

Kendal Town Council

Town Hall, Highgate, Kendal LA9 4ED
www.kendaltowncouncil.gov.uk



24 October 2022

To Members of the Allotments Committee and Site Representatives

Cllr G Archibald (Vice Chair)	Cllr K Blamire
Cllr S Coleman	Cllr J Cornthwaite
Cllr A Finch (Chair)	Cllr C Hardy

Site Representatives as appropriate

Canal Head	Deborah Allison	Rinkfield	Tony Hayton
Castle Drive	Mrs E Kelly	Sandylands	Vacancy
Castle Haggs	Gwen Tordoff	Sedbergh Road	Paul Huggonson
Castle Haggs Ext	Jon Cox	Shaws Brow	Vacancy
Coley Barn	Eric Ashton	Town View	Vacancy
Crow Tree	Brian Williams	Underley Hill	Vacancy
Greenside	Kim Baker	Underley Road	Chris Rowley
Greenside	Ali Paddle	Wattsfield	Ros Taylor
Natland Road	Vacancy		

You are invited to a meeting of Kendal Town Council Allotments Committee on **Monday, 31 October 2022, at 7.00 p.m., in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall, Highgate, Kendal.** This is a rescheduled meeting, with the scheduled meeting of 10 October having had to be cancelled.

Yours faithfully

Chris Bagshaw
Town Clerk

AGENDA

Public Participation

Any member of the public who wishes to ask a question, make representations or present a deputation or petition at this meeting should apply to do so before the commencement of the meeting. Information on how to make the application is available on the Council's Website - <http://www.kendaltowncouncil.gov.uk/kendal-town-council/statutory-information/guidance-on-public-participation-at-kendal-town-council-meetings/> or by contacting the Town Clerk on 01539 793490.

1. Apologies

To receive and accept any apologies. If accepted, apologies will be considered to be for reasons approved by the council under the terms of local government act 1972, s85.

2. Declarations of Interest

To receive declarations by members and/or co-optees of interests in respect of items on this agenda.

- 3. Exclusion of Press and Public (Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960)**
To consider whether there are any agenda items during consideration of which the press and public should be excluded.
- 4. Minutes from the Last Meeting**
To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Allotments Committee held on 18 July 2022 and to authorise the Chair to sign them as a true record (*see attached*).
- 5. Review of Spend against Budget**
To consider a report on budget spending (*see attached*).
- 6. Allotment Management Software**
To consider a proposal to extend the functionality of the current Allotment Management Software to include mobile reporting.

Background

The Council uses Rialtas software to manage the allotment database. Last year the company teamed up with a mobile technology company to offer an integrated mobile app that can be used to make allotment inspection reports on site. This would mean the Council Services Officer would be able to record her inspection visits, as she makes them, rather than taking notes to write up once she is back in the office. The app includes the ability to attach pictures for the file, and means that on return to the office, reports are generated almost instantaneously (the app downloads and syncs to the Rialtas system). The cost of the app is £150 pa.

- 7. Asbestos Site Investigation – Underley Hill Allotment Gardens**
To receive a brief update on the current situation, following the research tasks set at the last meeting (*the current Asbestos Management Plan is attached*).
- 8. Cockerels on Coley Barn Allotments**
To receive a brief verbal update on the current situation.
- 9. Canal Head Extension**
To receive a brief report on the extension of the available plots at Canal Head (*see attached*).
- 10. Waiting List**
To receive an update on the Allotments Waiting List (*see attached*).
- 11. Site Representatives**
To receive verbal reports from Site Representatives, and to consider what actions may be taken where no site representative has been present.
- 12. Project Updates**
To receive verbal reports from officers on other projects and longer-term plans.

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Minutes of the meeting of the Allotments Committee held on Monday, 18 July 2022, at the Town Hall, Highgate, Kendal, at 7.00 p.m.

