

# FINGAL ALLOTMENT STRATEGY

March 2012



Comhairle Contae Fhine Gall  
Fingal County Council

# FINGAL ALLOTMENT STRATEGY

**P. J. Howell**  
Director Of Services

**Gilbert Power**  
Director Of Services

**Kevin Halpenny**  
Senior Parks Superintendent

**Peter Byrne**  
Senior Planner

**Hans Visser**  
Biodiversity Officer

**Roisin Burke**  
Executive Planner

**March 2012**



## 1.0 Introduction:



Allotments represent an important element of Green Infrastructure in Fingal. The tradition of allotments in Ireland goes back to early 20th century. The Vacant Land Cultivation Society (VLCS) established the first allotment sites in Dublin city, in January 1910. The plan, as Michael Cullen writes in his thesis, ‘Uncovering the plot: Investigating Urban Agriculture in Dublin’, was to “help supplement the diets and incomes” of the city’s poorest, some of whom were living in tenement conditions with 4-5 families to a house. In 1917 The Dublin Corporation, by direction of The Local Government Board for Ireland, set up a Land Cultivation Committee to provide allotments aimed at increasing food supplies as a war measure.

The introduction of the Local Authorities (Allotment) Act 1926 highlighted the importance of allotments. This Act identified an allotment as a piece of land intended to be let for cultivation by an individual for the production of vegetables mainly for consumption by himself and his family. This act further included a clause which allowed local authorities to lease land to voluntary associations interested in the allotment movement.

The allotment movement was driven by the United Irish Plotters Union, who later became the Irish Allotment Holders Association. Their work focused on finding suitable land convenient to allotment holders. The allotment movement at the end of the 1930’s consisted of employed, unemployed and retired men as well as their families working on their allotments. A boost in the numbers came in 1939 when local governments and the Department of agriculture began allocating new allotment areas to deal with the food shortages as a result of World War II. After the war the land used for purposes of allotments was reclaimed for

the expansion of the city and its suburbs.

An article in 1952 of the Irish Times finds the levels of allotments at 1,200. However, the popularity of allotments since has fluctuated. In recent years there has been an upsurge in demand. Allotment gardening provides an opportunity for an active healthy lifestyle which reflects the ideals of well-being and sustainability. Allotments also have a role to play in the protection and promotion of biodiversity.

Currently there are more than 600 allotments provided by Fingal County Council in the Fingal area. These are located at three sites: Powerstown in Dublin 15, Turvey in Donabate and Skerries. The provision of approximately 200 more allotments at Balbriggan shall be coming on-stream shortly. Additional privately run allotments are also operating throughout Fingal.

A strategic approach is required to address the increasing demand and to ensure the benefits of allotment gardening are properly recognised and available to all.

This strategy seeks to improve the quality and quantity of allotments in the Fingal area and to provide support for the development of allotments by identifying ways to give more people the opportunity to grow their own food and promoting other food growing initiatives. All initiatives contained in this strategy are considered in the context of other council strategies, policies and objectives.

This document provides a framework in line with the County Development Plan to develop and manage allotments in partnership with the users.

## 2.0 Legislation & Policy:



### 2.1 Historical Reference

The provision of allotments was, historically, the remit of the Local Authority. The first piece of legislation relating to the provision of allotments was the Local Authorities (Allotment) Act 1926. This identified an allotment as a piece of land intended to be let for cultivation by an individual for the production of vegetables mainly for consumption by himself and his family. This act included a clause which allowed local authorities to lease land to voluntary associations interested in the provision of allotments.

The Allotment Act of 1926 was replaced by the Acquisition of Land (Allotments) Amendment 1934 whereby the amendment made provisions to accommodate approved unemployed persons at new or existing sites.

The Town and Regional Planning Act was adopted in 1934. This Act noted that the provision may be made by the local authorities to provide land for allotments. In 1963 the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act was passed. This act repealed the earlier Town Planning Acts and made no mention of the provision of allotments.

### 2.2 Current Legislation

Under the Planning & Development Act 2010, an allotment means an area of land comprising not more than 1,000 square metres let or available for letting to and cultivation by one or more than one person who is a member of the local community and lives adjacent or near to the allotment, for the purpose of the production of vegetables or fruit mainly for consumption by the person or a member of his or her family.

The Planning & Development Act also allows for a local authority to indicate in a Development Plan an

intention to reserve land for use and cultivation as allotments and regulating, promoting, facilitating or controlling the provision of land for that use.

### Fingal County Development Plan

Chapter 3 – Green Infrastructure, states:

#### Objective GI27

“Provide opportunities for food production through allotments or community gardens in new green infrastructure proposals where appropriate.”

Chapter 8 – Rural Fingal, notes the informal horticulture sector within Fingal has the strategic role of allowing families to provide for their own needs, and promoting hobby growing to feed into the informal food sector which may be marketed through licensed local markets. The increasing density of urban housing has reduced the opportunity to grow fruit and vegetables within private rear gardens. In this context, the Council will seek to provide opportunities for allotments within the Greenbelts adjacent to built up areas. Three allotment schemes are currently in place in Powerstown, Dublin 15, Turvey, Donabate and Skerries. New opportunities will be sought for the Balbriggan/Skerries, Rush and Malahide/Baldoyle areas. Furthermore, the Council endeavours to facilitate well managed new allotment schemes on private lands.

