

## Allotment Advisory Group Meeting minutes

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

Date - 14<sup>th</sup> October 2025 - 10.30am

Venue - Face to face.

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

Absent - Peter Chungui (PC)

Apologies - None

### PREVIOUS OPEN ACTIONS FROM EARLIER MEETINGS

| No | Minute                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Action                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Owner | Due date      |
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| A  | <p><b>Improving Accessibility to the allotments</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p>We are keen to ensure the allotments are open to all where practicable.</p> <p>We are therefore planning to add a raised bed area at the front of the allotments, behind the new polytunnel.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>We also plan to put a pathed pathway and path the area in-between the beds so people in wheelchairs can move about unrestricted.</p> | <p><b>UPDATE</b></p> <p>Three raised beds are now ready to be allocated. We will leave the remaining two beds until we know how much demand there is.</p> <p>We can now offer the three raised beds to local Care Homes, with the expectation that the Care Homes would contribute to the general upkeep of the allotments.</p> | DL    | When ready    |
| B  | <p><b>Allotment lease</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The BPC are considering the proposal and entering negotiations with Savills.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <p><b>Update from meeting</b></p> <p>Progress on the sale is moving forward.</p> <p>The current proposal will be discussed at a meeting of the Parish Council this week.</p> <p>An update will be provided post the outcome of the meeting.</p>                                                                                 | CU    | Next meeting. |
| C  | <p><b>½ plots vs Full plots</b></p> <p>A discussion took place covering the number of ½ plots available and whether we should create more.</p> <p>It was agreed that analysis is required on the current availability which should be included for discussion at the next meeting.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <p><b>Update from meeting</b></p> <p>It was agreed that we should split Plot 12 into two ½ plots as soon as it is vacated in October 2025.</p> <p>The Handymen are in the process of clearing the plot.</p> <p>We already have someone on the waiting list who is looking for a ½ plot.</p>                                     | MB    | End October   |

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| D | <b>Continuing supply to Diamond Hampers.</b><br>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.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>Update from meeting</b><br>It was confirmed that Diamond Hampers would still like to receive produce from the Community Plot                                                                                                                | DL  | Closed      |
| E | <b>Future of the Community Plot</b><br>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.<br><br>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. | <b>Update from meeting</b><br>The Community plot will now be cleared and available to a new plot holder by Spring 2026                                                                                                                         | ALL | Closed      |
| F | <b>Allotment Notice Board.</b><br>The notice board at the entrance to the allotments is out of date and needs updating.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Notice Board will be reviewed and out of date literature removed.                                                                                                                                                                              | MB  | End October |
| G | <b>Future of the Community Plot</b><br>Now that we have been successfully running the Community Plot for 2 years, we feel it is time to take stock and decide if this is something we want to continue with.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>Update from meeting</b><br>Plot to be cleared by Spring 2026                                                                                                                                                                                | All | October     |
| H | <b>Relocating the Pagoda &amp; Picnic Bench</b><br>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.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>Update from meeting</b><br>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.<br><br>We will wait on the Parish Councils decision re where and when. | CU  | When ready  |
| I | <b>Operating Plan for 2025 / 2026</b><br>The Parish Council has requested sight of our 2025 / 2026 Operating Plan.<br><br>Two ideas for next year are the continuation of the raised beds and installing two Raptor Perches within the allotments to help ward off the rabbits etc.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>Update from meeting</b><br>It was agreed that there are no significant projects forecast for 2026.                                                                                                                                          | ALL | Closed      |
| J | <b>Financial Profile.</b><br>A review of the current budget was conducted and the frequency of payments identified.<br><br>It was not clear where the funds which have paid for our National Allotment Association Membership were coming from and whether the membership is still required.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>Update from meeting</b><br>We haven't used the National Allotment Association for the last three years. It is therefore suggested that we cancel our membership.                                                                            | MB  | Closed      |

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| L | <p><b>Proposed Rent Increase.</b><br/>We discussed whether we should keep plot rents as is or increase them for 2025 / 2026.</p> <p>As the rents have been kept the same for approximately the last 4 years, it was agreed that we should increase the rents.</p> <p>Therefore, the new rents should increase from £20 to £25 for Buckden Residents and from £25 to £30 for non-residents.</p> <p>½ plots should also be increased by £5.</p> <p>Plot Deposits will remain at £50 for both full and ½ plots.</p> | <p>It was agreed that the rent fee for next year (2025 / 2026) will be £25 per plot for Buckden Residents £30 per plot for Non-Residents.</p> <p>Half plots will be charged as 50% of a full plot.</p> <p>The deposit for a plot, both full and half plots will be £50 for both Residents and Non-Residents.</p> <p>We need to inform the Parish Clerk before the 2025 / 2026 Rent Requests are sent out.</p> | <b>MB / CU</b>                              | ASAP                                               |
| M | <p><b>Plot Inspection Update.</b><br/>Most plots are being well maintained but some plot holders require a nudge.</p> <p><b>Plot 12</b> - In the process of being vacated.</p> <p><b>Plot 18</b> - Will be monitored through the "three strikes" process.</p> <p><b>Plot 26</b> – Plot Holder has confirmed that are vacating their plot and have been given until Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2026 to remove all their property.</p>                                                                      | <p>To be cleared by the handymen during October. Need to check shed for any Plot Holder property.</p> <p>Plot Holder has confirmed their intention to retain the plot and committed to having the plot in good order by Spring 2026. Need to email Plot Holder and confirm agreement and timescales.</p> <p>Handymen can clear shed after deadline.</p>                                                       | <b>MB</b><br><br><b>MB</b><br><br><b>MB</b> | End Oct<br><br>End Oct<br><br>15 <sup>th</sup> Oct |
| N | <p><b>Overflowing into neighbouring plots</b><br/>There is concern that Plot 5 is spilling out into neighbouring plots and pathways. We need to contact the Plot Holder and remind them that they must remain within their own plot.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <p><b>Update from meeting</b><br/>No longer an issue but will continue to monitor through the Plot Inspection process.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>MB</b>                                   | Closed                                             |

#### NEW ACTIONS FROM 14<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2025 MEETING

| No | Minute                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Action                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Owner                      | Due date                            |
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| 1  | <p><b>Water storage initiative</b><br/>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.</p> | <p>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.</p> <p>We need to put an article in the next newsletter pointing out the various methods we could use to preserve water and use less.</p> <p>The idea to introduce water butts to all sheds in the allotments was discussed and it was felt we should encourage that where possible, but the cost of installing a water butt was considered restrictive. We should contact companies like Anglian Water to see if they can offer support and advise.</p> | <b>MB</b><br><br><b>MB</b> | Next newsletter<br><br>End November |

Date of Next Meeting – 9<sup>th</sup> December 2025 at 12 noon, location to be agreed.