Cllr G Archibald (Vice Chair)	Absent	Cllr K Blamire	Apologies
Cllr S Coleman	Present	Cllr J Cornthwaite	Present
Cllr A Finch (Chair)	Present	Cllr C Hardy	Apologies

Site Representatives present

Canal Head	Deborah Allison
Castle Drive	Mrs E Kelly
Castle Hags	Gwen Tordoff
Castle Hags Ext	Jon Cox
Crow Tree	Brian Williams
Greenside	Ali Paddle

Also present in respect of Agenda Item No.5 (Minute No.A2/2022 below) was Cumbria County Councillor Shirley Evans.

In attendance: Chris Bagshaw (Town Clerk), Inge Booth (Democratic Services Assistant), Janine Holt (Council Services Officer) and Pierre Labat (Townscape Officer).

A1/2022 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs K Blamire and C Hardy.

A2/2022 Path Repairs at Sandylands Allotments

The Town Council had had problems with the surface of the footpath which ran through the heart of the Sandylands allotment. At its lowest point, it flooded and became very muddy and virtually impassable after rain. In winter, the route was often unusable. The Town Council had attempted to patch this path on a number of occasions and had scheduled further work this winter – mostly the compacting of self-binding aggregate on the worst bits. The land was owned by South Lakeland District Council, but the Town Council's allotment tenancy covered the whole of its landholding in this field.

Cumbria County Councillor Shirley Evans addressed the Committee, seeking co-funding for a project improving connectivity between Fowl Ing Lane and Jenkins Rise. Cllr Evans was supporting a Cumbria County Council footpath improvement scheme for the right of way between Fowl Ing Lane and Jenkin Rise, which included the section of path through the allotment. She explained that it was the main access path to the allotments from most locations and was very well used, particularly by Queen Katharine School pupils and the nearby nursery users. She informed the Committee that the County Council currently had

£20,000 put aside from the Environmental Improvement Fund, with a proposal to make the path the best it possibly could be. Officers had come forward with two suggestions, one by complete use of shale and one including some tarmac; the costs, however, were not yet known. South Lakes Housing, whose residents benefitted from the path, had promised a contribution of £1,000 and Cllr Evans hoped that the Town Council would consider also offering support to the proposal which would benefit the users of the allotments.

The Townscape Officer stressed the need to ensure that the contractors carrying out the work were aware of the problems caused to the path by heavy rain and for the need of the installation of a gully or other suitable drainage method. A Member having expressed concern to earlier mention by Cllr Evans of the potential for use of shale, Cllr Evans explained that it was, in fact, to be a self-binding aggregate.

A3/2022 Declarations of Interest

Cllr A Finch declared an interest in Minute No. A8/2022 as set out below.

A4/2022 Exclusion of Press and Public (Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960)

No issues were considered for exclusion.

A5/2022 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Resolved: To receive and accept the minutes of the previous meeting of the Allotments Committee held on and to authorise the Chair to sign them as a true record.

A6/2022 Review of Spend against Budget

In presenting the paper, the Council Services Officer asked Members if they wished now to consider County Councillor Shirley Evans' request at Minute No. A2/2022 above.

In response to a query, the Council Services Officer advised that there was some flexibility in the capital funding, although an amount of £30,000 had been put aside for the Canal Head extension scheme.

Committee Members expressed concern regarding at making a decision on any contribution to the path repairs at Sandylands allotments prior to any indication of costings, however, felt that match-funding South Lakes Housing up to a sum of £1,000 from the revenue budget would be appropriate.

A query having been raised in relation to the budget spreadsheet as presented not showing a breakdown on how money was being spent, the Town Clerk acknowledged that more detailed information was required and informed Members that the finance system was mid-change and that further consideration needed to be given to how this was presented. He undertook to ensure that the information was provided in a more appropriate format at the next meeting, however, assured Members that allotments spend was within budget.

