



Garden Share For Older People Seminar Frequently Asked Questions



What are the main reasons for older people requiring support in their garden?

- Their garden can become overgrown, making them vulnerable to members of society who may see this as an opportunity to take advantage of them e.g. rogue traders, vandals, fly tipping, theft.
- The sight of their garden becoming overgrown can be very distressing for them.
- The garden can become dangerous to both the older person and visitors.
- It may cause tension between the older person and their neighbours, as a messy front garden often affects the whole street scene.

Why are some older people unable to maintain their garden?

- Limited physical ability or loss of a partner who was the primary person working on the garden.
- They have limited disposable income/savings – often older people can be property rich and cash poor. The average cost of a single gardener per hour in Hart is between £15 and £20.
- Friends and family who could perhaps help with their garden may not live in the area or alternatively, with the fast pace of 21st century life, are just too busy!

Where can an older person or their carer obtain information about local gardening services?

- Age Concern Hampshire has an Information and Advice Service which maintains a list of gardening services on behalf of Hampshire Gardening Initiatives. Free phone 0800 328 7154.
- Buy with Confidence operated by Trading Standards can help to locate a reliable trustworthy gardener in your area. Tel: 01962 833620 or www.buywithconfidence.co.uk.
- The Shaw Trust in association with HCC offer a gardening support service for the over 60's at reasonable cost. Tel: 0845 604 4643 for more information.
- Green Circle based in Basingstoke & Deane and Hart, help older people regain their gardening independence after an extended period of health or social care. Please note the service doesn't provide long term practical support. Tel: 0118 988 4844

What does 'Garden Share' actually mean?

- Garden Share literally means that a garden owner agrees to share either part or their entire garden with a person(s) who would like to grow their own fruit and vegetables, flowers or a combination of the three.
- In Hart our recommendation is that an older person (garden owner) shares part of their garden with the person wanting space to grow their own crops (grower). In return, the grower helps to keep the remainder of the garden under control.
- We are also aware that you needn't be an older person to want to share your garden, anyone with a garden can join Garden Share – however in Hart we would be looking to 'match' the older people's gardens as a priority.
-



Garden Share For Older People Seminar Frequently Asked Questions



- No money should exchange hands, however it is often nice to share produce with the garden owner.

How does Garden Share differ from Landshare?

- Landshare is a Chanel 4 website publicised in the main by Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall's River Cottage television series
- The main focus is to match landowners with both individuals and groups who wish to have space to grow crops.
- In Hart the main differences between Landshare and Garden Share are:
- Utilising garden space as opposed to farmland /spare land.
- Focuses on the older person's garden.
- Our aim is that the garden owner has their garden maintained by the gardener in return for a share of the garden – no money changes hands.

Why would a grower / gardener choose Garden Share over that of an allotment?

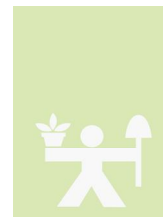
- According to latest UK figures there are currently 6 million people on the waiting list for allotments.
- The average 'wait' time is 40 years!
- In Hart the current waiting list held by Hart District Council for allotments just in Fleet is 240, the list is 'closed'. How many more people are there wanting to join?
- Hart's Garden Share will enable the grower to give something back to the community in the form of helping that older person that can no longer cope with their garden alone – what a great feeling!

What about the social element offered by both allotments and Landshare – is this missing from Garden Share?

- Not at all. In Hart we are keen to ensure a suitable 'match' of the older person with that of the grower not only in terms of location but also from a social viewpoint. As well as sharing a garden you could end up adopting a granny!
- Often the older person has a vast knowledge of gardening that can be shared with the grower.
- Within Hart we have applied for funding to enable us to run Garden Share forums, training sessions for novice gardeners on our own garden share plots and a website with a weekly blog!
- If an older person's garden is of a sufficient size there is no reason why more than 1 person can't garden there.



Garden Share For Older People Seminar Frequently Asked Questions



Do we really need a 'Broker' to set up Garden Share in our area?

