

Notes to Support Allotment Sub-Committee Meeting

Monday 29th January at 7.30pm

Agenda Item 3 - Deputy Clerk Update

- Water - is currently switched off (thanks Cllr Hazell) due to the cold temperatures. The water Meter reading shows there has been no water consumption on the Site since the last statement received and paid, October 2023.
- There has been some fly-tipping to the area South of the Weston Avenue Allotment Site. I am getting this removed and this has been communicated on Facebook.
- A tree just outside the perimeter (SW corner) has a large branch broken and fallen into the site and I have asked a Tree Surgeon to get this removed.
- 2 signs have been ordered for Weston Avenue Site from Bel Signs.

Agenda Item 5 - Income & Expenditure for Weston Avenue

Recommendation: To note:

Please see **APPENDIX 1 (separate document)** for Detailed Income and Expenditure for Centre 155 – Weston Avenue Allotments for the current year.

N.B. an EMR transfer of £2,250 for the annual maintenance contribution from the future maintenance sum received from the developer is yet to be off set from the above.

This therefore leaves, after income and expenditure, a balance of **£587**.

On acquisition in October 2022, a sum of £5,500 was transferred, in addition to the future maintenance sum. **APPENDIX 2 (separate document)** shows the expenditure from this sum incurred last financial year.

N.B. No maintenance draw down on the future maintenance was made from the EMR for FY 22/23.

Agenda Item 6 – Waiting List

6.1 – To note

- There is currently 1 un-allocated raised bed.
- There are 5 residents on the Waiting List awaiting a half or full-sized plot.

6.2 - Recommendations:

1. To agree to cover Raised Bed 8 in case of a request for a raised bed.
2. To continue to not offer 2nd plots to existing plot holders.

Agenda Item 7 - Allotment Rules

7.1

- To agree the revised rules as per **APPENDIX 3 (page 8)**.

7.2

Recommendation

- As per the Waiting List Policy, vacated plots are taken over as seen.
- To note – to agree, no clearing of plots on a tenant rescinding the plot.

Agenda Item 8 - Area South of Weston Avenue Site

- Area South of the site perimeter was also transferred to BBHPC and is covered by the landscape maintenance responsibility schedule.
- It is noted that the eastern perimeter line of this area of land is indicated as having a hedge on the plans.
- A “camp”/fly-tipping was noted. A Facebook post was shared, and the items are being removed by HDC w/c 22nd January.
- This is a large area of trees etc that has open access currently via private parking spaces.
- As has been identified there are discrepancies with land ownership.



- The photos show the access currently behind parking spaces, and some of the rubbish. If unfamiliar with the area I would recommend a visit to the site.



Recommendations

To determine whether this site should be treated as:

1. An extension to the allotment site and therefore future maintenance responsibility ultimately being passed to the Allotment Association, financed by future maintenance sum.
2. A separate open space and maintenance to be the responsibility of Recreation Committee, budgeted within open space budget lines.

Future considerations include:

1. Fencing of perimeter
2. Access to area (potential gate from allotments)
3. Signage
4. Hedge planting

Agenda Item 9 – Facilities & Maintenance at Weston Avenue

9.1

ASC035/23

The purchase of communal sundry items and a Keter Storage Unit on a concrete base at Weston Avenue were considered and a budget of £500 was **AGREED** with delegated authority to the Chair and Deputy Clerk to progress and finalise (Proposer: CK, Seconded: SC).

- This minute reference was from April last year. At the time we were unable to purchase a suitable storage unit, base etc by Invoice and the Council had no debit/credit card. The Council still currently has no debit/credit card.
- Due to the time passed, the tenants and shed's established and no feedback received regarding such items, To a

➤ **Do the council wish to re-consider the above decision?**

9.2 – Perimeter Whip Planting

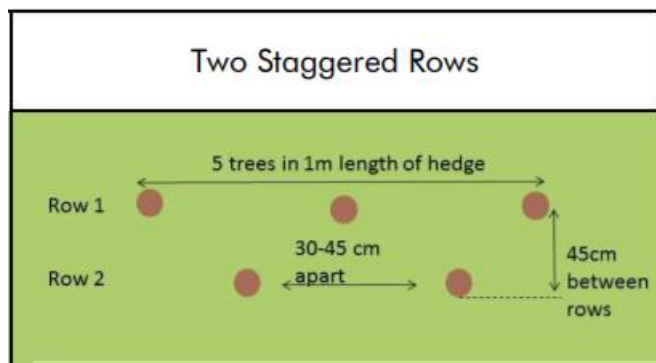
- On acquisition of the site some failings of the perimeter planting were noted.
- The Water pipes are along the fence line and perimeter planting may affect access to the pipes if they are not sunk into the ground.
- Whip planting needs to be done March or October and to do any planting this March there is a tight deadline to progress.

