

#NAW26



National Allotments Week 2026 Media Information

Grow to Learn

Who is the National Allotment Society (NAS)?

The National Allotment Society (NAS) is the leading national organisation upholding the interests and rights of the allotment community across the UK.

We work with government at national and local levels, other organisations and landlords to provide, promote and preserve allotments for all.

We offer support, guidance and advice to our members and those with an interest in allotment gardening.

In 2011, His Majesty King Charles III kindly agreed to become the Patron of the Society. The King is an avid gardener himself and advocate of green issues, he is also keen to promote and protect the UK's enduring traditions.

What Is National Allotments Week?

National Allotments Week, established in 2002, is an annual celebration dedicated to raising awareness of the vital role allotments play in promoting healthier lifestyles, sustainable living, and stronger communities. Spearheaded by the National Allotment Society, the event

highlights the incredible benefits of allotments and encourages individuals, families, and communities to connect with the land and with each other.

Allotments have long been a cornerstone of sustainable living, offering people the opportunity to grow their own food, enjoy time outdoors, and adopt more active lifestyles. In addition to their physical and mental health benefits, allotments foster meaningful connections and friendships while contributing to the development of vibrant, cohesive communities.

Key Objectives of National Allotments Week:

1. Promote Healthy Living: Allotments empower individuals to embrace healthier lifestyles by growing fresh, nutritious produce and engaging in physical activity.
2. Champion Sustainability: Encouraging homegrown food reduces food miles, waste, and reliance on plastic packaging, supporting an eco-friendlier way of life.
3. Strengthen Communities: Allotments bring people together, creating spaces where diverse groups can bond over shared goals, gardening tips, and harvest celebrations.
4. Educate and Inspire: By sharing stories of allotment success, the event inspires more people to explore the joys of allotment gardening and sustainable living.
5. Raise Awareness and Preservation: Promote allotments to those who may not know about them, while encouraging efforts to preserve and maintain these vital community resources.

Speaking about the significance of National Allotments Week, Mike Farrell, Chair of the National Allotment Society, said: “Allotments have always been more than just a place to grow food. They are hubs of community spirit, wellbeing, and environmental awareness. National Allotments Week is our chance to celebrate their enduring value and to invite others to experience the joys and rewards of allotment gardening.”

Why Grow to Learn?

- Allotments as classrooms for life: They teach more than gardening skills, offering lessons in patience, resilience, problem-solving, and teamwork.
- Promotes lifelong learning: Time on the allotment encourages curiosity and a continuous love of learning for all ages.
- Supports personal development: Allotment gardening fosters confidence, independence, and wellbeing.
- Engages the next generation: Highlights how young people can gain valuable life skills and life-long lessons through hands-on experience.
- Connects learning and wellbeing: Demonstrates the link between practical skills, mental health, and personal growth.

Previous National Allotment Week Themes

2025 – Allotments & Wellbeing

2024 - Biodiversity

2023 - Soil Health

2022 - Bugs, Bees and Broccoli

2021- Plotting for the Future

2020 - Growing Food for Health and Wellbeing

2019 - Shared Harvest

2018 - Living and Growing

2017 - Growing and Movement

2016 - Growing Together

2015 - A plot for all ages

2014 – Growing Together

Key Timelines

April 1901

The Agricultural Organisation Society is formed

1917

Allotment & Smallholding Department formed under the direction of The Right Hon. F. D. Acland M.P., who was appointed Chairman.

1922

The Allotments Acts 1922 is introduced

1923

The Agricultural Rates Act 1923 and income tax relief on sales introduced

1924

Advances were made in respect of Land Renting Societies, where Local Authorities were beginning to see the wisdom of handing over their Allotments to properly constituted societies for administration.

The Allotment Organisation Society and the Smallholders Limited were brought into existence at a Conference held on 19th September 1924.

1930

On the 10th March, the National Union of Allotment Holders Ltd. and the Allotment Organisation Society amalgamated under the title of the National Allotment Society Ltd.

1939 - 1945

The “Dig for Victory” Campaign, assisting thousands of needy Allotment Holders each year.

1941

The NAS developed an allotment policy intended for post-war reconstruction.

1946

the Society changed its name to National Allotment and Garden Society

1947

An Allotment Holders Charter was prepared and published

1950

Allotment Act 1950 is introduced

1951

The “Village Produce Association” became attached to the NAS title as a method of distributing aid to rural areas.

1979

The society had a final change of title to its present title, the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners Limited

1980s

In the 1980's the National Society's organisation, structure and Headquarters changed considerably with the sale of the Flitwick Site and move to Corby. The original purchase of the Flitwick premises was possible, due to the generous assistance of Ted O'Dell who provided the premises on an interest free mortgage. In appreciation of his help, the Corby Office, the new headquarters, were named O'Dell House.

1997

The Society completed a national survey of allotments which provided the first comprehensive data on allotments for over 20 years.

2002

The first National Allotments Week was held - helping to grow interest in allotments.

2011

HM King Charles III became patron and interest in allotments reaches a high of 57 people waiting for every 100 plots.