#### Objective GB04

“Promote the provision of allotments within the rural areas of the County especially within the Greenbelt, which have good access from the built-up and residential areas.”

## 3.0 Strategy – Vision, Key Policies & Objectives



The purpose of this strategy is to provide a mechanism to improve the quality and quantity of allotments in the Fingal area and to provide support for the development of allotments by identifying ways to give more people the opportunity to grow their own food and promoting other food growing initiatives.

### 3.1 Vision

Fingal County Council seeks to provide allotments being managed and developed in a way that all sections of the community can realise their horticultural potential, and that the service is developed to encourage sustainability. Allotments will also play a part as habitats in urban green corridors to enhance biodiversity, but acknowledge, that the prime purpose of allotments is to grow food.

Fingal County Council seeks to provide allotments which promote social inclusion and cohesiveness, where people from all levels of society can meet, enjoy a common activity and exchange ideas in a pleasant and welcoming setting.

Fingal County Council aspires to provide an allotment to anyone who wants one and will charge a fair rent for each plot.

### 3.2 Key Policies

- Policy 1:** Ensure sufficient provision of allotments
- Policy 2:** Ensure good administration
- Policy 3:** Provide high quality allotments
- Policy 4:** Ensure environmentally sustainable allotments
- Policy 5:** Secure resources

### Policy 1: Ensure sufficient provision of allotments

In relation to the provision of allotments, there is no standard figure in Ireland. However, in the UK most allotment strategies quote the 1969 Thorpe Report, which recommends a minimum provision equivalent of 15 allotments per 1,000 households. This is the standard to which Fingal County Council shall aspire.

### Council Owned Land

A search for potential allotment sites is ongoing in the Fingal County Council area.

**Objective 1:** Identify potential allotment sites on council owned land.

**Objective 2:** Carry out community consultation for potential allotment sites to support the design process.

**Objective 3:** Explore all opportunities for external funding to aid the construction of new allotments.

Community groups and/or voluntary organisations may be interested in taking the lead on the development of an allotment site. Where funding has been obtained and an allotment site designed planning permission will be applied for.

**Objective 4:** Produce a template lease agreement for the use of Council owned land for allotments and/or food growing initiatives by a community organisation.

Where this is the case a lease must be drawn up between a constituted group and the Council. To ease this process a simple template for a lease agreement will be created.

## 3.0 Strategy – Vision, Key Policies & Objectives



Publicly owned allotments are a temporary and occasional use of land in the ownership of Fingal County Council. Land is not purchased for the specific use as allotments. Given the development of council owned allotments is generally considered a temporary provision, the following considerations apply:

- Leases shall be time-limited and all tenants shall be aware that when redevelopment proposals came forward the site shall have to be vacated
- Growing methods may need to be adapted to site conditions.

### Other publicly owned land

Fingal County Council will support the development of allotments on other publicly owned land.

### Private landowners

The private provision of allotments is an important element to meeting the demand for allotments. Private landowners may be interested in developing their land for allotments.

**Objective 5:** The Council will support private landowners looking to develop allotments or food growing spaces by providing advice and promoting initiatives to those on the allotment waiting list.

Where private land is developed for housing, consideration should be given to the provision of allotments or communal food growing areas. All future Local Area Plans shall encourage the provision of allotments.

### Policy 2: Ensure good administration

Currently there are no national regulations in relation to the development and administration of allotments. The need for good records and management is essential for the efficient running of the sites and the development of a partnership approach to management.

### Allotment Management

**Objective 6:** Fingal County Council will support and encourage plot holders to create formally organised site associations. A template constitution will be developed.

**Objective 7:** Set up a liaison group for allotment management groups and site representatives to allow the dissemination of information on training, events and others.

An examination of existing allotments indicates that the best allotment sites tend to be those that have an active management committee. Informative notice boards, clean and tidy entrances and communal huts (where appropriate) all demonstrate this. Fingal County Council encourages the creation of formally organised management committees for a number of reasons. In particular they can access a variety of funding sources. To help allotment management teams in becoming established and to ensure they are run properly, Fingal County Council will supply sample constitutions and other appropriate advice. A sample constitution is attached on Appendix B. Fingal County Council will seek to set up a liaison group between the management committees for sharing best practice and exchanging information. An informal networking group will also be established where information on training, funding and events is circulated to interested groups in the county.

## 3.0 Strategy – Vision, Key Policies & Objectives



Fingal County Council actively encourages devolved management. So where the majority of the plot holders on the site are in favour of having this, it will be permitted. Devolved status shall be reviewed by the Council regularly and may be rescinded if Council policies and/or site management requirements are not being met.

### Mentoring and training

The retention of new plot holders is a high priority for the Council. Fingal County Council will encourage plot holders and management teams to develop mentoring schemes at their sites.

### Policy 3: Provide high quality allotments

All Council allotments have running water, footpaths and most are secured with appropriate fencing.

### Design standards for new allotment sites

**Objective 8:** Apply design standards to all new allotment sites.

**Objective 9:** Provision for the less able-bodied should be prioritised on the basis of demand.

With the creation of a new allotment site there is an opportunity to provide high quality allotments from the outset. Design standards will ensure there is a consistent, best practice, approach taken to all new sites in the county. A degree of flexibility will be required, and the final design of any new allotment site will be guided by the requirements of the local community and the size of the land being developed.