Resolved:

- (1) to accept the report;

- (2) to contribute a sum from the revenue fund of up to £1,000 to Cumbria County Council for the path repairs at Sandylands allotments; and
- (3) the Town Clerk to arrange for the production of a more detailed budget report to the next meeting.

A7/2022 Asbestos Site Investigation – Underley Hill Allotment Gardens

The Council Services Officer reported that the Council had been quoted a figure of up to £3,755 to investigate the extent of the asbestos contamination at Underley Hill Allotment Gardens. She provided some detail of the lengthy history of the site which was leased by the Town Council from South Lakeland District Council. The Committee was being asked to consider the quote and to indicate its approval for a timescale of appropriate works.

Members expressed strong concerns around health and safety and insurance, however, were also concerned that, should the Town Council commence with investigations, then this could be seen as taking on responsibility for the issue. Concern was also expressed in relation to insurance. The Town Clerk explained that, having been reunited with the Town Council's paper files now that the Team had moved back to the Town Hall, it would be much easier to check up on the back stories. The Council Services Officer advised that emails existed indicating that the District Council was responsible and that it was the District Council that had taken the decision to simply cordon off the area and to not condemn it. The Town Clerk reassured Members, explaining that the asbestos was inert if not disturbed; the area was cordoned off and the risk was to those trespassing in the location; this was not an emergency situation.

Resolved: Officers to carry out further investigation on the history of the site and as to who is responsible for the matter.

A8/2022 Cockerels on Coley Barn Allotments

Note – Cllr A Finch declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item of business by virtue of the fact that he was a tenant of Kendal Town Council on Coley Barn Allotments. He abstained from voting on the matter.

The Council Services Officer presented a report, explaining that in 2015 a complaint by a member of the public had been received with regard to the noise nuisance of the cockerels on Coley Barn allotments. At that time, the Committee had agreed that cockerels would be permitted in exceptional circumstances, with the tenant having to provide robust evidence to support their need for a cockerel(s). Two tenants had been granted approval, the main basis of the approval being that they kept rare breed birds. The birds were used for breeding to ensure the survival of bloodline. In the interim period, no further complaints had been received.

In November 2021 a complaint had been received from a local resident about the noise nuisance caused by the cockerels on Coley Barn. The resident found the situation intolerable and had reported it to the Environment Protection department of South Lakeland District Council. An Officer from the Environment Protection department had confirmed that the current noise caused by the cockerels was above the acceptable level and was a legal

nuisance. The Town Council, as landowners, was obliged to resolve the issue or face fines and legal costs.

The Council Services Officer offered three options for consideration by the Committee:-

- (1) To not permit cockerels on any allotments.
- (2) To allow cockerels on any allotments.
- (3) To allow cockerels in exceptional circumstances.

A lengthy discussion ensued, particularly with regard to Option (3) which was felt to be the best way forward. During consideration, it was brought to Members' attention that Town Council officers had not always been treated in an appropriate manner in trying to deal with the matter over the past few months. Members expressed the strong opinion that where tenants were abusive towards staff then their tenancies should be terminated with immediate effect.

The Council Services Officer indicated that, should Members pursue Option (3), then officers would ensure that the birds involved were indeed rare breeds and that everything was in order.

Members discussed the fact that, should Option (3) be pursued, then those keeping birds illegally should be given the opportunity to remove their birds within an appropriate timescale and, if this did not happen, then their tenancy should be terminated. In addition, those being allowed to keep rare breeds would need to be reminded about acceptable noise levels and that, if they continued to cause a nuisance, then their tenancies too would have to be terminated.

Resolved: To allow cockerels in exceptional circumstances (the plot holder will have to provide robust evidence as to the reasons for keeping a cockerel and will be subject to a trial period with restrictions in place. The situation will have to be closely monitored and he views of the surrounding residential area sought. This is the "Status Quo" situation as it applied to Coley Barn until recently, when it emerged that several cockerels were being kept on the site without permission.)