Please see the included Maintenance Plan **APPENDIX 4 (separate document)** with specifications regarding the Hedgerow, and noting the following of the site perimeter:

Proposed mixed native hedge planting to be planted in a double staggered row 300mm apart and at 500mm centres in each row. To be maintained at 1m height and 1.8m height adjacent to site boundaries.

Original recommendations from HDC were based on 5 plants per metre.

This is the recommended layout:



You are being asked the following:

1. Do Councillors wish to progress with whip planting?
2. If yes, do you wish to have the water pipes buried or, do we proceed just where the pipes aren't present? (Noting maintenance plan indicates full perimeter hedging).
3. To agree to sink the pipes (if applicable).
4. To agree a budget to progress with the hedgerow planting.
5. To agree for Green Gym to oversee the project with an agreed 2 days' work above our normal 4 days (additional donation by BBHPC).

Please see **APPENDIX 5 (pages 12-14)** for advice/information obtained from Green Gym and nursery.

FINANCE

Indicative Costings Received:

Hedge Nursery

900 whips (6 species), Bamboo canes, Plastic Rabbit Guards and Rootgrow

= £1384.22 ex vat

English Woodlands Nursery

Mixed native hedging- packs of 25, 60-80cm

= £1649.99 ex vat

Noting Item 5 as above, should the sub-committee wish to progress the whips project, a retrospective draw down from future maintenance sums could be considered (£2,250 from FY 2022/23).

Recommendations:

1. To agree a budget of up to £2250.00 to progress the project, overseen by Green Gym.
2. To recommend to Full Council a retrospective EMR transfer (in respect of 22/23) of £2250.00 to fund the project.
3. To delegate to the Deputy Clerk to progress the project.

9.3 – Additional Maintenance Proposals

- Previously the moving and re-planting of trees to the South of the site were discussed.
- A proposal from Cllr Chandler was also received about the planting of new fruit trees around the water pump fence.

Recommendations

1. To have a Tree Surgeon assess and report on the trees at the allotment site and obtain a quote for the removal/remedials. This will enable an accurate report of the maintenance required on the trees remaining before any future planting is considered.

Agenda Item 10 - Allotment Association

210/23

It was **AGREED** to obtain advice from the National Allotment Society regarding the timing of the setup of an allotment association.

The following was received with a template tenancy agreement and the unregistered model rules which can be adapted to be used as a constitution.

- There is no certain rule about when to help create an association and for them to take on management of the site. it can be helpful to look earlier rather than later so that the grow along with the relatively new site, rather than potentially get fixed in some particular ideas whilst still direct-let from the council.
- Based on the plot numbers, the associations could possibly become incorporated to provide more certainty for the council and for them to avoid all members being jointly and severally liable under an unincorporated association.
- We could look to arrange a meeting between the council, plot holders and a NAS representative to help discuss the merits of self-managing the allotments.
- It would be good to get a rough idea as to who would be willing to stand for a committee so that you can be more confident that a committee could be formed.

All Weston Avenue Plot Holders were emailed, and the response was positive with 8 responses stating their further interest.

Recommendations

1. To agree to progress to an Allotment Association.

2. To recommend to Recreation Committee to set up a Working group to progress the Allotment Association set-up.
3. The Working Group to report into the Recreation Committee.
4. Recreation Committee to approve Working Group Terms of Reference.
5. All WA tenants to be invited to join the working group.
6. To set up an initial meeting Working Group Meeting and to invite the NAS Regional Rep.

APPENDIX 3 – DRAFT RULES

The following rules as established by the Parish Council will apply until site responsibility is transferred to The Allotment Association.
Allotment rules may be reviewed once the Association has taken responsibility for the Allotment sites.

ALLOTMENT RULES & REGULATIONS – AMENDED JANUARY 2024

1. Tenancy will commence following allocation of the plot by the Parish Council.
2. **The Parish Council does not take any responsibility for any activities undertaken on the land by individual plot holders.**
3. Rent is payable in advance at the rate of 50p per square metre and for raised beds a fixed price of £15.00 per annum, to be reviewed by the Council annually. Rent to be paid to the Parish Council Finance Officer by the date stated on the Annual Invoice.
4. Any tenant not having paid their annual subscription by the date stated shall be deemed to no longer require their plot and the Allotments Sub-committee shall have the power to re-let the plot.
5. Allotments shall only be let to those applications that have been approved by the Allotments Sub-committee, and the committee shall have the right to make special stipulations regarding any tenancy.
6. No tenant shall be allowed to hold more land than they are able to adequately cultivate. It is the council's recommendation that a minimum of 75% (approx.) of the plot is used for cultivation. If there are any cultivation issues experienced due to mitigating circumstances, please inform the council.
7. The Council require one months' notice period for a resident to terminate their plot tenancy and no monies will be refunded.
8. No tenant shall be allowed to sub-let, assign, or part with possession of the whole or part of his/her allotment without sanction from the committee. Where plot holders choose to share a plot, they are solely responsible for the maintenance and rent of the plot. They must notify the Deputy Clerk in writing of the name and address of co-user.
9. Any tenant changing their postal address and/or their email should notify the Deputy Clerk within twenty-eight days in writing.

