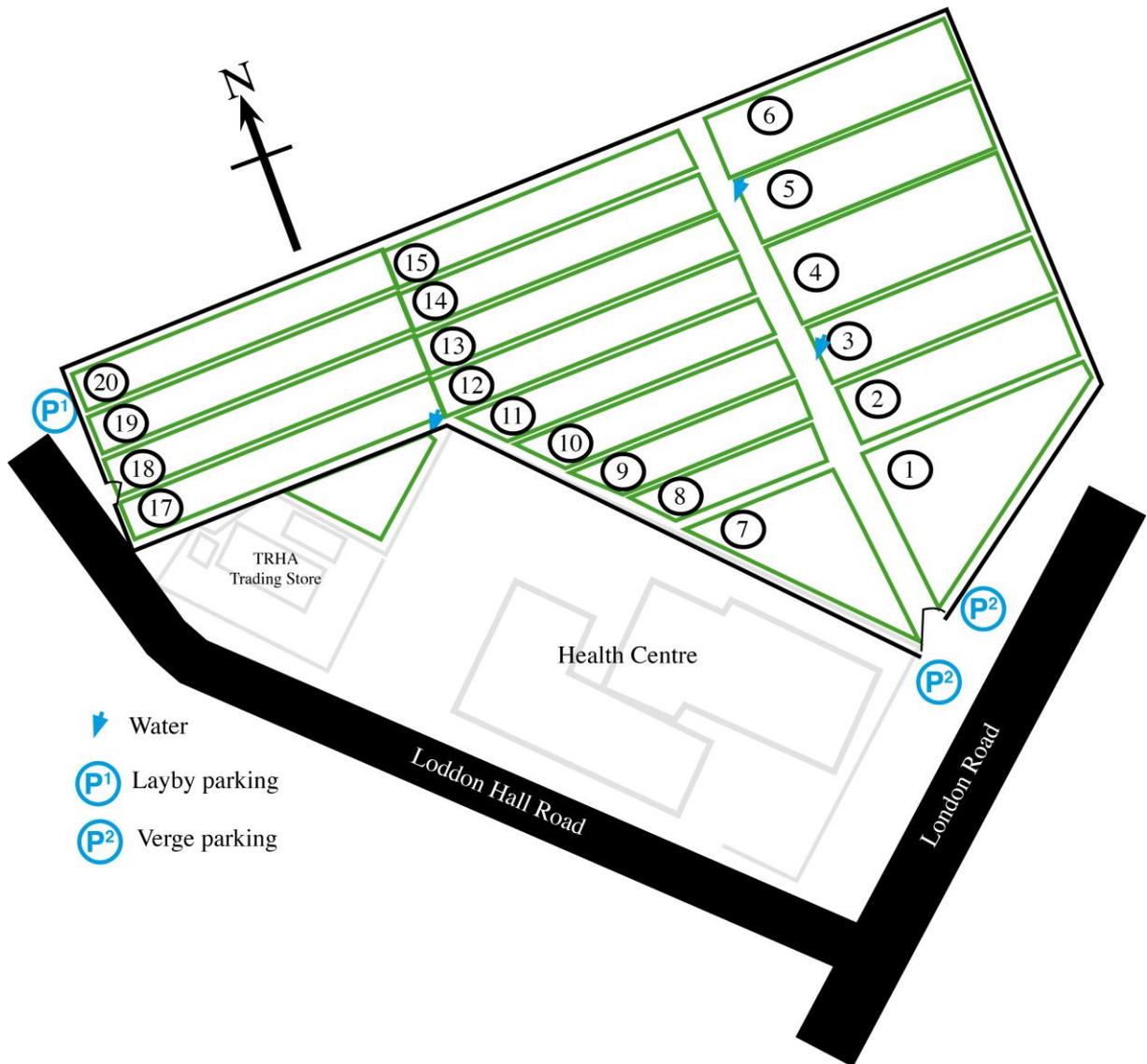
'NORTH END'



'SOUTH END'



3.4 London Road Allotment Site Plan



- Water
- Layby parking
- Verge parking

4 Association/Parish Council Partnership

4.1 Allotment Tenants Association - Qualification

It is not mandatory for tenants to join TATA. However where current allotment tenants are members of such an Association, the Council will acknowledge that organisation when it represents over 50% of tenants. Furthermore, the Council will seek to work with TATA in a mutually cooperative manner for the furtherance of the allotment site and its tenants.