A9/2022 Rabbit Control

The Council Services Officer referred to the growing problem within Kendal of rabbits and asked Members to discuss what measures the Council could take to protect itself and allotment holders from rabbit infestations from surrounding, privately-owned land. She informed Members that she had been providing advice to allotment holders on netting and preventative measures. The Town Council could put up or fix existing fencing, however, was not able to fix the problem. She felt that it was necessary for the Council to put pressure on the landholders and the District Council. The District Council had advised that their estates management team was carrying out work in this regard and she undertook to make contact with them again on the matter. She was also keen to raise the profile of the issue with partner agencies and to engage at higher level than officer and at least look to reduce the problem if not resolve. She further suggested a PR campaign and inclusion of an article in a newsletter or the Westmorland Gazette.

Members further raised the issue of burrowing causing unsafe ground, particularly on Kendal's historic sites, and for the potential for injury. Also raised were the health and safety issue of myxomatosis and the burden of the rabbit issue on officers' daily routine. It was suggested that allotment holders should be advised that the Council was doing its best in this regard.

Resolved:

- (1) to note the report; and
- (2) officers to talk to partner agencies to look to reduce the problem, to consider an appropriate PR campaign and to advise allotment holders that the Council is doing its best to address the problem.

A10/2022 Waiting List

The Council Services Officer informed Members that she was struggling to let plots, despite the long waiting list. She was finding that she was offering plots but either getting no response, or the prospective tenants no longer required an allotment. This was time-consuming and resulting in plots being unworked for a considerable length of time. The Council Services Officer suspected that this problem would continue for some time until she had offered plots to all the people who had joined the waiting list during the 2020 lockdown.

The waiting list currently stood at 151 individuals. Ten plots were currently on offer to prospective tenants, and one plot vacant. 18 plots had been let since the last meeting of the Allotments Committee.

Members suggested the need for a quarterly email to those on the waiting list with an update on the current position and to make it clear that others were also waiting for plots. In addition, it was suggested, where no response was received, that those individuals should be removed from the list.

The Council Services Officer informed Members that the allotments systems had now been streamlined with the finance system. It was her intention now to get out and about and work on the list.

Resolved: To note the report.

A11/2022 Site Representatives' Reports

The Crow Tree representative, Brian Williams, informed the Committee that tenants had raised the possibility for the provision of a skip for a tidy-up day. The Council Services Officer explained that this had previously been done, however, had resulted in other individuals using the skip. The Townscape Officer added that tenants had also occasionally used the skip for inappropriate items, such as asbestos, glass, grass and soil. He felt that it would not be possible for the Council to provide a skip again.

Jon Cox, Castle Hags Ext representative, drew attention to the vast number of rats on the site, which was resulting in the loss of produce. The Council Services Officer acknowledged that there was a problem on this site and undertook to report this back to Pest Control. She

advised that the laws in respect of rat control had changed and explained that, if the environmentally-responsible approach of eradication was not working, then poison could be used as a last resort.

Resolved:

- (1) to note the reports; and
- (2) the Council Services Officer to contact Pest Control with regard to the rat problem at Castle Hags Ext.

A12/2022 Project Updates

The Townscape Officer reported that the contractor had promised to make a start on the Canal Head allotment extension at the end of July/beginning of August. Members acknowledged the problems currently faced by contractors, however, were keen for a start to be made and suggested a press release and regular updates on the situation. The Council Services Officer also explained that it was her understanding that work would commence at the end of July.

The Townscape Officer was pleased to inform Members that the Wattsfield fence had been successfully erected at the football field side. He had addressed the issue of a gap at the bottom of the doors where rabbits had been entering the site and added a wooden plate and this seemed to be working well. He referred to the roadside fence which needed dealing with in autumn and pointed out that the issue here would be with regard to maintenance of the hedge which was becoming wider and taller. The Council Services Officer indicated that the Town Council would need to take this on board.

