



Bustardthorpe Allotments Association
Charitable Incorporated Organisation
(BAACIO)

Registered Charity No: 1211930

Bishopthorpe Road, York, YO23 2QA

Communication Policy

(primarily for Trustees, but also for plotholders)

The Tenancy Agreement

It is really important as Trustees that we lead by example. Please ensure that you regularly familiarise yourself with the wording of the Tenancy Agreement and follow all aspects of it.

Communication

(whether with fellow trustees, plotholders or members of the public)

To Plotholders who have email addresses

If an email is being sent to more than one plotholder, the email addresses should be put in the BCC box. Emails should only be sent through the bustardthorpeallotments@gmail.com email account, unless they are regarding lettings or the waiting list when the Lettings Officer will use the bustardthorpelettings@gmail.com email account.

To Plotholders who do not have email addresses

It is important that if any email is sent to all plotholders with email addresses, that the same information is either posted to plotholders, eg. rent invoices and invitations to AGMs, or posted on the noticeboard by the shop on site. Plotholders who do not have email addresses know that, to stay informed, they have to check the noticeboard regularly and that if there is a larger document, eg. minutes of a meeting, that a hard copy is kept in the green Operations Manuals in the shop.

Trustee communications

Inevitably there may well be communications which don't involve all trustees, in such a situation it is important that the outcome is shared with all trustees either by email or WhatsApp, e.g. the purchase of a large piece of equipment. Such decisions are then recorded in the minutes of the subsequent trustee meeting.

Email Etiquette tips:

Some of this also applies to other forms of electronic communication such as texts or WhatsApp.

The Process

- Answer swiftly even if it is just to acknowledge receipt and indicate that you will reply in full later.
- Do not overuse the high priority option - avoid using URGENT and IMPORTANT.
- Don't send or forward emails containing libelous, defamatory, offensive, racist or obscene remarks, chain letters.
- If uncertain, use a more third-party, formal approach - informality can be misunderstood, e.g. write it as if it was a traditional letter with the salutation being 'Dear' rather than 'Hi', avoid using emojis, '!' and abbreviations.
- If sending an email on a new topic do not use a previously sent or received email and Reply or Reply All. Start afresh with a new list of recipients and subject title.

Email Addresses

- If the **Reply All** facility is used, it is worth checking the email addresses which will receive your replying email, to ensure that the new message is sent only to the intended recipients. Also, check the email addresses and do not presume that the previous sender had all the email addresses correct.
- When sending emails to all Bustardthorpe plotholder email addresses, if **bounce-back emails** are received as a result, contact using a different method, e.g. message to a mobile phone number, to get the erroneous email address corrected for replacement on the Association database of plotholders.

The Structure

- Start by making sure that the subject is meaningful, summarises the content of the email and where relevant include the plot number and surname of the tenant.
- Don't leave out the message thread of previous emails on the same subject, it allows the reader to read in context.
- Use cc: field sparingly and be sure that you actually want all recipients to receive the email if you select **Reply to All**.

The Content - *to enable you to get your message across in a way that the recipient can easily understand and read*

- Write it as if it was a traditional letter on paper. i.e. start with 'Dear' and end with something like 'With kind regards', 'Best Wishes' or some such.
- Use proper spelling, grammar, paragraph breaks & punctuation and take care with abbreviations and emoticons.
- Ensure that there are no more than 5-6 lines of text in a paragraph and put a line of space between paragraphs.
- The complete email should be readable on one screen without scrolling, otherwise it is too long.
- Be concise and to the point - avoid long sentences.
- Use proper structure and layout.
- Do not write in CAPITALS.

Email Footers

If at the end of a received email you see wording similar to:

Sent from Samsung Mobile on O2

This indicates that the sender composed and sent the email on their mobile phone and it would be worth bearing this in mind when reading it as typing text on a mobile phone is not as easy as on a tablet, laptop or computer.

Finally, and most importantly:

- before sending it read the email through again from beginning to end as if you were receiving the email from someone you did not know.
Please remember that you should be able to say face to face what you have put in your email without either person feeling uncomfortable.
- If in any doubt, save it as a draft and come back to it afresh.

Data Protection

Association Responsibilities

Association Membership Database retention

Only the Secretary to the Trustees can amend the Association Membership Database (AMD) and only the Treasurer and Lettings Officer have access to modified versions. All out of date versions must be deleted if electronic or shredded if in paper form. An abridged plot number, name and mobile phone number only hard copy is left in the shop out of sight for emergency contact purposes.

Association Membership Database retention

When a plotholder leaves or details change the master database should be updated and previous versions, both original and copies, both .PDF and hard must be deleted or destroyed.

Tenancy Invoice retention

At the beginning of each year when the Tenancy Invoices are returned with corrections, these documents should replace the previous year's version and the out of date sheets should be shredded.

Plotholder Responsibilities

Throughout the year, plotholders must ensure that they inform the Secretary to the Trustees of any changes in their name or contact information, whether change of postal address, email or telephone numbers as per the Tenancy Agreement.

Trustee responsibilities

Because of their responsibility to the membership Trustees must conduct themselves at all times, in accordance with the seven Nolan principles which apply to all people in public life. Upon their election each Trustee must "*sign up*" to these principles and adhere to the Committee Process Communication Policy of BAACIO (as above). Breach of this or behaviour unbecoming of the Nolan principles shall constitute grounds for immediate dismissal from the Board of Trustees.

All correspondence must therefore be directed or have approval from the Chair/Secretary to the Trustees. Evidence of such needs to be retained if required at a later date

Appendix 2 - The Nolan Principles

(The 7 principles of public life)

1. Selflessness - Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.
2. Integrity - Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.
3. Objectivity - Holders of public office must act and take decision impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.
4. Accountability - Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.
5. Openness - Holder of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.
6. Honesty - Holders of public office should be truthful.
7. Leadership - Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life/the-7-principles-of-public-life--2>

Appendix 3 - Data Protection Guidelines

1. Personal data shall be processed fairly and lawfully and, in particular, shall not be processed unless:
 - a. at least one of the conditions in Schedule 2 is met, and
 - b. in the case of sensitive personal data, at least one of the conditions in Schedule 3 is also met.
2. Personal data shall be obtained only for one or more specified and lawful purposes and shall not be further processed in any manner incompatible with that purpose or those purposes.
3. Personal data shall be adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose or purposes for which they are processed.
4. Personal data shall be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date.
5. Personal data processed for any purpose or purposes shall not be kept for longer than is necessary for that purpose or those purposes.
6. Personal data shall be processed in accordance with the rights of data subjects under this Act.
7. Appropriate technical and organisational measures shall be taken against unauthorised or unlawful processing of personal data and against accidental loss or destruction of, or damage to, personal data.
8. Personal data shall not be transferred to a country or territory outside the European Economic Area unless that country or territory ensures an adequate level of protection for the rights and freedoms of data subjects in relation to the processing of personal data.

Source: <http://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/data-protection-principles/>

*Reviewed and updated:
Jo Rogers, Secretary to the Trustees
20 November 2025*