### Soil conditions:

Soil tests and historical research should be undertaken to assess the suitability of new allotments for food growing so all new sites will have appropriate growing medium.

### Site security:

Sites should be fenced, with strong and durable material, and at least 2m high. Fencing is required to protect against vandals and grazing animals. Where possible native hedging and climbing plants should be used to soften boundaries, provide screening and shelter and support wildlife. Fencing may not be required in some community led projects. This will be considered on a site by site basis.

### Access:

Adequate provision shall be made to facilitate access to/from allotments by persons with disabilities. Vehicular access and parking shall be provided at all allotment sites. Mobility impaired ploholders shall be facilitated in whatever means possible.

### Plot size:

3 no. allotment sizes are available at Fingal County Council owned sites. These are 5m x 10m, 10m x 10m and 20m x 10m.

### Communal Sheds / Storage Facilities:

Such facilities should be provided. This shall be considered on a site-by-site basis.

### Water Provision / Water Conservation:

Water should be supplied from an onsite well where possible.

### Toilets:

Toilet facilities will be considered for provision in consultation with the management committee / private provider.

### Signage:

All sites will have notice boards for the display of information.



## 3.0 Strategy – Vision, Key Policies & Objectives



### Areas for Biodiversity:

All sites should have native trees and shrubs, wild areas and native hedge and climbing species around boundaries. The actual area left for biodiversity will be dependant on the size of the allotment site. Where possible ponds will be created within the biodiversity area. This will bring added benefits of pest control by invertebrates and amphibians.

### Policy 4: Ensure environmentally sustainable allotments

Allotment sites provide an increasingly valuable and noticeable area of green space, as gardens continue to reduce in size. However, the security needs and restricted access arrangements of allotments mean that they cannot be a substitute for public open space.

Within the cultivated area of allotments, principles of sustainable gardening are relevant. Many plot holders are very skilled and knowledgeable on issues of sustainability. Fingal County Council has a commitment to minimise the use of pesticides (this includes insecticides, fungicides and weed killers). However this commitment will be approached by persuasion not coercion through rules and regulations, except where an area of plots is designated for 'organic' use.

### Biodiversity

**Objective 10:** At new sites biodiversity will be encouraged as a fundamental objective, with native trees and shrubs used within the site and also planted around the edges.

Allotments are important urban habitats for wildlife as they provide food, shelter and breeding sites. They also provide an important link for wildlife with other

green spaces in the area. This can be enhanced by the use of native hedge and climbing species around site boundaries. As well as shelter for wildlife it gives visual interest. Areas within allotment sites/plots left to 'go wild' also provide a great habitat for wildlife – trees within these areas are also of benefit.

What can be done at allotment sites to enhance them further for wildlife, by planting native boundaries or leaving areas uncultivated, will vary from site to site. For example some smaller sites may struggle to find the room to leave wilder areas.

When new allotment sites are established biodiversity will be a fundamental part of the design, with native trees and shrubs used within the site and also around the edges.

### Policy 5: Secure resources

Fingal County Council provides resources to maintain and administer its publically provided allotments. This will be done a cost-neutral basis with income from allotment letting being used to off-set the costs of maintaining and further developing publically provided allotments in the Fingal area. Other resources are often secured to establish new allotment sites or fund major improvements.

Currently rents for Fingal County Council provided allotments are determined by the size of the allotment and are set as follows: €50 - for a 5m x 10m plot, €100 for a 10m x 10m plot and €200 - for a 20m x 10m plot. These prices shall be reviewed regularly.

**Objective 11:** Inform allotment holders of the rental changes.

## 3.0 Strategy – Vision, & Key Policies & Objectives

Allotment site associations may be successful in obtaining small grants for communal huts, communal composting bins, training courses, etc. In addition, small amounts of money for the site have been raised at open days from the sale of surplus produce and again this is welcomed, although the sale of produce for personal gain is not permitted.

**Objective 12:** Circulate information on funding opportunities to allotment committees.

**Objective 13:** Provide advice and support on funding applications.



## 4.0 Conclusion

This Allotment Strategy highlights the broad policies and objectives which Fingal County Council aims to deliver.

This strategy shall be reconsidered in line with the Fingal County Development Plan.

The attached appendices include the Fingal County Council Protocol for publically owned allotments and a template constitution for Allotment Committees.



# **APPENDICES**

## **Appendix A**

**Fingal County Council Allotment Protocol**

## **Appendix B**

**Template Constitution for Allotment Committee**

# DRAFT FINGAL ALLOTMENT STRATEGY

---

## Appendix A:

### Fingal County Council Allotment Protocol

#### Allotment lettings

##### 1 - Allocation of Vacant Allotments

- 1.1 Applicants who wish to register for an allotment must apply for an allotment application form AL1 available from Fingal County Councils Parks Division to register for an allotment.
- 1.2 Once a person has applied for an allotment, s/he will be placed on the waiting list or provided with an allotment if one is available immediately. Vacant allotments shall be offered by the County Council to applicants in order of application on the waiting list.
- 1.3 Preference will be given to applicants normally residing in Fingal. Requests from persons normally residing outside County Fingal shall not be considered until all Fingal residents have been catered for.
- 1.4 Preference for location (Turvey in Donabate or Powerstown in Blanchardstown or Skerries) and for allotment size (5m x 10m, 10m x 10m or 20m x 10m) shall be indicated at the application stage and subsequent renewal notices by a first and second preference. The County Council shall endeavour to provide the first preference plot size at the preferred location when vacant places become available.
- 1.5 A person on the waiting list shall be allowed to refuse an allotment location or plot size twice. After the second refusal the County Council may place the person at the back of the waiting list or remove the person from the waiting list.