The Townscape Officer circulated pictures of a push down water tap, the type of which he was suggesting could be used at Greenside. The cost of the tap was £76 and the bracket for the post £12. The plan was really to stop tenants' excessive use of water on the site rather than addressing the water theft issue raised at the previous meeting. The Townscape Officer provided details with regard to that issue, explaining that it had since been established that the main part of the problem was most likely to have been with regard to a leak in the pipework, although pointing out that the water company had been unhelpful as regards looking into this matter. The Council Services Officer was keen for the Council to move to the proposed push down tap across all of its sites and suggested that one or two be trialled initially.

Members expressed concern with regard to the theft issue not having been appropriately addressed by United Utilities and suggested that the company be approached again and asked to re-inspect the pipework. The potential for use of a water trough and valve system, which was quicker than a tap, was raised. Members though were keen to try out one tap for a period of time, in the location of the original leak/theft at Greenside, with allotment holders being updated on the situation and reason for this. Also raised was the fact that hose pipes could not be attached to push down style taps and the need to re-examine the Council's policy as water became a priority for people. It was suggested that this be done in spring once the new Canal Head site had been in operation for a while.

The Townscape Manager lastly informed the Committee of a good news story in relation to a Rinkfield allotment tenant who had recently appeared on Countryfile to talk about his hedgehog project. The tenant's scheme had been incredibly successful and he had since been offered a place at Kendal College on a woodworking course. The Townscape Manager also referred to the fact that the Council had recently provided Manna House with a plot at Castle Hags Ext. The organisation was delighted and this was proving to be a huge success. Members suggested that these stories should be included within a future Council Newsletter.

Resolved:

- (1) one push down style tap to be installed and trialled in the location at Greenside described above;
- (2) the success stories referred to be put forward for inclusion in a future Council Newsletter; and
- (3) the project updates be noted.

The meeting closed at 8.25 p.m.

Kendal Town Council 2022-23 Budget**5 Months Exp - April-Aug****Income/Exp**

Allotments	22/23 Budget	Exp to Date	Forecast
Capital Spending	£40,000	£24,156	£30,000
Revenue Spending/Main	£8,000	£712	£7,000
General		£761	
Waste		£2,416	
Equip & Repairs to Wattsfield			
Water	£1,800	£669	£1800
Rent	£900	£840	£840
Pest Control	£3,000	£1,098	£2,500
Total Allotments	£53,700	£30,652	£42140

Kendal Town Council

Asbestos Management Plan

Underley Hill Allotments

Date of this version 20 July 2022, Chris Bagshaw

Date of revision: 29 September 2022, Chris Bagshaw with EHO comments

Date of next revision: n/a

Background

Asbestos fragments were discovered by allotment tenants working on newly marked out allotments on the southern hillside below the housing on Underley Hill. The plots were designated 11, 24, 25 and 26, and let to tenants in June 2010. Very quickly the tenants reported the presence of suspected fragments of asbestos sheeting. Following investigation, the local EHO collected samples which proved to be both white and brown asbestos. The allotment tenants were removed from the site, local residents were informed and the site has lain dormant since. The site is believed to have been placed on the contaminated land register at SLDC at this time.

Significant overgrowth prevents access from the allotment side of the site.

In 2020, after lockdown, it was noticed that residents of adjacent properties (in former council housing on Underley Hill) appeared to be accessing the upper slopes of the site. It is not known from the records whether the areas being accessed by residents are contaminated or not, as the records held by the Town Council show insufficient detail.

The land is owned by South Lakeland District Council, and was managed by them for allotments until the early years of the 21st century. At this time, their management was transferred to Kendal Town Council – the appropriate allotment authority – on a £1pa lease. The Town Council has limited records of the management regime which the District Council kept.