4.2 Liaison

To facilitate a practical working relationship, TATA will be encouraged to form a committee/executive with which the Council can principally liaise. An undertaking from TATA to inform the Council of member changes within the committee/executive will assist with maintaining an effective communication route between TATA and Council Office.

4.3 Working Relationship

Where practical, the Council will seek to involve TATA in the development of management plans. It is also recognised that TATA can provide voluntary assistance with complementary elements that benefit allotment holders. These elements can include initiatives such as a 'Buddy' scheme for new tenants, oversight of mini plots, representation, maintenance of vacant plots, provision of a 'tool library' as well as assisting with the general maintenance of the site from time to time. TATA can also have a valuable role in maintaining standards through the promotion of best practice to its members.

4.4 Council Provision for TATA.

In recognition of the cooperative partnership between the Council and Association the Council will endeavour to provide:

- Meeting facilities at a mutually agreeable venue for an Association meeting with a Parish Council representative once a year - hire fee waived.
- Storage on site for shared equipment used by the tenants. The storage may also be used for a tool library, owned and managed by TATA, for the benefit of all tenants including a powered lawnmower on London Road site. - storage fee waived.

4.6 Promotion of Membership

The Council will promote the membership of TATA to new allotment tenants albeit that it is understood that membership is neither mandatory nor a condition of tenancy.



5 Issues

5.1 Waiting List

The Parish Council will maintain a prospective tenant waiting list. Vacant plots may be offered to non-residents on request.

5.2 Identification of Issues

Through consultation with allotment tenants, issues of concern with regard to the current provision can be identified and solutions sought. As a key stakeholder, TATA's involvement may be enlisted in both areas of identification and solutions thereof.



6 Environmental Benefits

6.1 Wildlife and Bio-diversity

Evidence from the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners shows that allotments have on average up to 30% higher species diversity than urban parks. They are a haven for wildlife in what could be an otherwise hostile urban environment. Wildlife is important for allotment holders - not just for its own sake and the pleasure that seeing wild animals and plants bring - but also because they pollinate vegetable crops, they prey on destructive insects and they speed up the process of decomposition for compost heaps. However, the use of inorganic fertilisers, weed killers and pesticides harms wild flowers and reduces invertebrate populations. Inappropriate management of boundaries, communal areas etc. can all have a detrimental effect on wildlife.

Hedgerows offer a refuge for birds and invertebrates as do ditches and grassy banks with low maintenance regimes. Invertebrates are associated with tussocky grasses, hedges and wildflowers found on the boundaries, and include butterflies, bumble bees and other beneficial insects. Various bird species can all find nesting and foraging habitat in hedges. Undisturbed margins next to hedgerows provide nesting sites for small mammals such as mice and field voles which in turn attract raptors such as kestrel.

Some tended plots act as seed banks for rare vegetable species. Disturbed ground from freshly dug soil on the plots makes worms, grubs and insects more accessible and is especially good for birds. The

addition of manure and composts to the soil encourages earthworms.

Compost heaps also are a haven for insects and invertebrates, slow worms, and over-wintering invertebrates and mammals. Hedgehogs and grass snakes may also be associated with tall grass, hedges and compost heaps. Ditches and marginal damp areas create the ideal habitat for over-wintering amphibians such as frogs, toads, newts, and offer nesting and foraging sites for water voles. Wherever possible the Council's approach to its maintenance and management programme will favour environmental practices which encourage biodiversity.

6.2 Environmental Good Practice

Subject to agreement from Twyford Parish Council the majority of site maintenance should be undertaken out of the Spring/early Summer season to avoid disturbing nesting birds.

