



Council Meeting – 25 March 2021

Agenda Item CC2184/21

Parish Council Allotment

Introduction

The Parish Council currently are the holders of a small allotment plot in the Barton Way Community Allotments. The plot has mainly been looked after by the Rangers with input from some current and past serving parish councillors.

Prior to the COVID restrictions in 2020 there had been engagement with a small group of pre-school children getting involved in making use of the allotment. This enabled the group to learn about growing food and getting the benefit of being in an outdoor environment.

Going forward into the future as more people are vaccinated and restrictions begin to ease, (hopefully later this year), I believe that there is an opportunity to expand the use of the allotment to the benefit of residents and other local community groups.

Discussion

Well-being of Local Residents

Across the UK, up until COVID restrictions, there has been a growing number of GP's prescribing referrals for patients to work alongside community groups in allotments and gardens. This holistic approach is being used to support people who suffer for a variety of illnesses such as anxiety, recovering from cancer treatment, recovery from addiction or even bereavement and loneliness.

Studies of this have shown that the benefit of people being able to come together as a group when they might not normally have an opportunity to do so can have a huge impact. It encourages people to be outdoors, meet new people and at talk to others who are experiencing similar situations.

Environmental Impact

As a Parish Council there have been regular and ongoing discussions about what/ how we can do more for the environment, and how we can do our bit to encourage and protect the limited resources of the planet. With the allotment, there are some opportunities to enhance what we currently do which will also link in with Earth Day.

1. Enhance the organic composting on the plot. The Rangers could create composting facilities, see the picture at the bottom. Good use of recycled materials.
2. Enhance the harvesting of rainwater on the plot with water butts, reducing the need to draw water for the troughs. Encourage the school children to think of ideas on how to collect rainwater through a competition idea.

3. Introduce extra raised beds that are easily accessible, which can be planted with appropriate plants/ herbs that attract and encourage insect pollinators. Benefit not just for our plot, but across the whole site.

Prior to Christmas, I had an initial discussion with the Rangers and Councillor Cole about this concept. There is funding in the annual budget for the running and maintenance of the allotment. The concept is to seek support in principle to expand the use of the allotment and to be able to install new raised beds as described, harvesting of water on the plot. The funds would also be used to purchase seeds and plants as appropriate.

I have had a discussion with the Clerk to discuss the availability of the Rangers to facilitate extra groups attending once COVID restrictions are over. I have also discussed with the Clerk how we can re-establish links with the pre-school group and extend to others. In addition, I have also discussed how this can be promoted via the Parish nurse and the GP practices in Croxley Green for referrals.

Recommendations

- To expand the use of the allotment to more community groups and make the necessary adjustments to the site to accommodate them.

Cllr Stephen Crabtree
March 2021

Further Information

Water Butts

Water butts and guttering to go on the shed would cost approx. £100.00 depending on the size and number of water butts introduced. The approx. price above allows for 2 butts which would harvest around 400 liters of water.



Raised Beds

https://www.aosom.co.uk/item/out-sunny-fir-wood-raised-rectangular-8-compartment-plant-stand-oak-tone~845-238V01.html?utm_source=google_shopping&gclid=EAlaIQobChMIvf_Vz5ub7wIVlxkGAB1MEAWbEAQYAIABEglvdvD_BwE

Cost of this type of raised bed range from £60.00 upwards. This one costs £112.00. There is scope on the site to have 2 raised beds of this nature. The durability needs to be considered for lasting outdoors but would be guided by the rangers on other options as appropriate.

Composting



Composting in the image above could be created from wooden pallets. The Rangers could build something similar if we can acquire a number of pallets free of charge.