

Full Council 12/09/2024, Agenda Item 12 - Allotments

Councillors may have seen the Allotment Association Facebook post looking for anyone interested in taking on a vacant allotment. This paper is intended to update Members on the allotment occupancy, administration, income and expenditure.

Allotment Occupancy

The allotment year runs from the 1st October to the 30th September.

The Allotment Association is responsible for the day-to-day management of the allotments. They inspect all the allotments in April/May and note any breaches of tenancy and contact the plot holder. It is therefore usual in the months preceding the new allotment year to find that there are those that wish to give up their allotment and in such cases the Allotment Association will seek to fill the vacancy from the waiting list and/or advertising vacancies as appropriate.

The plots are split into full plots and part plots and so the number may vary from year to year depending on vacancies and requirements i.e. a full plot may split into a part plot if this is what is required. Currently there are 74 plots – 11 full plots and 63 half plots.

The Allotment Association usually manages to fill any vacancies that occur. This year there have been some late vacancies arising that the Allotment Association are attempting to fill.

Administration

As mentioned previously the Allotment Association is responsible for day-to-day management and filling vacancies. They also collect the additional voluntary water payments for pump and hose users towards the cost of water rates and credit the Parish Council.

The Parish Council provides via the Clerk the following administrative tasks:

- Issuing new tenancies as instructed by the Allotment Association.
- Issuing breach of tenancy letters and notices where the Allotment Association has been unable to contact the plot holder, or they have not taken remedial action.
- Issuing and chasing rent invoices annually and liaising with the Allotment Association over non-payers.
- Organising tree safety inspections and any grounds maintenance required i.e. hedge trimming, tree work.
- Paying invoices to contractors, payment of water rates and paying the Allotment Association the annual subscription amount.

The Council receives a small amount of around £175 - £200 per annum for providing this administrative service but the amount fluctuates depending on the number of allotments.

Budget

The budget should be cost neutral.

Income is received as follows:

- Annual allotment rents. For 2024-25 the cost is £32 for a full plot and £20 for a part plot. The rent increases by 5% per annum currently.
- Contribution to cover water costs - £6 per plot per annum.
- Allotment Association subs - £5 per plot per annum.
- Voluntary contribution by pump/hose users - £10 per allotment, varies from year to year depending on weather and number using hoses or pumps.

Expenditure:

- Annual rent to Willand United Charities – for 2024-25 this was £472. Next year it will be £495.
- Water rates – varies from year to year, the intention is that the plot holder contributions will pay for this but there is invariably a difference. The Allotment Association annual AGM in 2023 agreed to increase to £6 per annum based on water usage for the preceding 3 years.
- Allotment Association subs – the income received is paid to the association annually.
- Trees and hedges – there are maintenance and assessment costs the majority of which occur every 2 years.
- In years where there is an underspend the funds are transferred to an earmarked reserve for use in future years as required. The reserve currently stands at £2,492.24 and can only be used for work to the allotments.
- A fee paid to the Parish Council for administration, which fluctuates from year to year based on the number of allotments and income received, it is between £175 and £200 per annum approx.

Debbie Bird
Clerk to the Parish Council
September 2024