The hazel copse should be cut during the Winter on a regular cycle (every 4 years) to provide poles and other materials for tenants' use.

Any tree surgery should be done during the Winter months to avoid creating a fatal shock to a tree relying on its leaves for photosynthesis.

To encourage pollinating insects for tenants' crops, a variety of native nectar and pollen producing plants should be encouraged around the site. It is important to have a variety of plants that give a long flowering season from Spring to Autumn.

Slow worms, toads and hedgehogs (gardeners' friends) should be encouraged to overwinter in safety in compost heaps and under sheds etc.

Where possible hedges should be trimmed in late winter to allow fruiting berries and seeds to be eaten by birds.



7 Financial

7.1 Income/Expenditure

The cost of running the allotments is incurred by the Parish Council. In setting rents the government publication 'Growing in the Community - A Good Practice Guide to the Management of Allotments' recommends the following factors be taken into consideration:

- Long term financial sustainability
- The nature, quality and cost of facilities provided (and desired)
- Expenditure on promotion and administration
- The present levels of rent and historic tradition
- The likely effect of rent on plot take-up

A consistent approach to annual rent increases will be applied taking into consideration the five elements above.

7.2 Requesting Resources

The process for applying for 'resources' from the Council for maintenance and upkeep of the allotment is that TATA or an individual plot holder makes a request to the Parish Lands Committee via a 'proposal' which describes the need and the resources required. The Committee then debate the merit of the proposal and agrees or declines the proposal by majority vote. Once a proposal is agreed, the Parish Clerk records the acceptance and takes note of any actions required to provide the required resources. This may involve further Parish Council discussion and requesting quotes for materials or effort. The Parish Clerk then reports back progress on the proposal until the requirement has been met and signed off.

7.3 Vacant Plots Expenditure

There is an inherent cost associated with the clearances of plots which are vacant. Removing detritus is an expenditure which should be avoided due to it being the responsibility of the former plot holder.

The inspection regime (see 10.4) should minimise the opportunity for rubbish to build up, thereby identifying potential issues in advance.

7.4 Future Investment

Opportunities for improvements of the allotment sites will be the subject of discussion between individual plot holders and/or TATA and the Parish Council so that the resource implications can be quantified. The delivery of any improvements will be the subject of the prevailing condition at the time and prioritised accordingly. Any agreed programme will be integrated into the Council's medium to long term financial plan. In addition, where external funding and/or partnership working may realise an agreed programme's early implementation, the Council will endeavour to enable it.



8 Administration/Management

8.1 Governance

The Council is responsible for ensuring that appropriate structures are in place for the effective management of the allotments. This includes formulation of organisational policies, forward planning and executive oversight. An annual review of fees and charges is considered during the budget process.

The Council will undertake periodic reviews of applicable operational policies to ensure adequacy.

8.2 Administration

The operational management structure set by the Council is implemented by the Parish Clerk.

Following the allocation of a suitable plot, the Parish Clerk will issue all the necessary paperwork including Tenancy Agreement and invoice. A central database is maintained for the smooth operation of the allotments, the data held remains confidential.

To improve efficiency and minimise wastage, greater use of electronic data will be sought. Information such as tenancy agreements, terms and conditions, communications and invoices can all be generated and made available electronically. In addition, the expansion of email as a delivery method helps to reduce overhead costs and expenditure pressures on the service provision.

8.3 Site Maintenance

The maintenance of the allotment site is required for both practical and aesthetic reasons; an unkempt appearance detracts from the overall environment that both tenants and the Council should expect. Furthermore, a pleasant and inviting environment is conducive with encouraging a greater uptake of available plots.

Whilst the maintenance of pathways between allotments are the responsibility of tenants, the main vehicle access tracks are maintained by the Council.

8.4 Plot Classifications

For the purposes of managing, maintenance and monitoring, plots may be categorised as follows:

- **Category One:**
Let - the tenant is responsible for all maintenance.
- **Category Two:**
Unlet - recently vacated and/or cleared and maintained in a readily lettable condition (possibly covered with a plastic sheeting until required).
- **Category Three:**
Unlet - overgrown/currently unusable.