- 1.6 When a person accepts an allotment at their second or third preference, they shall be placed at the back of the list for their first preference allotment.
- 1.7 Existing licensees will be given first preference if they wish to upgrade/downgrade the size of their allotment. Licensees are required to complete a new AL1 application form before the 1st December at the end of their tenancy year.
- 1.8 Allotments are a temporary development. All plottolders shall be aware that notice to leave may be given at the discretion of Fingal County Council.

##### 2 - Assignment

- 2.1 The allocation of an Allotment is personal to the Licensee. Licensees may not assign, sublet or part with possession of all or part of their Allotments during the lifetime of the Tenancy.
- 2.2 The Licensee shall be responsible for his Allotment and all that is on it. The Licensee shall be responsible for the removal of all waste matter relating to fences, gates, sheds and crops from the Allotment at the termination of the Tenancy. Any items left on the Allotment after the Tenancy has terminated will be disposed of in any manner, which the County Council deems fit and the cost of such disposal may be recovered from the Licensee.
- 2.3 Only one plot will be assigned per address

## Appendix A:

### Fingal County Council Allotment Protocol

#### 3 - Termination

- 3.1 The Allotment Licence agreement shall terminate every year at each allotment scheme on the dates indicated below:
- | Allotment scheme | Termination date licence agreement |
|------------------|------------------------------------|
| Turvey           | 31st December                      |
| Skerries         | 31st January                       |
| Powerstown       | 28th February                      |
- 3.2 The Allotment Licence agreement may be terminated by the Council before the dates indicated in paragraph 3.1 if:
- 3.2.1 The allotment development is being rescinded.
- 3.2.2 The rent is in arrears for more than 30 days after notification by the County Council
- 3.2.3 The Licensee is not duly observing the rules affecting the Allotment, or any other condition of his/her Tenancy

#### 4 - Rent

- 4.1 The rent of an Allotment shall be paid on an annual basis within two weeks following a request for payment send to existing and potential licensees by the County Council.
- 4.2 The rent is determined by the size of the allotment and is set as follows: €50,- for a 5m x 10m plot, €100 for a 10m x 10m plot and €200,- for a 20m x 10m plot
- 4.3 Failure to pay the rent within two weeks following the request for payment will result in the County Council issuing a two-week notice for payment within 14 days. If no rent is received after 14 days, the County Council may allocate the allotment to a new licensee from the waiting list.

#### 5 - Composting

- 5.1 Allotment holders must make every effort to compost waste materials.
- 5.2 Non-compostable waste shall not be burnt at the allotment site, but shall be removed from the site by the licensee. Bonfires are only permitted on site for the burning of diseased plant material, providing that such bonfires do not cause nuisance or annoyance to other Licensees or local residents. Bonfires must not under any circumstances be left unattended.

#### 6 - Cultivation and Use of Allotments

- 6.1 Licensees must use Allotments for their own personal use and must not carry out any business.
- 6.2 Allotments must be kept clean and in good condition, free from weeds and must be cultivated to the extent of at least fifty per cent of the total area.
- 6.3 Licensees shall keep hedges, fences and gates within the boundary of their Allotment properly cut, trimmed and maintained. The licensee shall not interfere with or remove any existing hedging, fencing or other boundary markers on the allotment site.
- 6.4 Licensees shall not cut or prune any trees adjoining the Allotments.
- 6.5 The licensee shall not grow any plants, weeds or otherwise, as specified and prohibited by Irish and European law

## Appendix A:

### Fingal County Council Allotment Protocol

6.6 The Council may be forced to dispose of crops, plants or otherwise due to disease.

#### 7 - Hoses and Other Restrictions

7.1 Sprinklers are not allowed due to the large volumes of water used. The licensee must not leave any hoses running after allotment closing hours.

7.2 Rubbish refuse or decaying matter (except for a reasonable amount of manure or compost required for cultivation) must not be deposited on the Allotment or any adjoining land by the Licensee or by anyone else with the Licensee's permission. Any Licensee, or any person being a guest of that licensee, found dumping such materials at the licensee's plot or a vacant plot without the consent of the Council, may have their licence agreement terminated immediately.

#### 8 - Dogs, Animals and Bees

8.1 Dogs, with the exception of guide dogs, must not be brought on to the Allotments or any part of the Site unless they are kept on a lead within the owners' allotment.

8.2 Livestock and poultry shall not be kept on Allotments.

8.3 Beehives shall only be permitted at the discretion of the Council.

#### 9 - Unauthorised Persons

9.1 Only the Licensee, or a person authorised and/or accompanied by the Licensee is allowed on a Site.

9.2 The Council may order any person entering the Site unlawfully or in breach of these Rules, to leave immediately.

9.3 The County Council may take action against a Licensee for allowing an unauthorized Person to be on the Site, when it has reasonable grounds for believing that by permitting unlawful access has seriously inconvenienced other users of the site.

9.4 Any Licensee, or any person being a guest of that licensee, found removing produce or other items from another licensee's plot without the consent of that plot's licensee, or from a vacant plot without the consent of the Council, may have their licence agreement terminated immediately. The licensee will be held responsible for such guest's behaviour.