Current Situation

During the Covid pandemic, consistent estate work has been difficult, and it is only since the end of that period that the Town Council has been able to return to the matter of ensuring the asbestos on the site is safe. The Town Council adopted a policy in 2019 of safely removing all visible asbestos from its estate – both the freehold and tenanted areas. The Underley Hill deposits remain as the last significant contamination on the Town Council's estate. Following discussion in the Allotments Committee, officers were instructed to take further steps to ensure that these deposits are also dealt with safely.

Site visits in the early summer of 2022 suggest that residents from adjacent properties have continued to trespass on the site, with some evidence that attempts at cultivation have been made. This is difficult to regulate, as the land is now very hard to access from the allotments, and the residents appear to have made their own access points from their gardens.

Next Steps

The Town Council recognises the hazard to health presented by the disturbance of the asbestos deposits. On the site's Asbestos Register, none of the deposits scored for hazard in their existing undisturbed state. The site is outside and not frequented by staff, tenants, or the landlord. However, the presence of unlawful occupancy must also be factored in, and it

is this impetus, along with the Town Council's own policies to remove contaminants from its estate, that causes this revised position and management plan.

Action	Timescale	Completed	Notes
Secure boundaries of contaminated area.	By end of August 2022		
Alert residents to existence of contaminated land	By end of August 2022		
Establish current scope of contamination on record	EH to supply details by end of July 2022		
Establish current scope of contamination by ground investigation	By autumn 2022		
Devise new management plan	By year end 2022		

Additional Notes

The land was acquired by Kendal Corporation for housebuilding in the 1930s. After the Hallgarth council estates were laid out, the pony field and allotments were established as amenity spaces. When SLDC took over the running of the KC estate in 1974 there was a considerable impetus to build more council houses. Allotment land at Romney Gardens was used (possibly unlawfully, as this land was actually statutory allotment), in 1975, and the Town Council was given a capital receipt at the point where SLDC's legal position became untenable for the remaining 'statutory' allotments. SLDC retain the freehold on several allotment sites in Kendal because they are able to show that the land was not bought specifically for allotment use, but for housing use. Correspondence with SLDC agents in the early part of the 21st century makes explicit reference to this in the negotiations over the transfer of management of the sites. The lease arrangements for the Underley sites (which are common to most of the SLDC-owned land) give rise to the District Council assertion that the Town Council is liable for the condition of the soil and therefore any decontamination of the site. However, the District Council's own environmental protection policies are firmly fixed on the concept that the 'polluter pays'. In this context the polluter would appear to be the housing authority, which is the same District Council. [Contaminated land \(southlakeland.gov.uk\)](https://www.southlakeland.gov.uk)

Following correspondence, the Council received this advice from an Environmental Health Officer at SLDC on 25 July 2022.

Our Ref: SR 094767 (& SR 032040 & SR 030948)

I've had an initial look at our records which does make reference to the finding of Chrysotile and Amosite Asbestos on the site back in 2010. I'm sure you'll have copies of the correspondence between our team and the then clerk of KTC, Liz Richardson.

Regarding the status of the land, the land hasn't, under the legal definition, been determined as Contaminated Land, as for this to be the case there would need to be all three of a

source, pathway and receptor to be present. As you say the land isn't occupied, then technically there is no receptor and so doesn't meet the legal determination standard.

Our records indicate that the land was to cease use as an allotment and allowed to grass over to prevent intentional or incidental access to any remaining asbestos fibres. I also understand that an adjacent garage, privately owned, was to be removed. Our records do not clarify the position re the intended/requested garage removal.

The land will remain on our database of several thousand sites that may be considered in the future regarding further investigation which would lead to, where appropriate, voluntary remediation or where necessary, enforcement action. As this land would appear to be SLDC owned I would need to take advice on any proactive action the authority may consider.

I take this opportunity to advise that the land in question is not considered a high-risk, due to apparent non-occupancy, and as such will likely remain a low priority for this authority. Whilst I can appreciate there may be a drive to provide additional allotments I doubt at this time SLDC would be in position to finance such a project.



