

PUCKLECHURCH PARISH COUNCIL ALLOTMENT POLICY

Purpose of the strategy

This allotment strategy has been developed for the provision of allotment plots provided by Pucklechurch Parish Council (either directly or through devolved management), not for privately owned sites.

The overall objective of this strategy is to increase the ability and opportunity for people to cultivate allotment plots in Pucklechurch Parish. The strategy seeks through its targets and initiatives to optimise the use of allotments for existing and potential plot holders, identify needs and meet demand. All initiatives contained in this document are considered in the context of other Parish Council strategies, policies and objectives.

This document provides a framework allowing tenants to develop and manage their allotments in partnership with the PPC.

Introduction

The provision of allotments by local authorities is a statutory duty. Pucklechurch Parish Council will continue to provide and promote allotments not only because of this statutory requirement but because allotment gardening can make a valuable contribution to the Parish's sustainability by providing health, social, economic and environmental benefits. These can be summarised as

- Low cost fresh food production for the family
- Promotion of healthy affordable diets
- Healthy recreational activity
- The opportunity to maintain and develop skills
- Social contact and as a contribution to community spirit
- Better partnership working

Allotments are a valuable green sustainable open space within the rural environment. They contribute to the retention of traditional skills and wisdom as well as being highly beneficial to the wildlife of the area.

Current Provision

The Site

Pucklechurch Parish Council operates one allotment site at Westerleigh Road, Pucklechurch, South Gloucestershire. The site is divided into 26 sites of varying sizes.

Management

The Allotment Garden is currently managed on behalf of the Parish Council by the Parish Clerk. The Parish Clerk will deal with the day to day administration of the Allotments, including:

- Collecting and administering rents
- Administering tenancies
- Letting plots and new tenancy agreements
- Enquiries from prospective tenants including site visits
- Inspecting individual plots on a regular basis
- Resolving disputes and dealing with complaints
- Arranging day to day maintenance of the site
- Managing alterations and improvement works

An Allotment Handbook has been drawn up and agreed by the Parish Council. This explains the rules in the Tenancy Agreement and what can and cannot be done on the site, along with details of site management and contact details. The Handbook is reviewed and revised as needed.

Site Maintenance

The Parish Council is responsible for maintaining clear access to the Allotment Gardens, allowing tenants access to their plots.

Target areas of the strategy

- Ensuring sufficient allotments
- Promoting allotment gardening
- Encouraging sustainability
- Providing good administration
- Maintaining adequate resources

Ensuring Sufficient Allotments

It is the Policy of the Parish Council to continue to meet its legal obligation to provide allotments in Pucklechurch, for the residents of Pucklechurch Parish. –

The Parish Council owns no land other than the existing site at Westerleigh Road. It is not anticipated that the Parish Council will either sell this site or buy additional sites in the future. The aim therefore is to maximise the use of the existing site.

In addition to a residents' only policy, the Parish Council may exceptionally accept applications from voluntary community groups for the tenancy of allotment(s), where the proposed use is beneficial to the residents of Pucklechurch Parish and may increase allotment use.

Promoting Allotment Gardening

Current position

It is the Parish Council's policy to promote allotment gardening. Details of the Allotment site appear on the Parish Council Web site.

Encouraging Sustainability

Current position

The handbook encourages organic gardening but does not forbid pesticides:

- To encourage and where possible support, good environmental practice including use of organic alternatives to fertilizers and pesticides.
- In consideration of opportunities for improved wildlife habitats, such as hedge planting, lace-wing and ladybird overwintering shelters.
- To reduce maintenance and improve bio-diversity by making use of unlettable plots and planting to encourage wildlife.

Maintaining Adequate Resources

At present the rental income from the site does not cover running costs, with major capital costs having to be met from Parish Council. The salary of the Parish Clerk's time spent on allotment administration is met from the Parish Council's staffing budget and not from rental income. The Parish Council needs to balance the benefits of the allotments provision against the cost to the residents of Pucklechurch via the Council tax precept.

The level of rents, key and plot deposits plus any concessionary schemes is considered annually and any changes are introduced in time for renewals on 1 April.

In addition to the above there may be opportunities to obtain some external funding through Government, EU and Lottery Grants etc.

The Parish Council policy is to make each vacated plot sufficiently attractive for letting, which could at one extreme include the use of external contractors to clear a plot, at the other, it could include offer of a rent-free period to compensate the new tenants for having to clear the plot.

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