#### 10 - Security

10.1 Each licensee shall be issued by the County Council with a one key to access the allotment area.

10.2 The entry gates to the allotments are to be locked at all times by the licensee holders when entering and leaving the allotment site. The County Council will treat the noncompliance with this condition as a breach of the rules affecting the use of the allotment site as set out in paragraph 3.2.2. Should the licensee be observed not locking the gates more than 2 times by County Council staff or members of the



## Appendix A:

### Fingal County Council Allotment Protocol

local allotment committee, the County Council will terminate the licence agreement.

10.3 The costs for a replacement key from the County Council shall be €10.00

10.4 The transfer of keys to any unauthorised person(s) is strictly prohibited.

10.5 Keys must be returned to the Council upon termination of the letting agreement

#### 11 - Paths & Car Park

11.1 The County Council or allotment committee by arrangement, will keep the car parking areas and distributor pathways in good condition and also regularly cut the grass.

11.2 The licensees shall keep clear the distributor paths of obstructions at all times and these paths can only be accessed by licensees for large deliveries to the allotment plot such as the delivery of large quantities of manure and compost. Access to the pathways will be controlled by the County Council or the Allotment Committee.

#### 12 - Sheds, Building and Structures

12.1 The licensees are allowed to erect new structures on the allotment garden. The sheds shall not be higher than 2.20metres and the total ground floor surface shall not exceed 9 sqm. Any shed shall be kept in good order to the satisfaction of the County Council or the Allotment Committee.

12.2 No trade or business may be carried out from sheds, greenhouses or tool lockers.

12.3 Petrol, oil, fuel, lubricants or other flammable liquids must not be stored in the allotments.

12.4 The Council shall not to be liable for loss of, or damage to, whether by accident, fire, theft or otherwise, any tools or contents in the shed, greenhouse or tool locker.

12.5 The Council shall not be obliged to replace or repair any private shed, greenhouse or tool locker which is destroyed or damaged.

#### 13 - Inspection

13.1 The Allotment (and any shed or greenhouse on it) may be inspected by a member of the County Council at any time and the Licensee must give whatever access is required by them.

13.2 The Council will carry out regular inspections on each of the allotment sites. The licencees of plots that are deemed to be underutilized, overgrown or in breach of any of the conditions of this Schedule of Conditions, will receive a warning letter outlining the problem with their plot. This problem will need to be rectified prior to the following month's inspection. A maximum of two warning letters will be issued to the licencee. If no action is undertaken to rectify the problem within 4 weeks of the date of issue of the second warning letter, the lease

## Appendix A:

### Fingal County Council Allotment Protocol

agreement will be terminated and the allotment reallocated. The County Council will not re-fund the lease fee to a licensee once a second warning letter has been issued. Any licensee who receives two warning letters during any one season will not be given the option to renew their agreement for the following year.

#### 14 - Disputes

14.1 Disputes between Licensees referred to the Council, the decision of the Council will be binding on all the Licensees involved in the dispute.

#### 15 - Change of Address

15.1 Licensees must immediately inform the Council in writing of changes of address.

15.2 Any notice must be served on a Licensee either personally or by leaving it at his last known address, or by registered letter or by recorded delivery letter addressed to him there, or by fixing a notice in a conspicuous manner on the Allotment.

15.3 Notices served under paragraph 13.2 will be treated as properly served even if not in fact received.

#### 16 - Interpretation and Repeal

16.1 In these rules, the following words are to have the following meanings:

Allotment: Any allotment or leisure garden let by or on behalf of the Council.

The County Council: Fingal County Council

Rent: The annual rent payable for the Tenancy of an Allotment and all amenities provided with it.

Licensee: A person who holds a Tenancy of an Allotment.

Letting agreement: The letting of an Allotment to a licensee.

16.2 The headings of these rules are not to affect their interpretation.

16.3 This protocol may be reviewed at the discretion of the County Council.

## Appendix B

### Template Constitution for Allotment Committee

An allotment committee will most likely be a voluntary organisation and there is no legal requirement for a voluntary organisation to have a constitution. However difficulties and disputes are much more likely to be resolved amicably if there is a framework for managing the organisation.

There is no one standard constitution. If you are a new association then you may want to start with a simple constitution to get you going and build it up as time goes by. Do not try to put every thing in, the document will become very bulky and it will be expensive if you have to modify it. You can refer to Rules, standing orders for AGMs and Committee meetings.

Some items are essential. Always remember you want members to read the document and not be intimidated.

#### Name

The name of your association/group/society should be clear simple and nondiscriminatory.

The name of the organisation is (.....)

#### Objects

This section should set out clearly the main objects of the organisation. One liners are ideal. They should be carefully drafted to reflect the aims of the organisation. Prospective funders will scrutinise them.

The objects serve two purposes:

1. To direct future management committees in relation to the activities they should pursue.
2. To identify to others what the organisation does.

Sample Objects are (you need not – and should not – use all of these)

- The co-ordination of all members.
- The protection of members interests especially of their security of tenure.

