

Allotment Advisory Group

Meeting minutes

Purpose of meeting - To discuss progress and issues affecting the allotments.
 Date - 12th February 2024
 Attendees - Mark Burgess (MB), Pauline Butcher (PB), Caroline Underwood (CU), Rosie Surridge (RS)
 Apologies - Debbie Leighton(DL)

PREVIOUS OPEN ACTIONS FROM EARLIER MEETINGS

No	Minute	Action	Owner	Due date
A	A1 Boundary Fence – Owner = Mark The group reviewed the boundary fence along the A1 end and agreed to enhance the fencing by planting shrubs that deter entry like Pyracanth or Holly. This will be reviewed in September when the planting session permits.	The pyracanth shrub planted on the boundary at the A1 end is growing well. We will look to plant more pyracanth shrubs once the winter season has passed.	Mark	Spring 2024
Update – Permission has been granted and budget available. Will look to procure and plant plants is April 2024				
B	Defibrillator – Owner = Rosie The idea of positioning a defibrillator in the allotment car park on the existing wooden shed requires electricity to be available in the shed. It was not clear if this is the case.	There already a number of defibrillators around the village and there is some thought that this might be considered enough. We will engage with the Clerk of the Parish Council to discuss further. In the meantime, it was suggested that a notice be made and posted on the Allotment notice board showing everyone where the current defibrillators are positioned in the village.	Rosie	Next meeting
Update – It was agreed that there are enough defibrillators in Buckden to support the needs of the residents. However, to improve the emergency response it was agreed to produce a poster for the notice board identifying where the nearest defibrillators are located. – Action Rosie				
C	Polytunnel – Owner = Mark The idea of installing a poly tunnel at the at the allotments was not discussed and will be carried over to the next meeting.	Approval for a polytunnel has been given. We will now look to source a suitable polytunnel for the allotments. The proposed area for the polytunnel will be at the front of the allotments behind the shelter. To prepare the area we will ask the Handymen to deposit any chippings in a pile behind the shelter which we can use to cover the ground. Target is to get the polytunnel installed by early spring, making it available for allotment holders to grow plants from seed if required.	Mark	Next meeting
Update – The proposal to move the shelter back towards the hedge was agreed. It was also suggested, and agreed, that when positioning the polytunnel consideration should be given to location of the eco toilet. Action - Mark.				
D	Pest control progress Updates from the Pest Controller are sporadic, and we are not sure if monthly visits are being undertaken.	I am meeting with HFC, the Pest Controller, on Wednesday 6 th December to discuss progress and agree issues identified.	Mark	Ongoing

Update – Reports have now been received for December and February. No visits were conducted in January due to adverse weather conditions. The latest report (February) shows that the “rats remain active on site but the numbers / activity has decreased by about 30% since the last visit” (December).

Also, rat boxes on plots 10 and 41 are missing and plot 6 box cannot be accessed.

We will revisit these plots to find the boxes and make use access is clear – **Action Mark**

We will produce a plan of the allotments showing where the bait boxes have been positioned. – **Action Mark**

E	Community Plot update. Everyone acknowledged that the plot had been a great success. The level of harvest had been very positive with many vegetables being passed to the local food bank, which was greatly appreciated and put to good use. The plan is to plan out easy manageable vegetables such as onions and leeks.	We will continue to progress with the community plot and procure seed onions and winter vegetables to be planted at the plot. We will write a article for the Roundabout and engage with Mayfield Surgery to see if there are any potential volunteers who may benefit of working as a team on the community plot.	Pauline	End December
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Update – Community plot progressing well.

Shed now has its own water butts but guttering and downpipes need to be fitted.

Ashfelt on the shed roof has come off and needs replacing. We need to put a call out to volunteers for help via our Facebook page. - **Action - Pauline**

F	Hedgehog and insect boxes. We would like to create a rage of hedgehog boxes and bug boxes and position them around the allotments. It was suggested that we should include this in the Roundabout and the Buckden Facebook page, to see if anyone has some wood off cuts or would like to volunteer in making some.	Add a paragraph into the article for the Roundabout covering the request for off cuts or volunteers to make the boxes.	Pauline	End December
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Update – Need to produce an article for the next Roundabout. – **Action - Pauline.**

G	Update on Silver Street development Caroline gave an update on the Silver Street development project. Morris Homes are the new developer and will be meeting with National Highways to discuss the requirements of the Buckden A1 roundabout. Progress on the future development will depend on the requirements that National Highways ask for. Any actual building work is still a long way off.	No action required.		
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Update – Morris Homes have been in conversations with National Highways to discuss the alterations to the Buckden roundabout, which need to be implemented before any development of the proposed site can go ahead. There is also a constraint on starting work on the roundabout as this cannot start until the alterations to the Black Cat roundabout have finished, which is unlikely to be before 2027.

Therefore we are unlikely to see any changes to the allotment space for some time.

For information only - No further action required

NEW ACTIONS FROM 12th February 2023 MEETING

No	Minute	Action	Owner	Due date
1	Waste Minimisation – There is a meeting planned for the 28th February at the Pathfinder House, Huntingdon,	Send out the invite to all Advisory Group Members.	CU	Before 28 th February.

	focussed on minimising waste and the use of wormeries to turn compostable waste into natural liquid fertiliser and organic compost. The meeting is open to anyone on the Allotment Advisory Group.			
2	Climate Change Mitigation Champion. The Parish Council have asked if someone from the Allotment Advisory Group would take on the role of Climate Change Mitigation Champion covering the allotments. The responsibilities would be to act as the group's "challenger" when discussing projects or activities to ensure we have considered the environmental impact and ensure we are making a positive environmental impact and never doing things that would have a negative environmental impact.	It was suggested that Rosie would be best positioned to fulfil this role. Caroline will put the Environmental Team Leader in touch with Rosie so they can discuss what the role will require.	CU	Next meeting
3	Marker Posts. A number of the plot marker posts are rotten and have fallen over and need replacing.	Put a request to Ramune to ask the handymen to replace the broken marker posts and to check all posts are in good order.	MB	Next meeting
4	Non-payment of rent There is only one plots holder, [REDACTED] who still hasn't paid his rent even after numerous requests for payment. [REDACTED] has been a problem plot where constant "tidy up" requests have been sent. The rent is now 4 months overdue, and no response has been received to emails requesting payment. We need to formally write to [REDACTED] requesting payment to be made otherwise we will assume that the plot has been vacated. If the plot has been given up, then [REDACTED] will be given 2 weeks from the date of the letter to clear the plot and remove personal items and rubbish. If this does not happen then the deposit taken will be used to pay for the handy men to clear it. We have one person on the waiting list ([REDACTED]) who will be offered the plot.	Compose a letter to be sent to [REDACTED]	MB	16 th February

Date of Next Meeting – 8th April 2024 at 7pm by zoom.