

FARM LANE ALLOTMENTS

HAND DUG WELLS – FULL RISK ASSESSMENT

Item	Details
Site	Farm Lane Allotments
Activity	Hand Dug Well Excavation
Maximum Intended Depth	7ft (Approx. 2.1m)
Method	Manual excavation using hand tools
Persons Involved	Volunteers, plot holders and helpers
Assessment Type	General Risk Assessment

1. Scope of Works

This assessment applies to the hand digging of shallow wells at Farm Lane Allotments for irrigation and water collection purposes. Excavations will be carried out manually using spades, shovels, buckets and hand tools. Excavations must not exceed 7ft in depth.

2. Persons at Risk

Volunteers, plot holders, visitors, children, contractors, delivery personnel and members of the public may all be affected by excavation works or completed wells.

3. Key Hazards & Control Measures

Hazard	Risk	Control Measures	Risk Level
Collapse of excavation sides	Burial, crushing, fatal injury	Excavation sides to be inspected regularly. Stop work if cracking, bulging or movement occurs. Never work alone inside excavation.	High
Falls into excavation	Broken bones, head injuries	Excavation area to be fenced/barriered when unattended. Secure covers used wherever possible.	Medium
Manual handling injuries	Back strain, muscle injuries	Use safe lifting techniques. Remove spoil in smaller loads. Rotate tasks regularly.	Medium
Underground services	Electrocution, flooding, gas leak	Check for underground utilities before digging. Stop work immediately if pipes or cables are found.	High
Lack of oxygen / poor air quality	Suffocation, dizziness	No person to enter confined or poorly ventilated excavations. Stop immediately if unusual smells occur.	High
Water ingress / flooding	Entrapment, collapse	Monitor groundwater and rainwater accumulation. Stop work during heavy rain.	Medium
Falling tools or materials	Head injuries	Keep spoil heaps away from excavation edges. Controlled tool handling required.	Medium
Slips, trips and uneven ground	Minor to serious injury	Maintain tidy work area. Keep pathways clear.	Low
Fatigue / dehydration	Reduced awareness, accidents	Regular breaks required. Drinking water available on site.	Low
Adverse weather	Collapse risk, heat exhaustion	Stop works during storms, heavy rain or extreme heat.	Medium
Lone working	Delayed emergency response	Minimum of two adults required during excavation activities.	High

Hazard	Risk	Control Measures	Risk Level
Unsafe access / exit	Falls, entrapment	Safe ladder access required for deeper excavations.	Medium
Public access after excavation completed	Falls, serious injury	Completed wells must be securely covered and protected.	High
Children accessing completed wells	Serious injury or fatality	Covers must prevent child access. Additional barriers recommended.	High
Structural failure of well cover	Collapse into well	Covers inspected regularly for rot, movement or weakness.	Medium

4. Safe Working Procedures

- Excavation depth must never exceed 7ft.
- Minimum of two adults must be present during excavation.
- Excavation walls must be checked regularly for instability.
- Spoil heaps must remain away from excavation edges.
- No undercutting of excavation walls permitted.
- Excavations must not be left open and unattended.
- All excavations must be securely covered at the end of each working session.
- Heavy rain or unstable conditions require immediate suspension of works.
- Children and visitors must be kept away from excavation areas.
- First aid kit and mobile phone must be available on site.

5. Well Covering & Long-Term Safety

Completed wells present an ongoing hazard and must remain adequately protected at all times.

- Wells must be fitted with secure heavy-duty covers immediately after excavation.
- Covers should be capable of supporting accidental foot traffic.
- Covers should not be lightweight or easily removable by children.
- Covers must prevent accidental falls into the well.
- Covers should be inspected regularly for deterioration.
- Additional fencing or barriers should be considered where wells are near paths or public areas.
- Warning signage should be installed where practical.

6. Emergency Procedures

In the event of collapse, all work must stop immediately and emergency services contacted via 999. No person should enter an unsafe excavation in an attempt to rescue another individual. The surrounding area should be cleared to prevent further collapse. All injuries and incidents should be recorded appropriately.

7. Approval / Acceptance

Name	Role	Signature	Date
	Excavation Lead		
	Volunteer		
	Volunteer		
	Committee Representative		