

CENTRAL SWINDON NORTH

Allotment Working Group Notes

Monday 13th May 2024 - Held in person.

Present:

J Manley – Pickards Field Tenant
M Carter – Pickards Field Tenant
P Nobbs – Rodbourne Farm Tenant
T Reynolds – Gorse Hill Tenant

N Jackson – CSNPC Allotments Officer
A Briggs – CSNPC Ops Manager

Cllr M Lucas - WG Chair
Cllr P Park – (Online)

Notes:

1. Review action points of previous Working Group meeting.

A Briggs presented the notes of the previous meeting, held on 15th Feb 2024.

The group reviewed the action points of the previous meeting and A Briggs and N Jackson provided updates which included:

- Discussion on a vertical plough – Cost at >£3k deemed excessive compared to projected usage. It was agreed that the grounds team would look at spraying courses that could help tackle excessive weed growth. Council would need to ensure solutions did not contain glyphosate.
- M Carter updated on Asian Hornet monitoring. 9 Gard’apis traps installed across CSNPC sites. Several European Hornets caught and released. Monitoring would continue over the summer period. M Carter confirmed 4 Asian Hornets had been caught in the UK this year and were undergoing analysis to determine where they had originated from.
- Hops & Compost collection and delivery continued. Positive response received from allotment tenants. Large quantity of hops available for collection from the brewery so regular delivery occurring every week. Compost very popular, with majority of



material used on day of delivery by tenants. Growing success to be determined over the summer period, with a review on whether the collections remain ongoing. Early indication shows mixing solution with water works well. J Manley advised he had sample testing undertaken which showed inert bio activity. Comments were made around the smell of the material.

N Jackson commented that CSNPC offer a lot of additional services compared to other local Councils.

2. Allotment Officer Workload Update

N Jackson updated the group on several matters, including:

- Small amount of green waste removal.
- Positive reduction in fly tipping seen.
 - Success at Cheney Manor site with the introduction of CCTV.
- Cultivation notices commenced. These will be staged in phases to allow for efficiencies. Priority to get vacant or unused plots active prior to mid-June.
- High number of vacating tenants at the start of the growing season. Mainly due to early contact ahead of Spring and the new billing term.
- Approx 30 vacant plots across all sites. Main sites being:
 - 6 @ Pickards Field
 - 6 @ Cheney Manor
 - 7 @ Gorse Hill
 - 7 @ Redcliffe St
- Large waiting list should allow for quick uptake in vacant plots.
- Hydrotherapy Group turned around a vacant plot at Gorse Hill, and have done an excellent job.

Item noted.

3. 24/25 AWG Project Work

A Briggs referred to quotations sought for remedial works to pathways and then the installation of new water troughs at several identified sites.

The group were reminded that the Allotment income is reinvested, giving an annual balance of around £20k PA. However, that the water and waste costs are deducted from this, so the remaining balance is approx. £15k.

A Briggs asked the group whether they would support the Council looking at Pathway repairs to Cheney Manor Allotment and installation of water troughs at Akers Way, Churchward Ave and Pickard's Field.

The group held discussion at length were supportive.

It was noted that any connection to the mains would need to be authorised and undertaken by Thames Water. Which may incur additional costs.

A Briggs advised a report would be drafted along with costs and presented to a future Council committee for consideration.

4. Allotment Best in Show Proposal.

A Briggs presented a document that had been circulated with the agenda pack. It was explained the document had been presented to recent Council Committee, and that councillors wished for the Working Group to review the proposal before any further commitment was made.

The document detailed the initiation of a 'Best in show' style of award. Where allotmenters would be rewarded for their good work at the end of each growing season.

A Briggs then presented the draft criteria ideas for judging.

The group agreed that the draft criteria was too complex, and that a more simplified set of judging markers should be created.

It was remarked that uniformity of judging was needed to achieve a fair and equal review.

Cllr M Lucas suggested Cllr John Ballman should be part of the judging panel.

Cllr P Park referenced a similar activity that has taken place at Haydon Wick Parish Council. It was remarked that the activity was successful. Cllr Park explained that Haydon Wick incorporated a 'Best Newcomer', where tenants were entered automatically upon taking up a new plot.