- From our experience in Hart – the system is more likely to be sustainable with an individual managing the scheme. Whilst there appears to be no shortage of individuals wishing to share their garden – would-be growers are more reticent as they feel that there may be too many barriers to sharing. A broker certainly helps to alleviate this as the system automatically becomes more professional.
- A broker should be able to offer guidelines for good practice and advise individuals to seek legal advice if they feel they need to draw up a more formal agreement than the sample agreements a broker can offer.
- The broker can also track how the Garden Shares are progressing and ideally run marketing, training and social events.

What safety checks should be made in relation to working with vulnerable people?

- The only way to be reasonably sure that all parties are protected is through a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check.
- It is recommended that any organisation setting up Garden Share schemes should carry out CRB checks for both the garden owner and the grower(s).
- If an individual holds a current CRB check it may be possible to accept this in lines with CRB portability guidelines.
- There should be no charge for these CRB checks as all those involved are volunteers. See www.crb.gov.uk for details.

Do you need a legal agreement to Garden Share?

- Whilst there are several debates surrounding the pros and cons of legal agreements, we highly recommend that a contract agreement is established between the garden owner and the grower(s).
- The contract enables both parties to have a clear understanding of what is expected of them and can also provide a clearer exit procedure if things don't work out quite as originally planned for all parties involved.
- Whilst we are aware that some parish councils in Hampshire are already operating schemes using a simplistic introductory service with no follow up advice for garden sharers – we feel that it is vital that some form of disclaimer accompanies these services in order to protect the originator of the 'match' from future legal action if something untoward occurs.
- In Hart we feel that there will be a greater 'take up' of Garden Share if individuals feel that they have some 'protection' in the form of a contract.

Where can we locate sample contract templates?

- There are several published examples available on-line which have various degrees of complexity. Both Adopt-A-Garden and Landshare have contract templates to download.
- Using LawWorks' pro bono legal advice scheme, Hart Voluntary Action are currently developing contract templates for individuals to utilise and adapt as they see fit.



Garden Share For Older People Seminar Frequently Asked Questions



If the garden 'owner' is a housing tenant how does this impact on the Garden Share contract?

- Hart Voluntary Action's 'Minding the Garden' project undertakes garden maintenance work in gardens of older people including those living in council owned property, shared ownership or housing association properties i.e. Sentinel Housing. In all cases the actual owners of the properties have been incredibly supportive of the current garden maintenance programme. In the event of a garden share becoming available the contract would obviously need to be modified to take into account both the tenant and owner's requirements as well of those of the grower.

Are we as an organisation liable if anything goes wrong between the garden owner and the grower?

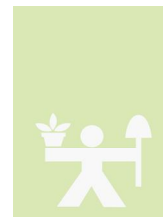
- Organisations operating a Garden Share scheme should ensure that information they provide in the form of contract templates, letters of contract termination etc are given with the clear understanding that the literature being used is for GUIDANCE purposes only.
- We would advise that all literature pertaining to contracts / agreements contains a disclaimer. Examples of these can be found on the Adopt-A-Garden website.

Do the garden owner or the grower need additional insurance?

- In Hart we advise garden owners to inform their home insurers that they are taking part in the scheme. Household insurance policies generally include liability insurance.
- We suggest that both the grower and the garden owner check that their insurance covers them for any incidents.



Garden Share For Older People Seminar Frequently Asked Questions



The following FAQ's demonstrate the reason as to why in Hart we recommend the use of a written contract / agreement.

What hours are normally recommended for growers to have access to gardens?

- Normally daylight hours would be recommended – however this could be negotiated between the garden owner and the grower.

What can and can't be grown in the garden?

- The growing of fruits, vegetables and/or companionship plants.
- It is advised plants should be no higher than 2.5m and should not take longer than 12 months to cultivate.
- In Hart we advise against planting expensive fruit trees or specialist plants that may be difficult to transplant if the Garden Share is ended.

What happens if the garden owner dies?