The preference is for all plots to be in Category One, however it is accepted that currently this is an aspiration. Therefore, operationally the remaining plots should be maintained as Category Two plots

The level of Category Two plots will be reviewed annually taking into consideration tenancy changes in the year, feedback and available resources.

8.5 Plot Sizes

The standard 10 pole plot size is a historical standard set many years ago. Today the emphasis and needs of an allotment is different and for some even a five-pole plot is unmanageable. This can lead to a swift decline in the condition of the allotment and the eventual loss of a tenant. A large plot size may also be acting as a deterrent to some who may wish to consider an allotment. Subdivided plots could be considered by Twyford Parish Council in special circumstances.

8.6 Partnership Working

Opportunities exist operationally for partnership initiatives with TATA, these include:

- Guardianship

This initiative relates to plots in the Two and Three categories. By placing plastic taken from a recently let plot onto one to be uprated its eventual cultivation can be made easier. This task could be undertaken on an agreed number of plots by TATA for the benefit of new tenants. TATA could undertake the guardianship of these plots with regards to maintaining the condition at or above the category standard.

- Mini Plots

A full size allotment can be a daunting prospect for some, and even with reduced sizes many are unsure as to whether being an allotment holder is right for them. There are also those who are unsure where to start and a greater level of guidance to begin with may be beneficial. The provision of mini beds along with people available able to offer advice and a degree of supervision may be a welcome

option for some and would assist with introducing people to renting an allotment of their own.

Such a provision is currently not possible within the Council's operation; however, an informal scheme has been undertaken successfully by TATA and could be encouraged. Whilst a formal tenancy agreement for a Mini Plot would be issued and charged for by the Council, the oversight and general operation could be managed by TATA. (A separate scale of charges for Mini Plots will be implemented along with a dedicated area for them within the overall allotment site.)

The Council may seek opportunities to encourage such initiatives with TATA and in recognition will provide an annual grant of up to 25% of income from TATA managed starter beds to be used towards the costs associated with operating partnership/working initiatives.



9 Communication

9.1 Email

The Council will encourage tenants to provide an email address for contact purposes. Wherever appropriate information from the Council will be sent via email as a first preference.

9.2 Website

Making more information available electronically can be facilitated by a dedicated section of the Council's website being assigned for the allotments. As well as the terms and conditions, tenancy agreement and annual fees. The website should provide a link to TATA's website for other useful information.

9.3 Meetings

Meetings are an invaluable communication tool both for tenants and the Council in providing a greater understanding of issues.

Responsibility for the allotments has been delegated to the Parish Lands committee. The Parish Lands meeting is the best forum for allotment holders to ask questions of the Parish Council. If any allotment holder has an issue they wish to be discussed at a committee meeting a request can be made to the Clerk for its inclusion on the agenda. Council meetings are open to the public and the timing and date of the meetings are detailed on the Twyford Parish Council website.

9.4 General Enquiries

Where information is not readily available by other sources, tenants can contact Twyford Parish Council. This can be via email, letter, or telephone.

9.5 Promotion of Allotments

A vibrant allotment site requires a vibrant tenant base and therefore encouraging others to join existing allotment holders thereby increasing the uptake is an important objective. Various methods of promotion exist including articles in the local newsletter, utilisation of Council noticeboards and website, Open Days, promotion at events and word of mouth.

The Council will utilise the aforementioned methods to promote greater uptake of plots. Furthermore, the Council will seek the assistance of others including TATA in exploring additional approaches to increase usage of the allotments.

9.6 New Allotment Holders Information Pack

New plot holders in particular may need better training and information about what to do when they get started. A new plot holder's information pack and opportunities to be mentored by more experienced growers could be beneficial. Often plots are in disrepair when inexperienced people take them on, far too often people quickly lose interest or are overwhelmed by how much work is needed in the first six months and don't work their plot, leaving the space to become ever more overgrown. Once plots are overgrown they are harder to let and harder to cultivate, and spread seeds from unwanted weeds to other nearby allotments. New plot holders often want

more information about what they should do first, where to borrow tools and buy basic equipment, opportunities for learning before they obtain their plot and the chance to learn from more experienced tenants.

