

Water Usage and Sustainability

As part of your allotment license, we require all tenants to practice sustainable water usage to ensure fair and efficient use of resources. Please follow these important guidelines:

1. **Rainwater Collection:** All tenants must install rain barrels or other rainwater harvesting systems. If you already have one, consider increasing your rainwater storage capacity.
2. **Water Conservation:** Use water-saving techniques like mulching to retain moisture in the soil, and adopt efficient irrigation methods.
3. **Respect for Others:** Water is a shared resource especially at Maxton Allotments, where it's collected from the ground. It's crucial to use water sparingly to ensure everyone has access.

The Maxton Allotments borehole and water tank system provides a minimum of 6,000 litres of water daily, with continuous refilling. However, excessive and inconsiderate use by some tenants has led to shortages, preventing others from having enough water. This is not in line with the principles of community gardening and is unacceptable.

Given the ongoing climate crisis, the Council expects all tenants to adopt better water management practices. Freshwater is a limited resource, and no additional water will be provided at Maxton Allotments. As a result, the use of hosepipes or sprinklers connected to public water is strictly prohibited. Tenants should focus on collecting rainwater, modifying crop-growing practices, and using water retention techniques.

Compliance with the Tenancy Agreement

After receiving a petition from Allotment Holders (dated August 4th, 2024) regarding water supplies, the Council conducted a survey to evaluate rainwater collection among tenants. We looked at the use of water butts and tanks connected to structures for rainwater harvesting, as well as the use of ground cover and mulch for water retention.

The Annual Tenancy Agreement (Section A22) states that all structures must be equipped to collect and store rainwater. Tenants must also use water-saving materials like mulch, and borehole water should only be used as a last resort. Hoses should not be connected to taps and can only be used to fill containers.

Survey Results

Our survey found that only 20% of tenants at Maxton are collecting rainwater, and around 30% of plots are overgrown or uncultivated. This high reliance on borehole water violates Section A22 of the Tenancy Agreement.

Action Required

If tenants do not have a water butt or tank installed on their plot, we urge them to do so as soon as possible. Had more tenants collected rainwater, many of the recent water shortages could have been avoided—especially since July 2024 was one of the wettest months on record.

The borehole tank, installed in August 2022, has a 6,000-litre capacity and refills throughout the day. With 71 plots at Maxton, even if the tank didn't refill during the day, each plot would still have access to 84.5 litres of water daily. With rainwater collection, this should be sufficient for everyone.

Vacating or Transferring Plots

If tenants wish to vacate their plot, please contact the Allotment Project Officer to arrange this. They can also request to join the waiting list for other allotment sites in Dover, such as Pretoria, Pilot's Meadow, or Prospect Place. Please note that while these sites currently use mains water, they too will be switching to borehole systems in line with the Council's sustainability goals.

Thank you for your cooperation and your efforts to support the sustainable management of our shared allotment resources.