- In Hart we advise that the agreement would be terminated with 7 days notice at any time following death of a garden owner. However we advocate that the agreement should enable the grower to harvest previously planted produce up until an agreed date provided that it is no longer than 3 months following the date of the garden owner's death.
- In reality relatives are often quite relieved to know that the garden is still being maintained and that there is someone accessing and keeping an eye on an otherwise empty property. A well maintained garden makes a house much easier to sell!

What happens if the garden owner decides to sell their property or needs to move into long-term residential / nursing care?

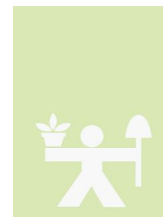
- As with the above point, in Hart, the agreement would be terminated with 7 days notice, although it is more than likely that the grower would have more time to continue maintaining the garden and harvesting their crops until the house was sold.
- Ideally we would hope that gardeners would be given a season's notice to quit the garden.

Can the grower have access to the garden owner's water supply?

- Obviously as weather forecasters allude to hotter, drier summers there is a need for access to water.
- Water butts are the recommended choice and there are examples of water companies (Southern Water) giving free water butts to Garden Share schemes.
- Hose pipes suffer much bad press – but an agreement should be made between the two parties for times of water shortage.
- If the garden owner utilises a water meter this needs to be taken into consideration.



Garden Share For Older People Seminar Frequently Asked Questions



Can the grower access the garden owner's electricity?

- An initial set up of a vegetable garden including raised beds may well require provision of electricity – this would need to be agreed between the two parties.
- In most instances where there is a need for electrical power there is a direct benefit to the garden owner i.e. cutting the lawn or hedges.

Where can the grower store their gardening equipment?

- The grower should be entitled to have access to store tools within the garden owner's property. This could be a space within an existing garage or shed.
- If neither is available the grower should be allowed to install a small shed.

Can the grower use pesticides / chemicals etc?

- This needs to be agreed prior to commencement of the Garden Share and a safe place to store them allocated.

What happens to the garden waste?

- Where possible as much of the waste should be composted on site.
- Any additional waste should be removed whether via local council garden waste services (garden owner to provide) or taken to the local recycling centre by the grower.
- In Hart we have included a percentage of money into our funding bid for this facility and will be looking to liaise with the District Council's recycling department.

Who can join the grower at the Garden Share site?

- This needs to be agreed with the garden owner – however in Hart we would be looking for the grower's family to maybe join them on site occasionally and get to know the older person – who is often incredibly lonely.

Can pets be brought into the garden?

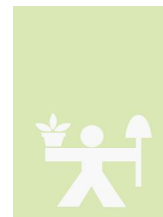
- No - pets of the grower, i.e. dogs and cats, should not be allowed on site with the exception of a working dog.
- The garden owner's pets (if applicable) should be allowed free access to the site but it is the responsibility of the garden owner to manage and to clear away waste.

What happens if property does not have side or rear access to the garden?

- Gardens with access only via the house should not be included in any Garden Share project.



Garden Share For Older People Seminar Frequently Asked Questions



And finally.....Funding?

- Funding advice is available through your local Council for Voluntary Services (CVS). There are 14 CVSs located throughout Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.
- Hart Voluntary Action is currently at the second stage of their funding bid with Local Food we would be happy to share our experiences with you.

Useful Contacts and Websites:

Adopt-A-Garden - <http://www.footprint-trust.co.uk/adoptgarden.html>

Age Concern – www.ageconcernhampshire.org.uk

Buy with Confidence - www.buywithconfidence.co.uk

Council for Voluntary Services, Hampshire – www.hampshirecvs.org.uk

Criminal Records Bureau - www.crb.gov.uk

Garden Organic – www.gardenorganic.org.uk

Green Circle – greencircle@thrive.org.uk

Hampshire County Council Wellbeing Services - www.hants.gov.uk/bettertime

Hart Voluntary Action – www.hartvolaction.org.uk

Landshare - <http://landshare.channel4.com>

LawWorks - <http://www.lawworks.org.uk/>

Shaw Trust - <http://www.shaw-trust.org.uk>

Thrive - <http://www.thrive.org.uk>

Transition Towns - <http://www.transitiontowns.org>