The Parish Council will work with TATA to produce a New Plot Holder's Information/Induction Pack.



10 Tenure

10.1 Tenancy Agreement

The current tenancy agreement is based upon an amended national model made available some time ago. (The Tenancy Agreement is attached as Appendix A)

10.2 Terms and Conditions

Whilst the Tenancy Agreement deals with the technical aspects of the tenure including Terms and Conditions and defines Parish Council expectations of the tenant, adherence to the Terms and Conditions is a mandatory requirement of the Tenancy Agreement. (The Terms and Conditions are attached as Appendix A)

10.3 Benchmark

In order to maintain a standard of acceptable condition for allotments the standard requires definition. Not only does this ensure that tenants are aware of the requirements of them, but also the baseline criteria against which an assessment is made.

The Council will ensure that tenants are aware of the criteria that inspections are based upon by incorporating the definition within the Terms and Conditions. (Appendix B - Section 2).

10.4 Inspections

An inspection regime assists with maintaining standards and identifying issues on a regular basis. Non urgent issues reported to the Council's Office can also be assessed during the scheduled inspection round.

Regular site inspections should take place each year. It is important that tenants have confidence in the inspection regime being impartial, therefore during each regular inspection a representative of

TATA may be invited to be present. During the inspection the allotment condition will be assessed against the criteria defined in the Terms and Conditions and given a grading against three standard classifications:

- Class A: At or above the standard (no action required)
- Class B: Fallen slightly below the standard and/or working towards the standard (monitor for one inspection cycle)
- Class C: Well below accepted standard (stage one warning)

Once graded the appropriate action (if any) is applied. To raise awareness and ensure a consistent approach, the protocols followed and the tenant's right of appeal are defined in the Terms and Conditions (Appendix B - Section 2).



11 Facilities

11.1 Toilet

There are no toilet facilities on either allotment site.

11.2 Manure deliveries

Deliveries of manure is not a service provided by the Council. A designated area of the car park is identified at Hurst Road for manure deliveries. The path or part of a plot is used at London Road. All deliveries should be supervised by the recipient.

11.3 Water provision/usage

The Council provides a water supply to the allotments for the reasonable use by all allotment holders. Depending on weather conditions, the supply is switched off between October and April each year, at the discretion of the Council.

Water is a valuable resource and should be used sparingly. To raise awareness, 'waterwise' tips are provided in Appendix D.

11.4 Car Parking

At Hurst Road there is a car park (originally plots 1 and 2) which allotment holders are able to use subject to available space. Some plot holders have allocated parking space within their plots. Parking is only permitted when allotment holders are working their plots.

At London Road cars are not allowed to park on the allotment land, they can park on the grass verge either side of the main access gate.

11.5 Access and Security Arrangements

At Hurst Road there are two access points to the allotments, through the main gates on Hurst Road and the gate opposite Byron Road. At London Road the main gate is on London Road with a smaller pedestrian gate in Loddon Hall Road. Access is for allotment tenants, their guests and persons authorised by the Council only. There is no public right of way over the allotments. Gates should remain closed to avoid potential fly-tipping.

The perimeter boundaries are a mixture of fencing and hedges varying in condition.

11.6 Dealing with Waste

All compostable waste is retained and composted by the allotment tenant on their own plot. The tenant has sole responsibility for non-garden waste and as such skips may be provided on both sites for waste removal as the discretion of the Parish Council.

12 Aspirations

12.1 Equal Opportunities - Disabled Access Plots

Allotments should be available to all social groups, unfortunately it is all too often the case that allotments are not accessible to people with disabilities. Various adaptations may be required such as flat hard surfaces around, to and from beds, the construction of raised beds and locations accessible from the parking area. To undertake such a task a variety of relevant organisations would need to be contacted for advice and guidance. The input from the intended user group is also crucial to the success of such a provision.

The Council will endeavour to investigate the feasibility and viability of providing accessible allotment plots for the disabled.

