

Allotment Advisory Group Meeting minutes

Purpose of meeting	- To discuss progress and issues affecting the allotments.		
Date	- 3 rd September 2025	-	12 noon
Venue	- At the Buckden Cafe		
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 We have been donated a number of raised bed frames which we are going to use to create four raised beds which would be accessible from a wheelchair. The work is planned to start on Wednesday 3 rd September, weather permitting. We intend to initially offer a raised bed out the previous plot holders who were forced to give up their due to ill health but who may be able to manage a small raised bed.	MB	End Sept
		If we have any raised beds which are not taken up we will reach out to local care homes and the Doctors Surgery in Buckden to see if they can recommend someone who may benefit. Update from meeting The proposal to create four raised beds at the back of the polytunnel was agreed. The priority will be allocated to ex plot holders who are no longer able to manage a full plot, in first instance. If any raised beds are left, to offer them to local Care Homes, with the expectation that the Care Homes would contribute to the general upkeep of the allotments.	MB	When ready
B	Freds plaque The original plaque that was put by the trees has gone missing and it was agreed that it should be replaced.	The replacement plaque has now been installed on the bench where Stan's plaque has been placed. Update from meeting The position of the plaque on the bench was acceptable.	MB	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. An update on progress will be provided at the next meeting.	A progress update is included in the agenda for today's meeting. Update from meeting There is no update on the purchase of the allotments, which is currently with the Solicitors. The Allotment Advisory Group will be updated when progress is made.	CU / MB	On Going
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.	We have had an push back from the Plot Holder of Plot 12. They have decided to give up their plot and vacate it by October, when the new rent requests are issued. This does not change our intention, and we will split the plot into 2 when they have left. Update from meeting It was agreed that we should split Plot 12 into two ½ plots as soon as it is vacated in October 2025.	MB	End October
E	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, who's address is unknown.	There were three problem plots. Plot 10 – This has been vacated and cleared and is being offered to the next person on the waiting list. If someone takes on the plot, we do not intend to charge them for the months of September and October 2025.with The plot holder of plot 12 has decided to vacate the plot by October 2025. The plot will then be split into two ½ plots. The plot holder of plot 18 had previously told us that they intended to give up the plot. They have now decided to keep the plot and committed to use it to grow produce in the next growing season. Update from meeting Plot 10 and Plot 19 are in the process of being allocated to the next people on the waiting list. Re progress of plot 18, we will continue to monitor this through the Plot Inspection program and, should the plot remain unmanaged, will be dealt with through the three strikes process. We are waiting for the key for the shed on Plot 10. Text plot holder and	Agreed MB	For info

		request the key and the return of their green Garden Waste bin, which is currently on Plot 13.		
F	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 it 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.	A number of chalk boards have been purchased and will be used in the polytunnel to identify plot holder seed trays.	PB	CLOSED
G	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. 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.	Update to be provided at the next meeting. Update from meeting It was confirmed that Diamond Hampers would still like to receive produce from the Community Plot A discussion on the future of the Community Plot is on the agenda for this meeting.	DL ALL ALL	Next Meeting Next Meeting End October
H	Allotment Notice Board. The notice board at the entrance to the allotments is out of date and needs updating.	Notice Board has been reviewed and out of date literature removed.	MB	Carry Over
I	New Pest Controller. Having completed a value for money review it has been decided to move from HFE over to the HDC for pest control. Before the end of the termination period, we need to identify who owns the Bait Boxes.	Waiting for confirmation from Parish Clerk. Update from meeting The contract doesn't state who owns the bait boxes and HFC have not claimed them. Therefore, we will assume they belong to the Allotments.	MB	Closed
J	Future of the Community Plot 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.	Discussion included in the agenda. Update from meeting We discussed the future of the Community Plot and it was agreed that we would vacate Plot 23 and return it to two ½ plots and offer them out to anyone looking for a plot.		

[illegible]

NEW ACTIONS FROM 3rd September 2025 MEETING

No	Minute	Action	Owner	Due date
1	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.	There are possibilities that the Pagoda could be better used elsewhere in the village. Discussions to be had with possible interested parties.	CU	Next Meeting
2	Operating Plan for 2025 / 2026 The Parish Council has requested sight of our 2025 / 2026 Operating Plan. 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.	Consider all ideas for 2025 / 2026 Operating Plan, calculate an estimated cost and submit our Operating Plan to the Parish Council.	ALL	Before October
3	Financial Profile. A review of the current budget was conducted and the frequency of payments identified. 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.	Consider if membership provides value for money and, if not, consider cancelling.	MB	Before October
4	September Newsletter. It was agreed that we should publish a Newsletter in September and to include three items within it.	Compile September Newsletter	MB	Before end Sept

	a. Plot Boundaries. b. Best Kept plot competition where Plot Holders can vote for the plot they believe is the best managed. c. Any new Advisory Group members.			
5	Proposed Rent Increase. We discussed whether we should keep plot rents as is or increase them for 2025 / 2026. As the rents have been kept the same for approximately the last 4 years, it was agreed that we should increase the rents. Therefore, the new rents should increase from £20 to £25 for Buckden Residents and from £25 to £30 for non-residents. ½ plots should also be increased by £5. Plot Deposits will remain at £50 for both full and ½ plots.	Inform the Parish Clerk of the 2025 / 2026 rent increases. Add an article in the next Newsletter informing all Plot Holders of the coming rent increases.	CU MB	Before end Sept Next Newsletter
6	Plot Inspection Update. Most plots are being well maintained but some plot holders require a nudge. Plot 12 - In the process of being vacated. (See above) Plot 18 - Will be monitored through the “three strikes” process. Plot 26 – No response received from the communication after the last inspection. This is considered a 1st strike. We will now issue a 2nd strike communication to the plot holder. Failure to then attend the plot will mean a 3rd strike where the Parish Clerk will issue a formal letter letting the plot holder know that, if no evidence of activity is seen, the plot will be reclaimed and reallocated to a new plot holder. Plot 32 and 42 – These plots were allocated to the current plot holders this year and there was a lot of initial activity by the new plot holders to clear and prepare the plot. However, over the past few month’s things seem to have stop. We will issue a gentle communication to the plot holders to see how they are getting on and see what their intentions are.	Send text message and email to plot holder. Send email	MB MB	End Sept End Sept

Date of Next Meeting – 14th October 2025 at 10am location to be agreed.