

Allotment Advisory Group

Meeting minutes

Purpose of meeting - To discuss progress and issues affecting the allotments.

Date - 10th June 2025 10am

Venue [REDACTED]

Attendees - Mark Burgess (MB),
- Caroline Underwood (CU),
- Pauline Butcher (PB),
- Debbie Leighton (DL)

Absent - None

Apologies - Peter Chungui (PC)

PREVIOUS OPEN ACTIONS FROM EARLIER MEETINGS

No	Minute	Action	Owner	Due date
A	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 FROM MEETING Project on hold pending outcome of lease agreement. We will engage with the care home and the Doctors Surgery in Buckden once the raised bed area has been established.	MB MB	On hold When ready
B	Seeking alternative funding It was suggested that the Allotment Group may be able to access funding through various grants.	UPDATE FROM MEETING Many of the grants identified would not be available for the allotments. However, there is a maintained list of grants published by the Cambridgeshire County Council which we may benefit from. Caroline has sent the link to possible grants to Peter for review. Peter to review link and provide an update at the next meeting	PC	Carry over to next Meeting
C	Freds plaque The original plaque that was put by the trees has gone missing and it was agreed that it should be replaced.	Replacement plaque has been delivered to the handymen to install yet has not yet been put in place. Caroline to follow this up with the Parish Clerk.	CU	Carry over to next Meeting

D	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. An update on progress will be provided at the next meeting.	The Parish Council is completing its due diligence process on the offer to buy the allotment area. A meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 11 th June where a progress report will be presented and discussed after which an update will be provided to the rest of the Allotment Advisory Group.	CU	Next meeting
E	Allotment Fee's and value for money. During the above telephone conversation between the plot holder and the Parish Clerk it became clear that the individual felt he was not getting value for the rent he was paying, which was somewhat astounding considering they only pay £25 per year.	Information has been collected covering the rent and associated costs that other Allotment Groups in our area are charging. This needs to be collated and an article included in the next new letter.	MB	Next News Letter
F	The provision of manure We have provided a number of manure drops for the allotments and the cost of delivery has been covered by contributions from the individual members of the Allotment Advisory Group and Working Party (Ray) For the last delivery we asked for a small donation of £1 per barrow to cover the delivery charge. So far we have raised a total of £7 towards the delivery cost of £25 which falls well short of what is required, and yet over ¾ of the pile has been taken. It is not fair to expect the Allotment Advisory Group and Working Party (Ray) to fund this for everyone else.	A note should be in the next newsletter telling plot holders that, unless a contribution towards the manure is made, we will not provide any more and that the plot holders will need to source it themselves.	MB	Next newsletter

NEW ACTIONS FROM 10th June 2025 MEETING

No	Minute	Action	Owner	Due date
1	Plot condition expectations. After the recent plot inspection it was felt that a reminder should be sent to all Plot Holders informing them of the standard expected of their plots and referring to the Rules & Regulations that they signed up to.	Include in the next newsletter	MB	Next newsletter
2	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.	Review the historical number of ½ plots vs the current level of ½ plots and prepare a report for discussion at the next Allotment Advisory Group meeting.	MB	Next newsletter.

3	School Plot The beds on the school plot are in good order with a lot of produce being grown. However the grass pathways need to be maintained, which is difficult for the school as it is not an activity the children can do and they don't have the necessary equipment to cut the grass. It was suggested that this could become part of the area that the Handymen maintain when cutting the central path at the allotments. Moving to ½ plot. Some informal discussions have taken place between the leader of the school plot and members of the Allotment Advisory Group over the idea that the school drop down to ½ plot.	Speak with Ramune and see if she agrees that the Handymen can include this in their activities. Speak with the school for formalise the discussions and, if the school wish to reduce to a ½ plot, add this into the discussion re item 2 above	MB MB	Next meeting Next meeting
4	Plot Holder Status An update on the condition of the plots was provided as part of the Plot Inspection Report. A request was made to include an indication on whether the plot holder lives in Buckden or outside Buckden. It was explained that this information is included in the Plot Holder spreadsheet which identifies who is on which plot. At the moment the split is 39 Buckden residents (81%) and 9 non-Buckden residents (9%), with one plot holder, [REDACTED] who's address is unknown.	Send out Plot Holder status report to all Advisory Group Members.	MB	With minutes.
5	Chalk boards for polytunnel. Due to the popularity of the polytunnel there is concern that plot holders using the polytunnel could mix up their plants and this could cause disputes. To prevent this is was suggested to purchase some small chalk boards (or something similar) that can be used so the plot holders can clearly identify who owns which pots. It was agreed that there was money in the budget for this.	Identify suitable marker boards and procure them or request an order be placed for them via the Parish Clerk.	PB	When required.
6	Continuing supply to Diamond Hampers. The group was made aware that Diamond Hampers have now obtained their own allotment plot in Huntingdon. There was concern that, once their plot is up and running, that their requirement for produce from the community plot may drop off. Future of the Community Plot It was agreed that while the community plot has been an excellent success it has required considerable effort from Pauline (and Tony) to keep it going and in good order. This was never the intention as, when the idea was first floated, it was expected that a team of volunteers from the allotment and the Buckden residents would support this initiative, however this has not transpired.	Contact Diamond Hampers and understand what their future intentions are. Based on the above response, discuss the future of the Community Plot.	DL ALL	Next Meeting Next Meeting

	Based on the outcome of the item above, if Diamond Hampers feel their requirements can be supported from their own plots we will need to have a discussion re the future of the Community Plot and decide whether to downsize to ½ a plot or give it up completely.			
7	Items for the next Newsletter Suggestions for the next Newsletter are; - Plot condition expectations – MB - Value for money assessment – MB - Wildlife survey – RS - Article from Climate Change Gardening from their website. – MB - Polytunnel success – MB - Eco fair success – MB - Community Plot success – MB	Next newsletter to be prepared and published by end June.	MB	End June
8	Allotment Notice Board. The notice board at the entrance to the allotments is out of date and needs updating.	Review notice board and remove out of date literature and replace where necessary.	MB	Next Meeting

Date of Next Meeting – 14th July 2025 at 7pm via zoom.