# Shared house tenants divided over garden upkeep as landlord remains unresponsive



Residents of a shared house are divided over who should take responsibility for the upkeep of their garden as the lawn has become overgrown, sparking a debate about landlord duties and tenant obligations.

The property, located in an unspecified area, has both front and back lawns, which according to the tenants’ rental agreement, fall under the landlord's responsibility. However, with the landlord now living abroad and unresponsive to communications regarding garden maintenance, the grass has grown unchecked. This has prompted tension between the tenants over how to manage the situation.

Eleanor, who has lived in the house for five years, feels compelled to take matters into her own hands. She expressed frustration that the garden looks neglected, saying, "I want to cut the lawn myself but that means buying a lawnmower and maybe a strimmer." She added that maintaining the garden is important for enjoying summer activities like barbecues and that she does not want to "walk to my front door without it feeling as if I’m entering Narnia." Eleanor proposed establishing a communal fund for garden maintenance, noting, "We already have one for a cleaner, so what’s the difference?"

Raheem, the newest tenant who moved in last year, opposes spending money or time on the garden, citing that the contractual responsibility lies with the landlord. Speaking to The Guardian, he stated, "It’s not our house or our responsibility." He emphasised the financial and practical burdens, saying, "She’s asking me to split the cost of a machine, find somewhere to store it, and take on a chore that’s officially not our job." Raheem also raised concerns that if the tenants start maintaining the garden, "the landlord gets used to us doing it and never lifts a finger again." He prefers to continue urging the landlord to address the issue and suggested delaying any action until June, even though this will allow the weeds to worsen.

The third housemate remains undecided and is willing to align with the majority decision.

The disagreement has caught the attention of The Guardian readers, who were invited to weigh in on the matter. Contributions from several readers highlight the complexity of the issue:

* Sophy, 44, agreed with Raheem that tenant responsibility is limited but suggested that the tenants could ask the absentee landlord to provide equipment for garden care, which Eleanor could then use during his absence.
* Janina, 57, sympathised with Eleanor’s desire for a well-kept garden but supported Raheem’s choice not to invest in maintenance, advising continued efforts to pressure the landlord.
* Tiffany, 23, advised against spending money on garden maintenance, noting that overgrown grass can benefit local wildlife by promoting biodiversity.
* Oliver, 41, acknowledged Eleanor’s wish for outdoor enjoyment but reinforced Raheem’s point about contractual responsibility resting with the landlord.
* Shaun, 35, suggested that standing firm on the landlord's obligations might involve withholding rent to prompt action.

An online poll conducted by The Guardian invited readers to decide whether Raheem should agree to contribute towards buying a lawnmower. The poll was open until 10am BST on Thursday 1 May. Previous polls included issues related to house-sharing finances.

This situation highlights the challenges faced by tenants in balancing personal preferences, financial responsibilities, and legal obligations when dealing with property maintenance, especially when landlords are not readily available or responsive.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.totallandlordinsurance.co.uk/knowledge-centre/garden-maintenance-rented-property> - This article supports the idea that tenants are usually responsible for day-to-day garden maintenance tasks such as mowing the lawn, while also highlighting the need for clear definitions of responsibility to avoid disputes.
2. <https://www.nrla.org.uk/news/landlords-essential-guide-to-garden-maintenance> - It explains the importance of clear communication in tenancy agreements to define garden maintenance responsibilities, which is relevant to the tenants' dilemma over who should handle the upkeep.
3. <https://www.landlordvision.co.uk/blog/property-maintenance-tenant-responsibilities/> - This source emphasizes tenant responsibilities for property upkeep while noting that landlords are responsible for repairs and replacements, which aligns with Raheem’s stance on contractual obligations.
4. <https://www.checkatrade.com/blog/expert-advice/landlord-garden-responsibilities/> - It clarifies that while tenants manage basic upkeep like mowing, landlords are responsible for tasks that require specialist skills, and suggests that tenants might need equipment provided by landlords for maintenance.
5. <https://www.simplybusiness.co.uk/knowledge/property-maintenance/landlord-responsibilities-a-guide-to-property-maintenance> - This guide outlines landlord responsibilities in garden maintenance and highlights the need to specify these responsibilities in the tenancy agreement, similar to the situation where the rental agreement places garden maintenance on the landlord.
6. <https://www.noahwire.com> - This source provides context for the scenario presented, involving a shared house where tenants are divided on garden maintenance responsibilities due to an unresponsive landlord.
7. <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2025/apr/26/you-be-the-judge-should-my-housemate-chip-in-with-mowing-the-lawn> - Please view link - unable to able to access data