- To stimulate interest in and to encourage a commitment towards horticulture in allotments and gardens.
- To purchase, on a co-operative basis, supplies for the use of the members.
- To foster the interests and responsibilities of its members.
- To preserve the existing allotment gardens.
- To promote new allotment gardens.
- To educate allotment gardeners and to preserve skills.
- To advocate the benefits of environmentally sustainable allotment gardening.
- To manage and supervise Allotments for the benefit of the Members of the organisation in accordance with the Association's General Rules.
- To promote by whatever means agreed by the Membership, the suitable provision of Allotments in the area.
- To provide, by whatever means agreed by the Membership, support for the ploholders and opportunities for the public to learn about Allotments and their cultivation.
- To represent and promote the interests of ploholders.
- To promote a greater understanding of allotment gardening among the local community and beyond.
- To protect and promote the biodiversity, landscape value and amenity of the allotment site.
- To foster good relations with residential neighbours, and local statutory & nonstatutory bodies.
- To practice good governance and follow participatory & non-discriminatory principles;

## Appendix B

### Template Constitution for Allotment Committee

#### NB

In pursuit of these Objects, the Association shall be non-political, non-sectarian and non-racial.

#### Powers

The powers describe what you can do to carry out the objectives.

You can just use a catch-all worded

“To do anything which may be incidental or conducive to the furtherance of the Associations Objects.”

Alternatively you can have a list of specific powers, but if you choose this route be careful you do not leave something out that you may want to do later. Sample powers are below:

- To carry out any activity in furtherance of the objects
- To purchase, lease, hire, etc
- To improve, develop, manage or other wise deal with the property and/or rights of the Association.
- To sell, lease out, hire out, license or otherwise dispose of all or part of the property and/or rights of the Association.
- To borrow money.
- To employ staff
- Engage consultants
- Co-opt experts
- To effect insurance
- To invest funds
- Liaise with other like-minded organisations.
- To raise funds
- To accept grants donations.

You may need to define your relationship between you and your Landlord if you do not own the land or put this into the General Rules

#### Members

You may have several categories of members:

- The plot holder
- The plot holders partner
- Helpers
- Waiting list members.
- Honorary members, e.g. Council officers

However if you define the members, be sure to state who has voting rights and how the rights are established. For instance if a full size plot is dug by two people do they both have a vote? A full plot by one person does it carry one vote? How about half plots? What subscription/rent does each category of member pay? Any person can apply to be a member and must lodge an application form with the organization?

- Membership shall be open to..... And confirmed by the payment of the annual subscription/rent as determined by the management committee
- The management committee may at its discretion refuse to admit any person for membership.
- The management committee shall keep a register of members.

#### General Meetings

- The management Committee shall convene an annual general meeting of all the members, not more than (15) months shall elapse between annual general meetings.
- The business of an Annual General Meeting shall include but not be limited to:
  - A report by the chair of the years activities
  - A review of the annual accounts.

## Appendix B

### Template Constitution for Allotment Committee

- The election/re-election of officer bearers and members of the management committee.
- Any other competent business.
- 14 days clear notice shall be given of any annual general meeting or extraordinary general meeting.
- The management committee may call a special general meeting at any time.
- If (XX)% of the members sign a letter requesting a special general meeting, the management committee shall organise such a meeting within 21 days.
- A quorum for general meetings shall be (XX)% of the voting members.
- Voting shall normally be by a show of hands, if a poll of all members is called for the management committee will arrange a poll of all members within (14) days. General meetings shall be governed by standing orders for AGMs and EGMs

#### Management Committee

- The maximum number of members of the management committee shall be (XX)
- A person shall not be eligible for election unless he/she is a member of the organisation.
- The AGM shall elect officers and ordinary committee members.
- The officers of the organisation shall be:  
President  
Vice-President  
Chairman  
Vice-Chairman  
Secretary  
Treasurer
- Officers shall retire each year but be eligible for re-election OR

- Officers shall be elected for three years and be eligible for a further three years after the first period. Normally they would retire for at least one year before being eligible for re-election.
- Ordinary members shall be elected for three years and be eligible for re-election.
- Initially after the first AGM one third of the ordinary management committee members shall retire, similarly at the end of the second year so that in time one third of the ordinary management committee members retire each year.

You may want to put a brief description in about the officers' job spec., or leave it to the standing orders. What you are looking for is a balance between continuity in the management committee while preventing take over by a small clique. The constitution should not be too strict about making existing committee members stand down, the use of the word "normally" can help out here.

- Management Committee meetings shall be governed by standing orders for use at Management Committee Meeting

#### Miscellaneous

You must always have a dissolution clause. No members must gain and having paid all debts etc, the balance either goes to a similar organisation or to charity as decided by the EGM.

You also need a clause which states how the constitution can be amended, usually at an AGM or EGM

## Appendix B

### Template Constitution for Allotment Committee

#### Sample Constitution:

##### 1. NAME

The Association shall be known as Fingal Allotments Association (hereinafter referred to as “the Association”) and shall be an unincorporated association.

