

Leisure & Recreation Committee

Report: Pickard's Field Allotments – Access Track Condition and Future Improvement

Date: 3rd September 2026

Report Author: Andrew Briggs – Head of Operations

1. Recommendations

Members are asked to:

1. **Note** the current condition of the Pickard's Field access track and the quotations obtained for permanent improvement works.
2. **Note** that temporary repairs are undertaken to the worst potholes and rutted sections during the current financial year.
3. **Agree in principle** that a permanent improvement scheme is considered as part of the 2027/28 budget process, subject to confirmation of planning, drainage and technical requirements.
4. **Agree** that Officers continue discussions with SALGA regarding its delivery arrangements and seek an appropriate financial contribution towards any permanent improvement where heavy delivery vehicles continue to use the track.

2. Purpose of Report

To update Members on the condition of the access track at Pickard's Field Allotments, the impact of increased heavy vehicle movements associated with the SALGA shop, and options for short- and longer-term remedial works.

3. Background

The access track at Pickard's Field serves allotment tenants and also provides access to the Swindon Allotment and Leisure Gardens Association (SALGA) shop located within the site.

The condition of the track has deteriorated, with areas of rutting and potholing becoming increasingly evident. Concerns have been raised regarding the need for a more durable long-term solution.

The Parish Council has previously invested in infrastructure at Pickard's Field, including significant drainage improvement works completed during 2025. These works improved drainage conditions in the vicinity of the access and benefited the wider allotment site.

SALGA currently occupies the shop at Pickard's Field without payment of rent to the Parish Council.

Current Condition and Vehicle Use

The access track was primarily intended to accommodate normal allotment-related vehicle movements.

In recent years, larger and heavier vehicles have increasingly used the track to make deliveries to the SALGA shop. These vehicles impose a substantially greater loading on the surface than normal allotment traffic and are considered to be contributing materially to the rutting and deterioration now being experienced.

While the track would require periodic maintenance in any event, Officers consider that the additional heavy traffic associated with commercial deliveries to the SALGA shop has accelerated deterioration.

Permanent Improvement Options

The Parish Council has obtained two quotations for a permanent tarmac improvement to the entrance section of the track.

The first option is £16,850 plus VAT. This provides for reducing the existing stone by approximately 100mm, retaining and compacting the existing sub-base, installing concrete edging and laying 100mm of tarmac surfacing. The contractor has specifically assumed that the existing sub-base will be sufficient and has made no allowance for additional stone fill.

The second option is £20,950 plus VAT and provides for full new construction. This includes excavation to approximately 250mm, concrete edging, geotextile membrane, 150mm of Type 1 stone and 100mm of tarmac surfacing.

The full reconstruction option would provide the more comprehensive solution, particularly if the track is expected to continue accommodating heavier delivery vehicles.

Planning and Technical Considerations

Before any permanent tarmac scheme is progressed, the Parish Council would need to confirm the relevant planning, drainage and technical requirements.

A permanent impermeable surface could alter existing surface-water drainage arrangements, and the final specification would therefore need to ensure that water is appropriately managed and does not create additional flooding or drainage issues elsewhere within the allotment site.

The Council would also need to confirm whether planning permission or any other formal consent is required before construction.

Financial Position

There is currently no identified budget available to undertake works of this scale during the current financial year.

If Members wish to pursue a permanent solution, Officers would therefore recommend that funding is built up and the project is considered as part of the 2027/28 budget process.

At current quotation levels, Members should anticipate a capital requirement in the region of £17,000–£21,000 plus VAT, subject to final specification, planning requirements and any changes in construction costs.

Interim Repairs

In the short term, Officers propose that temporary repairs are undertaken to the worst potholes and rutted sections of the track.

This would help maintain reasonable access and address the areas presenting the greatest immediate concern.

These repairs should, however, be regarded as temporary maintenance rather than a permanent solution. Repeated repairs are unlikely to represent good value if the level of heavy vehicle traffic continues unchanged.

SALGA Contribution and Delivery Arrangements

Officers consider that any long-term solution should be considered alongside the current delivery arrangements serving the SALGA shop.

Although the Parish Council accepts responsibility for maintaining the allotment access, it would not be reasonable for the Council, and ultimately allotment tenants and parish taxpayers, to meet the entire cost of upgrading the track to accommodate a substantially greater level of heavy vehicle traffic generated by deliveries to the SALGA shop.

SALGA should therefore be invited to consider either:

- changing its delivery arrangements so that larger delivery vehicles do not travel along the allotment access track, with goods transferred from an appropriate point nearer the entrance; or
- making an appropriate financial contribution towards a permanent improvement designed to withstand the additional loading generated by deliveries to the shop.

Officers have indicated to SALGA that the Parish Council is willing to discuss how a practical long-term arrangement could be reached.

Financial Implications

Temporary repairs can be met from existing operational maintenance resources, subject to the extent of the works required.

A permanent improvement would require separate capital provision and is currently estimated at between £16,850 and £20,950 plus VAT based on quotations received.

Any contribution secured from SALGA would reduce the cost falling to the Parish Council.