2011/12

The Government carried out a review on all statutory provisions of LA - the section 23 1908 Act was under threat. NAS rallied the membership eliciting a huge response from the allotment movement. The Government agreed that the provision would remain.

2012

The society which had used various titles over the previous years adopted the trading name of National Allotment Society (NAS) but still operates as a cooperative under NSALG Ltd.

2016

The NAS created New Rules for operating as a co-operative under the new legislation and improved governance procedures.

2019/20

The Society concentrates on the provision of training for members, installs a new database to streamline all office procedures and continues to improve communications with members and stakeholders.

2020/21

NAS works with Government to ensure allotments remain open for gardening during Covid-19 lockdown.

2024

King Charles III announces his continued patronage with the NAS.

Fun Facts

- Allotments are often measured in poles (or rods), a traditional unit of measurement that equals 16.5 feet. This system comes from the old practice of using a "surveyor's rod" to measure land. Interestingly, 1 acre is the same as 160 poles, and this measurement is still used today in land surveys. So, when you hear about the size of an allotment, it might be measured in poles!
- Allotments are not just for everyday people – even famous figures have been known to enjoy them! For instance, Albert Einstein had an allotment in Berlin in 1922 when he was living there. At the time, he was reprimanded for neglecting his plot, with weeds taking over due to his busy schedule. In more recent years, former Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn is known for having his own allotment, where he grows fruit and even makes jam from his harvest.
- Many famous figures have found solace and joy in gardening, with several having their own vegetable patches. For example, **Kate Moss** is known to enjoy gardening and reportedly has a vegetable patch where she grows her own produce. **David Beckham** also has a vegetable garden at his home, where he tends to his crops. Even **Monty Don** and **Chris Packham** are passionate gardeners, with their allotments serving as personal retreats. These famous faces, among others, show that allotments and vegetable patches aren't just for the everyday gardener – they are enjoyed by some of the world's most well-known individuals.
- A fun fact: **The Good Life**, the popular 1970s BBC sitcom, has had a huge **comeback 46 years after it last aired**, but with a twist! The show, which originally followed a couple trying to live self-sufficiently, has been revived as a **theatre play**. This revival highlights the growing interest in the "grow-your-own" lifestyle, showing how self-sufficiency and sustainability are still important today.

- In Birmingham, a comprehensive [study](#) on allotments revealed that **88% of plot-holders grow potatoes**, making them the most commonly cultivated crop. Additionally, over three-quarters of plot-holders cultivate onions and shallots, brassicas, tomatoes, and courgettes.
- Recent studies indicate a significant shift in the demographics of allotment holders in the UK. A 2024 [report](#) by the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) notes that, **20 years ago, the average age of an allotment holder was over 60**, predominantly comprising retired individuals. However, this trend has changed, with a growing number of younger individuals engaging in allotment gardening.
- Similarly, a comprehensive [study](#) conducted in Birmingham found that **50% of allotment holders are aged 65 or older**, while **20% are between 30 and 49 years old**, and **almost 30% are aged between 50 and 64**. This data highlights a diverse age range among allotment enthusiasts, with a notable proportion of younger individuals participating in this activity.

Key Figures

- **Number of Allotments:** As of 2021, there are approximately 330,000 allotment plots across the UK
- **Average Plot Size:** A standard allotment plot is traditionally 10 rods (also known as poles or perches), equating to about 250 square meters (approximately 2,690 square feet). However, due to increasing demand and the need for more manageable spaces, many have subdivided plots into smaller sizes, such as half plots (125 square meters) or even quarter plots (62.5 square meters)
- **Waiting Lists:** As of September 30, 2023, there are at least 157,820 outstanding applications for allotments in England, marking an 81% increase from 12 years ago ([London Press](#))
- While APSE's 2025 *State of the Market* report highlights ongoing high demand for allotments, figures show that 35% of local authorities reported plans to offer more allotments to help meet interest — a shift from earlier statistics on expansion planning.
- **Members:** The National Allotment Society has approximately **130,000 members** over a 20% increase over the past five years.
- **Membership:** The National Allotment Society offers 8 different types of membership: Individual, Life, Association, Affiliate, School, Landowner, Parish & Town Council, and Other Local Authority membership.
- **Allotment holder age:** As per the Birmingham allotment [survey](#), the typical image of allotment holders has been of older men, but recent data shows a shift. More women are now taking on allotments, and there's a wider age range of plot-holders. While half are 65 or older, 20% are aged 30-49, and 30% are between 50-64. Most allotment holders work in professional jobs (44%), while 13% have manual jobs.
- **Cost:** **Average Cost:** In the UK, the average annual cost of an allotment typically ranges from £20 to £100. Urban areas tend to have higher fees compared to rural locations, with costs in cities such as London potentially being higher due to demand and limited availability.
- The National Allotment Society has 11 regional branches.

- **Cost:** To join the National Allotment Society is just £3.50 per year as an association member and £25 per year as an individual member. That's less than 50p per week!!
- The last official government study was written in 1969 H. Thorpe, *Departmental Committee of Inquiry into Allotments*, London, Parliamentary Papers, 1969
- If added together, all the UKs allotments would equal 58 Hyde Parks