##### 2. OBJECTS

The objects of the Association are to:-

- a. Represent and promote the interests of plotholders and cultivators at Fingal County Council;
- b. Promote a greater understanding of organic allotment gardening among the local community and beyond;
- c. Protect and promote the biodiversity, landscape value and amenity of the Fingal Allotment Site;
- d. Foster good relations with residential neighbours and local statutory and non-statutory bodies;
- e. Practise good governance of Fingal Allotments and follow participatory and non-discriminatory principles;

##### 3. POWERS

In furtherance of the objects the Association may:-

- a. Employ and pay any person persons to supervise, organise and carry on the work of the Association;
- b. Engage and pay fees to professional and technical advisers or consultants to assist in the work of the Association;
- c. Co-operate and liaise with representatives of voluntary organisations, government departments, local and other statutory authorities and individuals;
- d. Become members of any organisations that may benefit the Association or are compatible with its objects;
- e. Promote or carry out or assist in promoting and carrying out research, surveys and investigations and the publication of their results;

- f. Arrange and provide for or join in arranging and providing for the holding of exhibitions, meetings, lectures, classes, seminars and training courses for members of the Association, the local community or the general public;
- g. Collect and disseminate information on all matters pertaining to its objects and exchange such information with other bodies having similar objects, whether in this country or overseas;
- h. Open and maintain such bank accounts as the Committee may think fit;
- i. Raise money for the furtherance of the objects and accept gifts on such terms and on such security as shall be found appropriate;
- j. Raise funds and invite and receive contributions from any person or persons by way of subscription or otherwise;
- k. Invest the funds of the Association not immediately required for the objects in or upon such investments, securities or property as may be thought fit;
- l. Perform any other lawful acts as are incidental or conducive to the attainment of the objects.

##### 4. MEMBERSHIP

- a. Full membership of the Association shall be open to individuals of sixteen years and over.
- b. There shall be three types of full membership, as follows:-
  - i. Plotholder: The person named on the licence for an allotment on Fingal Allotment Site provided payment of the site association fee has been paid;
  - ii. Cultivator: A person not named on the licence but who works with the Plotholder. Not more than two Cultivator memberships will be allowed for each Plotholder membership;

## Appendix B

### Template Constitution for Allotment Committee

- iii. Friend of Fingal: An individual or organisation ineligible for Plotholder or Cultivator membership who wishes to support the objects of the Association subject to the total number of Friends of Fingal memberships not exceeding one third of the total membership of the Association at any time;
- c. Full members of the Association shall be entitled to vote at meetings of the Association; to nominate or second candidates for the Committee or for Auditor; to serve on the Committee or hold any office in the Association.
- d. The Committee may at its discretion appoint honorary members but they shall not be full members nor enjoy any of the rights listed in Clause 4 (c).
- e. Plotholders are automatically members of the Association by virtue of payment of the site association fee collected with the annual plot rental and remitted to the Association. Any individual or organisation seeking Cultivator or Friend of Fingal membership must submit an application form signed by the applicant or, in the case of corporations and unincorporated associations, signed on behalf of that corporation or association. Admission to membership shall be at the discretion of the Committee which shall give reasons in writing for any refusal. Immediately following any admission under this procedure the appropriate entry shall be made in the Register of Members.
- f. The Committee shall have the right at any time to terminate a Cultivator or Friend of Fingal membership for good and sufficient reasons subject to allowing the member concerned a right to make representations to the Committee before a final decision is made.

- g. In the event of misconduct by any Plotholder the Committee shall have the right to request that Fingal County Council terminate that Plotholder's let subject to allowing that Plotholder to make representations to the Committee before any such request is made.

#### 5. OFFICERS

Only full members of the Association shall be eligible to serve as officers or members of the Committee. Nominations for officers and membership of the Committee must be made in writing with the consent of the person nominated and given to the Secretary at least seven clear days before the Annual General Meeting. Members may not nominate or second themselves. In the event of competing nominations there shall be an election. The officers of the Association shall be a Chair, Secretary and Treasurer, two honorary auditors and such other officers as the Association shall from time to time decide who shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting and hold office until the conclusion of the Annual General Meeting next after their election. They shall then be eligible for re-election provided that no officer shall hold any office for more than three consecutive years. On the expiry of three years in any office a year must elapse before that officer shall be eligible for re-election to the office previously held but s/he may remain an ordinary member of the Committee.

The duties of the officers shall be as follows:-

- a. The Chair shall chair all Committee meetings and General Meetings of the Association and represent the Association at meetings of any organisation of which the Association is a member and on other occasions as appropriate. His duties will include management and direction of the Association towards the furtherance of the objects with the assistance of the other officers and members of the Committee.

## Appendix B

### Template Constitution for Allotment Committee

- b. The Secretary shall attend and keep minutes of the General Meetings and Committee meetings, maintain the Register of Members, give notice of meetings, ensure that members of the Association are given appropriate information and represent the Association if requested by the Chair;
- c. The Treasurer shall attend all meetings of the Association and the Committee, keep records of the financial transactions of the Association and its funds, prepare accounts showing the financial position of the Association annually for presentation to the Annual General Meeting and interim accounts for presentation to the Committee if requested and represent the Association if requested by the Chair;
- d. The honorary auditors, unlike the other officers of the Association, shall not be members of the Committee but shall audit the accounts prepared by the Treasurer each year.

#### 6. COMMITTEE

- a. The affairs of the Association shall be conducted by a Committee comprising the Chair, Secretary and Treasurer together with such other ordinary members of the Association as may be elected or co-opted as provided below;
- b. The Committee shall have power to exercise any of the powers of the Association other than those reserved to individual members;
- c. Meetings of the Committee shall be held not less than four times a year;
- d. In the event of vacancies arising in the course of the year the Committee may co-opt a full member of the Association to serve on the Committee until the conclusion of the next Annual General Meeting at which such co-opted member shall be eligible for election to the Committee. Co-opted

- members shall be entitled to vote at meetings of the Committee. Not more than four co-opted members may serve on the Committee at any one time;
- e. In the event of any official demitting office in the course of the year the Committee may appoint any full member to fill the vacancy who shall hold office until the conclusion of the next Annual General Meeting of the Association and shall be eligible for election to that office at that meeting;
- f. The proceedings of the Committee shall not be invalidated by any failure to elect or any defect in an election, appointment, co-option or qualification of any member;
- g. The Committee shall have power to employ such persons and fix their remuneration as it may think appropriate. Such persons shall not be members of the Committee;
- h. The Committee may create any sub-committees or special or standing sub-committees to report to it as it considers appropriate and shall determine their terms of reference, powers, duration and composition.