12.2 Educational

There is considerable scope for schools and local youth organisations such as the Scouts and Guides, to link up with allotment holders to use allotments and the skills of plot holders to participate in school/education projects. This has the benefit of fostering contact between generations as well as encouraging interest in allotments which may be 'transferred' to parents.

The Council may explore opportunities with TATA to engage local children through youth organisations and schools.

APPENDIX A

TENANCY AGREEMENT FOR ALLOTMENT GARDEN

AGREEMENT made on ...13/10/16.....(date) between Twyford Parish Council
(Hereinafter called the Council) of the one part and

.....(name & address)

(Hereinafter called the tenant) of the other part. **WHEREBY** the Council agrees to let and the tenant agree to hire a yearly tenant from

.....13/10/16.....(date)..... the allotment numbered 66A&B HR....

In the Hurst Rd / London Rd register maintained by the Council and containing ...5.... Poles or thereabouts at the yearly rental of £45.50 (less any early payment discount).

The tenancy is subject to the following conditions:

1. The tenant shall to the best of his/her endeavours keep the allotment clean and in a good state of cultivation throughout the year.
2. The tenant shall not cause any nuisance or annoyance to the tenants of any other allotment, to any other neighbours or obstruct any path or road provided by the Council for the use of tenants.
3. The tenant shall not, without the written consent of the Council, underlet the allotment.
4. The tenant shall not, without the written consent of the Council, erect any building on the allotment.
5. The tenant may use natural sources of water where that does not involve alteration to the existing drainage or extraction from a source other than from the council provided tap or hand held hose connected to the tap.
6. The tenant shall be responsible for maintaining a numbered stake on the allotment that identifies it (and if necessary replace the stake).
7. If the tenant wishes to give up his/her tenancy at any time he/she shall forthwith inform the Clerk to the Council.
8. The tenancy may be determined by the Council at one month's notice in writing, after due warning, if the tenant fails to comply with any of the preceding conditions; or at least 12 month's notice expiring during the period 29th September to 6th April inclusive for any other reason, which shall be stated in the notice.
9. The Council reserves the right to increase the yearly rent subject to giving three months notice of this intention to the tenant. (In practice this is done by posting notices on the allotment gates – with a reminder in the following rent notice).
10. Tenants are not allowed to take dogs on to any part of the allotments.
11. Carpets must not be brought onto the site to use as weed suppressers and the allotment must be kept free of household junk.
12. The tenant may only park on their allotment or in the allotment car park whilst they work on their allotment.

Note (Hurst Road only): The Council has provided a roadway to allow tenants to gain access with vehicles (e.g. to deliver manure). Movement is anticlockwise – i.e. in at the entrance on the bend, out at the entrance opposite Byron Road. Vehicles should not be parked on the access road.

SignedTenant

SignedClerk to the Council

APPENDIX B

ALLOTMENT TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. General

1.1 The allotment must not be used for any illegal, unauthorised, or immoral purpose.

1.2 All children must be properly supervised at all times while on the allotment site.

1.3 Tenants must use allotments for their own personal use and must not carry out any business activities.

1.4 No advertisement or display shall be erected on or near the allotment site for commercial gain.

1.5 Tenants, or any person connected with the tenant, are not permitted to reside on the allotment.

1.6 Only the tenant or a guest accompanied by the tenant is allowed on the site.

1.7 Sub-letting is not permitted. The Council and/or Clerk where appropriate must authorise temporary cover in case of illness etc. Such authorisation does not confirm any rights to future tenancy.

1.8 Tenants found taking produce, plants, plant material, or other items, from a plot without permission of the tenant of the plot concerned will automatically have their tenancy agreement terminated.

1.9 Tenants must not cause any nuisance or disturbance to other tenants or residents of houses adjoining the site. Any verbal abuse, threats, or threatening behaviour towards any other person on site will be investigated and may result in immediate termination.

1.10 Disputes between tenants should be resolved locally where possible. As a last resort disputes should be

referred to the Council. The decision of the Council will be binding on all the tenants involved in the dispute.