Cllr Park was asked whether he could source the information about the judging criteria in place at HWPC.

Cllr Park would consider being part of the judging panel.

A Briggs explained that given the need for refinement of the detail, the inception of the awards would likely take place prior to the next growing season in 2025.

The idea was well received by the group, and they confirmed they would support it being implemented.

Action – Seek information from Haydon Wick PC as to their judging criteria.

Action – Draft final judging criteria for approval.

5. Manor Garage

The Group were informed that the Parish had been approached by Manor Garage, who are a car mechanic company located along Kiln Lane in Cheney Manor. Garage staff had contacted the Parish Council with a request to occupy part of the Cheney Manor allotment site for their parking.

It was explained that parking along the lane was difficult, with articulated lorries often coming and going to various businesses.

The group were reminded that in 2020 a similar request has been received by the Council for another company located along Kiln Lane (Direct Windows). The request in 2020 had been approved and the revised land used as carpark had been in situ for approx. 3+ years.

It was confirmed that the Direct Windows lease was for 25 years, with an annual charge (income) of just over £2k plus annual inflation rises.

A Briggs confirmed that this income remains ringfenced for use on allotments.

The group held discussion on the matter, it was noted that whilst loss of green space is to be avoided, if an area of land is unusable then consideration should be given for an alternative use. It was further commented that should any change to the use of land be made, the incoming monies should be invested at Kiln Lane to improve the parking provision.

It was noted that the contractor would be liable for all costs, including construction, maintenance and legal fees.

A Briggs outlined the onward steps of the process for the request. Stating that the Leisure & Recreation Committee would need to consider its viability. Should the Council agree to the review, consultation and planning protocols would need to be adhered to. This process could take 9-12 months from start to completion.

Item Noted.

6. Trees / Hedges

N Jackson updated on the removal of a small tree located at Redcliffe St.

CSNPC officers continue to chase Idverde for an update on OS tree works and the mapping information.

It was noted that due to bird nesting, it was unlikely that any tree works, unless urgent would be completed until the Autumn of 2024.

The group discussed hedge maintenance.

The group were updated on the completion of planting of the pocket woodland at the Churchward Ave Allotment site. This project was planted with the assistance of the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust. It was fully funded and there are ongoing maintenance costs included within the funding.

A Briggs presented several photos.

It was commented that some of the willow may fail. However, this was expected given the type of root planted. Replenishment would take place at a later date.

Action – A Briggs to check existing contract to determine whether CSNPC has 1 or 2 cuts per year.

7. Site Issues / Concerns

P Nobbs raised the ongoing blockage issue within the drainage channel at Rodbourne Farm Allotment.

Officers to investigate over the summer.

J Manley reported an issue with one of the locks at Pickards Field.

Cllr M Lucas queried whether trees could be planted at any other unused space within our Allotments to improve ground conditions. Specifically commenting on willow.

N Jackson mentioned an area at Redcliffe St that could be considered.

J Manley asked whether the hedge at the Pinehurst Road entrance of Pickards Field could be addressed to improve the line of sight when entering and exiting.

Cllr M Lucas asked for the same to be considered at Churchward Ave.

Action – Officers to speak to Jet Rod and pass CCTV to try and locate the blockage.

Action – N Jackson to arrange replacement.

Action – Officers to arrange reduction of hedges around entrance and exit points of allotment sites to ensure safe ingress & egress.

8. AOB & Date of Next Meeting.

A Briggs verbally updated on a number of matters relating to the Salga shop situated at Pickards Field. Including Outstanding compliance, payments and flooding concerns.

M Carter advised some changes had recently occurred within the Salga Committee.



Parish Council

It was suggested the existing drain could be blocked.

A Briggs queried whether Salga had their own water meter.

It was confirmed they do, including an electric meter.

A suggestion of installing IBC tanks connected to the guttering might help with water run off and could be considered.

M Carter stated he would raise the lack of contact at the upcoming Salga AGM and propose the suggestion of the IBC tanks.

The next meeting is to be scheduled between August 2024.

Meeting closed 6.20pm