10. The tenant undertakes to use the allotment as an allotment garden and for no other purpose. Every tenant during his/her term of tenancy will be required to conform and observe the provisions of the Allotment Act and must not use the land otherwise than in accordance with such provisions.
11. The tenant shall be responsible for maintaining paths in a clean well-kept condition. Failure to comply with these conditions may render the tenant liable should any accident occur as a direct result.
12. The communal sheds are for the use of all plot holders, with an allocated space for each plot.
 - All items left in the shed are left at owners' risk.
 - The shed codes for plot holders' knowledge only.
 - No hazardous items to be left in the sheds.
 - Please be considerate to other plot holders and shed users.
13. No sheds, greenhouses or polytunnels are to be installed on individual plots, however cloches to 2m high and fruit cages are acceptable.
14. There will be no communal composting on-site, only for individuals on their own plot.
15. For raised beds: 1 plastic compost bin per raised bed is allowed, to a maximum height of 1M at the allocated location near to the raised beds, along the water station fence line.
16. A tool storage unit, on a non-permanent base to a maximum height of 1.35m is permitted (n/a for raised beds).
17. Temporary small ponds are allowed on ground plots only and must not be constructed of concrete or any hard-landscape material.
18. To install any structures not included in the rules please consult the committee for permission.
19. No livestock is permitted to be kept on site.
20. The tenant undertakes not to cut or prune any timber or trees or take/carry away any mineral, sand, earth, or clay without the written permission of the Allotments Sub-committee.
21. Only fruit trees on a dwarf stock can be planted subject to permission from the Committee and to a maximum of five on a plot. If permission is granted, they must be planted away

from the paths and must not be allowed to grow over 2.0m tall. They must not be allowed to overshadow other plots. Ornamental trees and shrubs are not permitted.

22. Registered plot holders are required to cultivate and keep their plot in a good state of fertility, in good order, free from weeds and rubbish and grow a range of produce and plants for home consumption/use.
23. No produce grown on a plot should be used for commercial gain.
24. Tenants who have not cultivated their plots to the agreed standards of the Allotments Sub-committee at any time will be given a written warning. The plots will be inspected twice a year, April and October. The written warning will state that should there be no satisfactory improvement within one month of the date of warning, the committee will be empowered to start proceedings to terminate the tenancy.
25. Well behaved dogs are welcome on site on a lead, and owners are expected to clean up after them.
26. No sprinklers or hoses shall be connected to any of the site's water supplies.
27. The tenant undertakes not to cause or permit any nuisance or annoyance to the occupier of any other allotment gardener or resident or property adjoining the allotment site.
28. No fires on site.
29. Any tenant committing a nuisance or throwing any soil, stones, weeds, or rubbish on any other allotment or on any path or road shall be liable to notice of eviction.
30. Any member using equipment belonging to the Parish Council does so at his/her own risk.

The equipment must be returned promptly in a clean condition and any fault reported to the committee. The equipment must not be removed from the site without prior permission.
31. Every tenant will be held personally responsible for any damage caused by any person who may accompany him/her. The Allotments Sub-committee shall have the right to refuse admission to any person other than a tenant.
32. The Allotments Sub-committee shall have the power to expel without notice and without compensation any tenant that shall:
 - a) be guilty of theft or wilful damage, or injury
 - b) wilfully break the rules

c) cause a nuisance or annoyance to any other tenant.

33. All cases of dispute shall be referred to the Allotments Sub-committee in writing and the committee decision shall be final.
34. The Allotments Sub-Committee shall have the full power to deal with any matter not dealt with in the rules.
35. The tenancy shall be perpetual, and in the event of the Tenant's death a decision on the succession will be at the Allotments Sub-Committee's discretion and in discussion with the deceased's family.

This rules list is not exhaustive, and the Allotment Sub-Committee reserve the right to amend and add rules as required.

APPENDIX 5

INFORMATION & RECOMMENDATIONS FROM GREEN GYM:

1. I've used Hedge Nursery in the past for a short hedge in my garden they have most if not all of the hedge/trees listed on the drawing <https://www.hedgenursery.co.uk/> are you sticking with the planting mix shown on the drawing? Which appears to be;
 - 10% Field maple
 - 10% Hazel
 - 25% Hawthorn
 - 10% Wild Cherry (tree)
 - 30% Blackthorn
 - 10% Goat Willow (tree)
 - 5% Elder

2. Hedge Nursery recommend approx. 6 plants per metre in a double staggered row; <https://www.hedgenursery.co.uk/planting-density-i26> The advice section on their website has some good advice on planting including the use of rootgrow, which can be mixed in a gel to dip the hedge whips in before planting, I'd recommend doing this to give the whips the best start.

