

Allotment Advisory Group Meeting minutes

Purpose of meeting	-	To discuss progress and issues affecting the allotments.
Date	-	7 April 2026 - 10.30am
Venue	-	Buckden Village Hall Café - Face to face.
Attendees	-	Mark Burgess - (MB)
	-	Caroline Underwood - (CU)
	-	Pauline Butcher - (PB)
	-	Ray Magness - (RM)
	-	Jan Mary Brooks - (JB)
	-	Jess Thomson - (Jess)
Apologies	-	Debbie Leighton - (DL)
Absent	-	None

PREVIOUS OPEN ACTIONS FROM EARLIER MEETINGS

No	Minute	Action	Owner	Due date
A	Meeting started with a welcome to Ray and Jan who have joined the Allotment Advisory Group and a thank you to Peter for his participation in the group. Jess also attended the meeting, and it was agreed that she should attend all future meetings.	Update – Jess is now invited to attend all future meetings	MB	Closed
B	Improving Accessibility to the allotments We are aware that while owing an allotment has significant physical and mental health benefits to everyone, some groups cannot participate in these activities due to accessibility issues. We are keen to ensure the allotments are open to all where practicable. We are therefore planning to add a raised bed area at the front of the allotments, behind the new polytunnel. The raised beds will form a U shape and will be constructed using wooden sleepers and raised to the height that a person in a wheelchair could access them. We also plan to put a pathed pathway and path the area in-between the beds so people in wheelchairs can move about unrestricted.	Update – There are no instructions from the Parish Council re suspending work on the raised beds area and that the Allotment Advisory Group should continue to progress this project. If a decision is made over the use of space or the relocation of the Handymen's workshop the Parish Clerk will inform us accordingly. One of our previous tenants, who was forced to relinquish their plot as it was becoming physically too demanding has requested taking over two raised beds, which we have agreed to. As the beds are very small in individual area, and we are yet to see how successful they will be, we decided that they will initially be offered at "no charge" to Buckden residents, but we reserve the right to revisit this decision if we feel necessary. People who take on these beds will still be required to sign a tenancy agreement and adhere to the Rules and Regulations of the Allotments. We are still waiting to see whether local Retirement Homes would be interested in taking on some raised beds for their residents, but we	Jess DL	When required Next Meeting

		expect them to pay a fee / sponsor the beds if they do so. There may also be interest from the Alms Houses in Buckden. We need to contact them and see if this would be of interest.	Jess	Next Meeting									
C	Allotment lease An update was provided on the recent letters received from Savills, acting as the Church Commissions agent, in the sale of the Silverstreet development site, which includes the access route into the allotments. As part of these discussions Savills has suggested the Buckden Parish Council (BPC) purchase the allotment site from the Church Commission for a sum of £16,000. The BPC are considering the proposal and entering negotiations with Savills.	Update - The Notice to Quit period has now expired but the Parish Council are in negotiations with Savills, the Church Commission's agent, over the purchase of the allotments. The Parish Council do not anticipate the Church Commission will enforce the termination notice and are in the process of concluding Heads of Terms prior to the formal Sales Contract being produced. Further updates will be provided at the next Advisory Group Meetings.	CU	Next meeting									
D	½ plots vs Full plots A discussion took place covering the number of ½ plots available and whether we should create more. It was agreed that analysis is required on the current availability which should be included for discussion at the next meeting.	Update – We have 2 plots which are not available to let (The Orchard and the Storage area. We have – <table><tr><td>1/2 Plots</td><td>10</td><td>20%</td></tr><tr><td>Full plots</td><td>38</td><td>76%</td></tr><tr><td>Total Plots</td><td>50</td><td>100%</td></tr></table> We have one full plot available (Plot 22) with no one on the waiting list.	1/2 Plots	10	20%	Full plots	38	76%	Total Plots	50	100%		No action required
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Total Plots	50	100%											
E	Relocating the Pagoda & Picnic Bench We believe that the Pagoda and the picnic bench is not being used and the space that they occupy could be used to provide for a smaller Community Plot. It was agreed that the Pagoda and the picnic bench can be reallocated to elsewhere in the village where it is likely to get better usage. We will wait on the Parish Councils decision re where and when.	Update - The Parish Council are still looking to relocate the pagoda and picnic bench to the Village Hall but are waiting until works at the Parish Council offices have been completed. The PC will approach Martin, who is managing this project, and arrange for the pagoda and bench to be relocated when the new space is available. The Groundstaff will be tasked with dismantling the pagoda and picnic bench and moving them. Some assistance maybe required from the Allotment Working Party. The PC will request support when the date is known.	Jess Jess Jess	When required When required When required									
F	Plot Inspection Update. There is evidence that most plots are being prepared for the up-and-coming growing season. However, there are some exceptions being; Plot 18 – This plot has not been attended at all and there is no evidence of any intention to prepare the plot for growing produce.	Update – A plot inspection was conducted on 7th April 2026 and the following issues identified. 1. There is no significance evidence of any activity having taken place on Plot 18. The plot holder needs to receive a formal “Notice to quit” from the Parish Council.	Jess	ASAP									