1.11 Any Officer of the Council or any person appointed by the Council must be permitted to enter the allotment for inspection purposes.

1.12 The Council is not liable for any loss (including by accident, fire, theft, flooding or damage of any tools or contents of sheds and greenhouses).

1.13 The Council will not be liable for injury to any tenant or guest accompanying the tenant whilst on site.

1.14 The tenant may sell such reasonable surplus that might result from time to time.

1.15 Any special condition which the Council considers necessary to preserve the allotment garden from deterioration must be observed and carried out.

1.16 The Council reserves the right to revise, delete, or add to, the Conditions from time to time.

1.17 The Council will carry out regular site inspections to assess the plot against the Allotment Terms and Conditions. If any plot is found to be in breach of the terms and conditions, then the termination procedure will be activated.

1.18 New plot holders will be encouraged to seek mentors from existing plot holders to get some guidance and advice in the annual cycle of an allotment. Existing plot holders are encouraged to volunteer as mentors for new plot holders.

1.19 Improved bio-diversity is an aim of the Council, and allotments already are a haven for wildlife. We encourage any wildlife friendly practices.

2. Inspections and Associated Protocols in Respect of the Condition of the Plot

2.1 Regular assessments of the allotment condition will be undertaken in the months of March, June, September and November. The criteria used is defined in Section 3 below and each allotment will be graded and actioned as follows:-

Class A:

At or above the standard (no action required)

Class B:

Fallen slightly below the standard and/or working towards the standard (monitor for one inspection cycle)

Class C:

Well below accepted standard (stage one warning protocol)

2.2 Warning Protocol

Stage One

Written Warning - This warning will give the plot holder 4 weeks from the date of the letter/email; to return the plot to an acceptable condition. An acceptable condition is defined as being in full compliance with the Allotment Terms and Conditions. If a plot holder gives due cause for another warning within one year from the date of the written warning, then they will receive a 2nd written warning

Stage Two

2nd Written Warning - This warning will be issued if the requirements of the first warning letter have not been complied with. The plot holder will have 2 weeks from the date of the letter to return the plot to an acceptable condition. An acceptable condition is defined as being in full compliance with the

Allotment Terms and Conditions. If the plot is suitable for sub-division the plot holder will be offered the opportunity to sub-divide the plot and bring the rest up to standard.

Stage Three (final)

Termination Notice - A Termination of Tenancy Notice will be issued if the conditions set out in the second warning letter have not been complied with. The termination is effective four weeks from the date of the Notice.

N.B. All Termination Notices will be signed by the Clerk who has full discretion in dealing with terminations.

2.3 Appeals

A plot holder has the right to appeal a termination notice. The appeal must be submitted in writing within 14 days of the date of the termination letter. The appeal should be addressed to the Clerk.

An appeal hearing will be called where the plot holder will have an opportunity to present their case. The hearing will comprise a panel of 2 Councillors from the Parish Lands committee and will be chaired by the Chairman of the Council. The decision of this panel is final. There are 4 options available to the panel as follows:

2.3.1. Uphold the termination.

2.3.2. Re-instate the plot holder with a probationary period of 6 months, where any further breach of the Allotment Terms and Conditions will result in immediate termination with no right of appeal.

2.3.3 Re-instate the plot holder (no probation).

2.3.4. Re-instate the plot holder on sub-divided plot

3. Animals and Livestock

3.1 Dogs must not be brought onto allotments or any part of the site except assistance dogs which must be kept on a lead at all times and controlled by owners so as not to annoy or inconvenience other tenants.

3.2 Animals and livestock must not be kept on the site without the express permission of the Council.

3.3 Tenants are responsible for providing adequate welfare for all livestock.

3.4 Beehives are only allowed on the site if permission has been expressly granted by the Council. If permission is granted, bee keepers will be required to be members of a local bee-keeping society.