#### 7. MEETINGS

- a. The first Annual General Meeting of the Association under this Constitution shall be held not later than 1st January 2012, and once in each calendar year thereafter;
- b. The Committee shall determine the time and place of all General Meetings of the Association and at least twenty one days clear notice of a General meeting shall be given in writing by the Secretary to each member;
- c. The business of the Annual General Meeting shall be to:-



## Appendix B

### Template Constitution for Allotment Committee

- i. consider the annual report on the work of the Association
- ii. approve the audited accounts
- iii. elect the officers and members of the Committee
- iv. consider and vote on any motions;
- d. The Chair may at any time call an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Association on giving twenty one days notice and the Secretary shall call an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Association within twenty one days of receiving a written request to do so signed by not less than twenty full members with reasons or a copy of a motion to be considered by such Extraordinary General Meeting;
- e. All motions for consideration at any General Meeting must be submitted in writing to the Secretary with the name of the proposer not less than twenty eight days before the date of the meeting.

#### 8. PROCEDURE AT MEETINGS

- a. The quorum for any Committee Meeting shall be one half of the current actual membership of the Committee;
- b. The quorum for a General Meeting shall be one fifth of the current actual membership of the Association;
- c. Unless otherwise stipulated in this Constitution all questions arising at any meeting shall be decided by a simple majority of votes cast. In the case of an equality of votes the person in the chair shall have a second or casting vote. The person in the chair shall have discretion to decide whether the voting on any question or motion shall be by a show of hands or ballot.
- d. Minutes shall be kept of all meetings whether General or of the Committee or any sub-committees or standing committees comprising a list of those present, in attendance and in the

- chair with a summary of the discussion and a record of all resolutions and decisions.
- e. The Committee shall have power to adopt standing orders for the Association and its committees and sub-committees. Any such standing orders shall come into effect immediately they are approved by the Committee but will be subject to any policy directions given by or amendments made by the Association in General Meeting;
- f. The Committee shall have power to draw up and publish Site Guidelines for the benefit of members of the Association and other visitors to the Allotment Site. Such guidelines shall, in particular, indicate the standards of practice and behaviour expected from members and visitors and the action that the Committee shall be entitled to take in the event of any infringement. The Site Guidelines are deemed to be bye laws of the Association and are subject to any directions or amendments made by the Association in General Meeting.

#### 9. FINANCE

- a. All funds raised by or on behalf of the Association shall be applied in furtherance of the objects of the Association and for no other purpose;
- b. Members of the Committee or any sub-committee or standing committee shall be entitled to reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred in carrying out their duties to the Association provided claims for reimbursement are made in writing to the Treasurer and supported by receipts;
- c. The Committee shall authorise three of its members to sign cheques on behalf of the Association, one of whom shall be the Treasurer. All cheques must be signed by at least two of the authorised signatories.

## Appendix B

### Template Constitution for Allotment Committee

#### 10. ALTERATIONS TO THE CONSTITUTION

This Constitution may be altered only in General Meeting by giving notice to all members in writing setting out the terms of the proposed alteration not less than twenty one days before the date of the General Meeting at which the alteration is to be proposed followed by a majority of two thirds of the members present and voting in favour of the alteration.

#### 11. DISSOLUTION

The Committee may by a simple majority decide at any time that it is necessary or advisable to dissolve the Association and shall call an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Association by giving not less than twenty one days notice in writing stating the terms of the resolution for dissolution to be proposed at the meeting. If the resolution is approved by at least two thirds of the members present and voting at such General Meeting then -

- a. The Committee shall apply the assets of the Association to settlement of the debts and liabilities of the Association including, as necessary, the sale of any assets of the Association for the best obtainable price;
- b. If dissolution is caused by the cessation of allotments at Fingal Allotment Site any assets remaining after settlement of debts and liabilities shall be given or transferred to such other organisation or organisations having similar objects to the Association as the Committee may determine;
- c. In the event of dissolution occurring for any other reason the Committee shall invite any other organisation or organisations having similar objects as it may determine to set up a trust to receive the remaining assets of the Association, if any, with power:-

- i. within three years of the date of dissolution to transfer the assets in trust to any new, properly constituted body with objects similar to the Association set up at Fingal Allotment Site and dissolve the trust; or
- ii. to use or dispose of the assets in the trust as seems fit if no such body is set up within three years of the date of dissolution.



**Comhairle Contae Fhine Gall**  
**Fingal County Council**

Planning & Strategic Infrastructure Department,  
Environment, Business & Enterprise Department,

Fingal County Council, County Hall,  
Main Street, Swords,  
Co.Dublin.

[www.fingalcoco.ie/planning/planningitemsondisplay](http://www.fingalcoco.ie/planning/planningitemsondisplay)  
Tel: 01 8905543