	This plot has been an issue for at least the last 2 years and has had numerous requests to attend the plot. We feel the tenant for this plot should be evicted and the plot reallocated. It is unlikely that the current tenant will make any effort to clear the plot so we should expect to retain their deposit and use it for clearing the plot.	2. The pathway between Plot 14a and 15a has been blocked by material which needs to be removed as it is restricting access to the plots behind. An email needs to be sent to the plot holders asking for this to be moved of the pathway and onto their own plot. 3. Plot 8 has fenced in their plot with chicken wire in compliance with the requirements set by the Rules and Regulations but in doing so that have blocked the shared footpath and restricted access to the rear of Plot 9. The fence needs to be repositioned so that it sits alongside plot 8 and does not restrict the shared pathway. The plot holder needs to be notified and asked to reposition their plot fence accordingly.	Mark Mark	Before next inspection Before next inspection.
G	Water storage initiative One of the Plot Holders raised an idea that the Allotments could help reduce water usage by storing rainwater. It was suggested that rainwater runoff from the sheds could be captured in water butts.	Update – Some of the plot holders have taken the initiative to capture rainwater from their sheds / lean-tos. An excellent rainwater capture system can be seen on plot 31. We need to further encourage this activity and should encourage Plot Holders to consider installing a similar system where possible. There are a few barrels / water butts available which can be offered to the plot holders that express an interest. We should put a note out on our Facebook page and in our next newsletter encouraging Plot Holders and informing plot holders of the available water butts.	PB MB	Facebook Newsletter
H	Silverstreet update The planning process is continuing, and the developers are in the consultation process with the residents of Buckden. The developers are also detailing Reserved Matters for submission prior to discussion and for submitting a reserved matters applications at a later stage. Reserved Matters tend to be specific details of a development that were not addressed during the outline planning permission stage. These details can include appearance, landscaping, layout, scale, and access arrangements of the project.	Update – No notable progress to report. Various communication and community engagement sessions have been had across the Parish but no significant progress from the Developer to report. Continued updates will be provided at the Allotment Advisory Group meetings.	CU	Next meeting

I	Allotment Storage Bay We discussed the need to provide a storage area within the allotments for wood chippings / manure / soil improver. These are currently being stored in the paddock at the front of the allotments. It was agreed that we will use plot 10 for this purpose. The idea of creating a community compost bay was discussed. It was decided that this would not be appropriate as it may encouraged more rodents / pests into the allotments.	Update – We have spoken to the holder of plot 9 and they appeared happy with the plans we have for Plot 10. We also agreed that the apple tree at the front of plot 9 may need attention and may need to be cut back if it is restricting access to plot 10. This needs to confirm in an email with the plot holder. We now need to decide how best to use the plot, what to store on it, and call an Allotment Working Party session to help prepare the plots for storage.	Pauline All	Next Meeting As required
J	Usage of the green waste bin. The Groundsmen have raised a concern that the allotment plot holders are using the green waste bin in the car park to dispose of rubbish and are filling it up so that there is no room for the rubbish they need to dispose of. The type of rubbish being placed in this bin does not sound like it is coming from the allotments and is more likely coming from residents along Silverstreet. We discussed the allotment group being allowed to use the green waste bin for rubbish that is deposited in or around the polytunnel. We do not allow plot holders to dump their rubbish in the polytunnel, and we will address this as and when this occurs, but we need somewhere to dispose of rubbish when it occurs. It was agreed it is unfair to expect members of the Allotment Advisory Group to have to dispose of allotment rubbish through their own household waste or take the rubbish to the local rubbish tip. It was therefore agreed that the Allotment Advisory Group can put small amounts of rubbish in the Groundsman's green waste bin. However, this is not open to plot holders who have and will be told to take any rubbish home.	Update – It was agreed that the Allotment Advisory Group, but not plot holders, could dispose of small amounts of waste in the green bin. This has been discussed with the Handymen. If any issues arise, they need to be raised with the Parish Clerk.	All	As required
K	Main gate into the allotments. The main gate into the allotment is sticking and needs adjusting.	The issue with the gate appears to have been resolved.	Jess	Closed
L	Buddy system. The proposed Buddy system was accepted as a good idea and should be pursued.	All Allotment Advisory Group members have expressed a willingness in supporting the Buddy system. New tenants have been informed of the Buddy system, and some have taken up the offer.		Closed

M	Improving tenancy contracts. The proposed idea of enhancing our Tenancy contracts was discussed and agreed. It was felt that this would help improve the Parish Councils contractual agreements with Plot Holders. However, it was agreed that the new Tenancy Agreement should sit alongside the current Rules and Regulations.	We are going to look at Tenancy Agreement templates which are available from the National Allotments Association and see which would best reflect our needs. We may need to enhance any new Tenancy Agreement with a “do’s and don’t’s” supporting page which all new Tenants will sign up to.	Jess	Next meeting
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NEW ACTIONS FROM TODAYS MEETINGS

No	Minute	Action	Owner	Due date
1	National Allotment Association It was agreed that we should re-register with the National Allotment Association and take advantage of the support and services they provide in managing allotments.	Jess to sign up to the National Allotment Association and to include membership in our annual expenditure.	Jess	When required
2	National Power Networks. A representative from National Power Networks has visited the allotments to inspect the power cables which run along the hedge / field side of the allotments and has agreed that the trees need cutting back but needs permission from Savills, the Church Commission agent, to access a piece of land on the field side with their heavy machinery.	Jess is monitoring the situation with National Power Networks and will report back on progress at the next meeting.	Jess	Next meeting.

Date of Next Meeting – 12th May 2026 at 10:30am, location to be agreed.