4 Infrastructure

4.1 New sheds and greenhouses can be erected without the permission from the Council if they are kept to a maximum size of 6' x 10' (1.8m x 3m). Permission from the Council must be sought for sheds and greenhouses with measurement exceeding 6' x 10' (1.8m x 3m) and for any polytunnels. Structures must not overshadow neighbouring plots and should not exceed 6' 5" (2m) in height.

4.2 All paths including main paths must be kept clear.

4.3 Barbed or razor wire must not be used on any part of the allotment site.

4.4 Tenants are responsible for clearly marking and maintaining the plot number on site.

5. Security and Safety

5.1 Tenants are responsible for locking the site gate on entry and exit at all times.

5.2 Access to the site must only be gained by an authorised entrance, tenants must not make any other means of entrance or exit.

5.3 Tenants are responsible for ensuring that there are no hazards present on the plot.

5.4 Tenants must not use or store any poisonous materials/substances on the allotment for rodent control or other purposes. The Council must be notified of rodent or other similar pest infestation to arrange suitable methods of control.

APPENDIX C

PLOT SIZES

Hurst Road Allotments

Hurst Road plots are nominally 10 pole plots divided into two 5 pole plots known as A and B.

London Road Allotments

London Road allotments are nominally 10 pole plots divided into two 5 pole plots known as A and B. Some plots are unique on this site due to the incursion of Twyford's Health Centre.

APPENDIX D

USING WATER RESPONSIBLY

Being waterwise is the responsibility of all allotment holders. Water is a constant requirement for living plants. It is used to carry mineral nutrients to leaf and stem, to distribute foodstuffs to all parts of the plant and to maintain what might be termed the pressure of growth forces. Excess water is constantly being lost through the plant by transpiration and elsewhere by evaporation. Insufficient water leads to wilting, a loss of growth and eventually the plant's death, so it is important to supply sufficient water to your crops.

With these points in mind what is there that you can do as an allotment holder to help conserve water? Below are ten points that may help you to maintain your allotment to a high standard with the minimum amount of water.

Use a water butt to collect rainwater. When available! soft rainwater is undoubtedly best for plants.

Mulch fruit and other long term crops; a good thick layer of mulch helps to conserve water but it also helps prevent weed growth. Well rotted manure or garden compost, even straw or grass clippings, can be used. From some crops, such as strawberries, it may be appropriate to plant through a layer of black polythene pegged down to the soil. Make sure that the soil is well watered before mulching.

When cultivating your allotment incorporate plenty of organic matter into the soil as this will help retain moisture in the ground.

When growing 'hungry' crops, such as beans, sweet peas, etc., dig a good deep trench and fill the bottom with any type of organic matter, even old damp newspaper will do before backfilling. This will help to act as a reservoir for these plants.

Grow crops that do not require excess watering, for instance many herbs such as Sage and Rosemary come from Mediterranean climates and can survive fairly dry conditions.

If you grow plants in tubs or containers incorporate a water retentive gel into the planting compost. Stand pots, containers and grow bags on trays to catch any water that drains through, this water can then be recycled.

When choosing a watering can pick one that is well balanced and not too heavy to carry when full, 7 to 9 litres (1.5 to 2 gallons) should be alright. Polythene cans are shorter lived than metal ones but are inexpensive and with reasonable care should last for several years. Buy two roses (perforated heads), a fine one for watering seedlings and a coarse one for general purpose watering.

When you do water, it is better to pick one section of the allotment and water thoroughly to some depth. A thorough soaking at weekly intervals is much better for the plant than a short period of daily

watering as this will encourage plants to grow deeper and search for their own water. It is best to water early in the morning, particularly in greenhouses, so plants are surface dry at night. This helps to keep diseases down. The use of sprinklers is not permitted.

If watering has to be curtailed because of a water shortage, the addition of a dilute liquid feed to the water used makes it more of an immediate benefit to the struggling plant and less water will go further.

Regular hoeing of cultivated areas not only reduces competition for water from weeds but breaks the soil capillaries and therefore reduces water evaporation from the surface of the soil.

If you take note of these points and are careful with the use of water it will still be possible to grow a wide range of crops through the driest of summers. It is these battles with nature that are amongst the things that make gardening so enjoyable.

