

Allotment Advisory Group Meeting minutes

Purpose of meeting	-	To discuss progress and issues affecting the allotments.
Date	-	3 rd March 2026 - 10.30am
Venue	-	Buckden Village Hall Café - Face to face.
Attendees	-	Mark Burgess - (MB) Caroline Underwood - (CU) Pauline Butcher - (PB) Ray Magness - (RM)
Apologies	-	Jan Mary Brooks - (JB) 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.	Invite Jess to all future meetings.	MB	Next meeting
B	Improving Accessibility to the allotments We are aware that while owning an allotment has significant physical and mental health benefits, some people 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 Three raised beds are now ready to be allocated. The remaining two beds will be left empty until we know how much demand there is. There has been one expression of interest in growing produce in the raised beds. The remaining beds can now offer the local Care Homes, with an expectation that the Care Homes would contribute to the general upkeep of the allotments.	DL	End March 26
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 Silver Street 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.	UPDATE The Parish Council are continuing to negotiate with Savills, the Church Commission's agent, over the purchase of the allotments. There is an agreement to sell in place and Heads of Terms are being drawn up so the final sales process can continue. The current "Notice to quit" ends in April 2026 but it is felt that the current lease will continue until the sale goes through.		

	The BPC are considering the proposal and entering negotiations with Savills.	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 now have 8 half plots (1a, 1b, 12a, 12b, 14a, 14b, 15a, and 15b) This equates to 18% of all plots. All ½ plots have been allocated and we have one person on the waiting list who is looking for a ½ plot. It was agreed that we will split plot 28 into two ½ plots and allocate them to two people on the waiting list.	Jess	When required
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. The PC will approach the project manager, for an update and an indication on the date when they would like to relocate them. The Groundsmen 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. 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.	It was agreed that a formal “Notice to quit” will be sent to the tenant giving them 1 month to remove their belongings. Once the month is passed the plot will be cleared and all items disposed of.	Jess	End March 26
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.	It was felt this was a good initiative and we should encourage Plot Holders to consider how we can preserve water and reduce demand on the current water supply. 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 Facebook informing plot holders of the available water butts.	PB	Next newsletter

NEW ACTIONS FROM TODAYS MEETINGS

No	Minute	Action	Owner	Due date
1	Silver Street 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.	Continued updates will be provided at the Allotment Advisory Group meetings.	CU	Next meeting
2	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.	As plot 10 sits alongside plot 9, it was agreed that we should speak with the plot holder and explain our intentions but also to inform her that the tree at the end of the plot may need to be trimmed back to allow access to the plot.	MB	ASAP
3	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 Silver Street. 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.	The Groundsmen need to be informed of the decision to allow the Allotment Group Members, but not plot holders, to dispose of small amounts of rubbish in the green waste bin.	Jess	ASAP

	However, this is not open to plot holders who have and will be told to take any rubbish home.			
4	Main gate into the allotments. The main gate into the allotment is sticking and needs adjusting.	Request the Groundsmen to look at the gate and adjust it accordingly.	Jess	ASAP
5	Buddy system. The proposed Buddy system was accepted as a good idea and should be pursued.	All Allotment Advisory Group members have expressed an interest in becoming a Buddy to new tenants when required. We need to inform all new tenants of the Buddy system and offer them a Buddy if they require one.	All Jess	On going As and when
6	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.	To ensure there are no duplications, contradictions or conflicts between the new Tenancy Agreement and the existing Rules and Regulations it was agreed that all members of the Allotment Advisory Group should review both document side by side and identify any duplications, contradictions or conflicts so that we can agree of the most appropriate wording and create a single Tenancy Agreement for all future Plot Holders.	All	Next meeting

Date of Next Meeting – 7th April 2026 at 10:30am, location to be agreed.