3. They recommend protection tubes supported by a cane if rabbits or voles are in the vicinity, these range from 49p (plastic) to £1.10 (biodegradable) for the quantity you'd require.

4. Please find a copy of the plan sent with the hedges highlighted in different colours, is it just the blue hedge line under consideration or all three sections?

5. The blue hedge is approx. 150m long (scaled from the drawing) which at 6 per metre would require 900 whips.

6. I planted 2yr old whips in my garden in March 2020, even after pruning to limit the hedge height it is around 1.8m now , pruning will be needed to keep the hedge below 1.8m. Once its approx. 10 years old it could be laid to maintain a dense hedge, which would reduce its height.

INFORMATION & RECOMMENDATIONS FROM HEDGE NURSERY:

Species selection

I think the proportion of Hawthorn is too low - the normal proportion would be 50%. Blackthorn spreads by suckers and that might become an issue for the allotment holders in the long term so I'd either reduce that or remove it from your list. You might want to avoid Hazel to prevent encouraging squirrels into the allotments, though it is a good early nectar source for birds. Unless the soil is very wet, I don't think Goat Willow is the best choice. Other species that I could recommend would be Cherry plum (very early flowering), Crab Apple, Dog Rose, Common Dogwood, Serviceberry (known more by its Latin name - Amelanchier) and Spindle. Because you need quite a lot of plants,

you could have a base of 50% Hawthorn and then lots of additional species (50 or 100 of each) to give you a "species-rich" hedge which is better for wildlife than hedges with fewer species. Perhaps aim for a maximum of 8 species in total?

Planting density

We recommend 5 - 7 per metre for mixed native hedging. Farmers claiming farm grants have to plant at 6 per metre but you don't have to. You could either go with 5 per metre and save a bit of money, or go with 7 per metre for more density, or vary it so if there's a section that needs more screening you could put more there.

Trees

I see you want to have some "hedgerow trees". Our recommendation is that you just identify one whip every 5 - 10m that you want to grow into a tree, mark it with something obvious so that it isn't trimmed with the hedge (some coloured ribbon), and in just a couple of years, it will become a tree standing above the hedge. It's often easier to plant this way rather than trying to squeeze the root of a bare root tree into a very tight space when you are also planting whips fairly densely. It's also the most economic solution.

Starting size

Virtually all our bare root stock is available as either 40/60cm or 60/80cm height. In some species we have 1 year old and 2 year old plants. As you are not claiming a farm grant, unless you have a particular reason to need the taller or 2 year old plants (eg keeping people to a footpath), I suggest you go with the cheapest option which is 40/60cm 1 year old. Within a full growing season (ie by next Autumn) you'd be hard pressed to tell the difference in a young hedge planted with the smaller plants versus a hedge planted with the slightly bigger ones.

Canes and guards

These are expensive but they really are essential if there are rabbits nearby. The allotment holders would know! The choice between the recyclable guards and the biodegradable guards is a difficult one because the biodegradable are so much more expensive but they are so much better environmentally. Most customers end up opting for the recyclable ones, especially for larger scale planting and I think because they are recyclable via a very easy scheme to participate in, and the cost saving being so significant, they can easily be justified. Here's the details of the recycling scheme - <https://tubex.com/sustainability/tree-shelter-collection-recycling-programme/>

Rootgrow

As your colleague has indicated below, we do strongly recommend Rootgrow which is a friendly fungi. I've calculated that you would need 3.6kg for 900 plants. You can either buy a 2.5kg tub of granules plus a 1kg pack of gel (that would cost £69 plus VAT in total) but the gel would be a lot easier to use when you've got lots of people helping with the planting. You'd dip all the roots in a bucket, let them drain off and then hand the

plants out - I don't know how you'd manage with granules. So, if you went with all gel packs that would mean 3 or 4 packs and they are £22.91 each plus VAT.

Irrigation

As I mentioned on the phone, later planting really does rely on being well watered in warm, dry weather. If you can plant soonish, that would be better. Either way, if there is access to a stand pipe in the allotment area, perhaps you could run in a leaky pipe system (very easy to set up) either on a timeclock or just ask the allotment holders to water it regularly.

Without knowing the exact species choice at this stage, I've made some assumptions and produced a quote on our website for our standard Flowering and Berrying Species Rich Mixed Native hedging packs (which are the nearest to your requirement and would be equivalent in price to what I've recommended) which I've attached.