Agenda Report

Committee: Allotments	Meeting Date: 31st October 2022
From: Council Services Officer	Agenda No.: 9
Description: Canal Head Development Update Report	

Summary: *The committee are asked to note the update report*

Background

The available land to let on the site has been extended to create over 30 new plots. A contractor was used to clear the land and install paths, fencing and water supply.

Signage

The current signage is inadequate. New signs are required at the entrances to the site. The Town Clerk will draft some prior to costing.

Troughs

The troughs are installed to a high standard, but there is a slight but perceived risk to the general public through drowning and foul water.

The mitigations are as follows:

- The troughs are fenced off, behind locked gates. This reduces the risk of casual encounters by incompetent people (eg toddlers).
- The troughs are on legs, raising them above the eyeline of small children. Non-climb baffles (triangular blocks of wood) installed to the tops of the legs to ensure they cannot be used as steps up in to the troughs.
- The troughs will have warning signs advising of the risk of contaminating the water, and that the water is not potable.
- The safety of the trough system will be kept under review. The quality of the water will be monitored. Guidelines for plot holders will include the necessity to supervise small children on the site at all times.

Drainage

Since the contractors left there has been heavy rain, allowing us to identify where the issues might be with poor drainage. On the castle side, there is a section, top side of the path, which needs a new drain/soakaway installing. This will need around 5 bags of gravel. On the canal side, there is a dip around one of the troughs which collects water. Again, a French drain and gravel solution should assist in dissipating this flow, to allow it to soak away without ponding. Further heavy rain has allowed us to identify the potential soakaway for the drains as the lowest point in the site, on the canal side. Draining excess water into here, will allow us to create a small wetland feature with appropriate planting, at the expense of half of one new plot.

This is a high priority task to be completed in the next 6-8 weeks, to avoid damage to the new paths.

**Gates**

The gates were not fitted to the highest standard, but the rabbit proofing was always agreed to be an aftersale installation by KTC. There are combination locks on each one, and we will remove fencing post tops to discourage their use as steps over the fencing.

Fencing

The perimeter fencing was installed by the contractor, but due to various reasons dealt with elsewhere in the Council's review of the project, the rabbit proof element was left incomplete. The Townscape Officer will complete this as a matter of high importance, burying the existing rabbit mesh, and installing fresh mesh around the gates. The gates may require weld mesh and this could be done with offcuts from the local fencing supplier.

This should be completed in the next six weeks.

Community gardening area

We identified the triangle on the canal side between the existing plots and the access path from the canal as being an area suitable for letting to a community garden project. The land is currently under-utilised, being taken out of the scope of the extension project due to likely cost. There are some extant soft fruit bushes, but the rest is mostly self-seeded sycamore, bramble and comfrey. It has reasonable biodiversity potential, but could be better used. Cllr Blackman will speak to the Head at Heron Hill school who is keen to extend an existing scheme at the school.

Other issues

There is debris from the initial timber clearance left at the north, undeveloped, area of the site. This includes old fencing, cut wood and brash. The area continues to attract anti-social behaviour in the form of fly-tipping and perhaps unauthorised camping, but there is not obvious sign of drug use. Officers will speak to SLDC about picking up the fly-tipping and about the timber piles.

As a footnote, The Town Clerk encountered two men taking wood from the site on his way home. They hadn't sought permission, neither did they know who this might be gained from. They were in a vehicle, suggesting that the gate by the tip end should now be locked to prevent further unauthorised access.

Expenditure

The total cost of the project to date is £24,626; we are awaiting confirmed costs on site signage, trough warning signs and planting for wetland area.

Allotments Committee 31st October 2022

Waiting List Update

I am continuing to find that I am offering plots but either getting no response, or the prospective tenants no longer require an allotment. This is time consuming and resulting in plots being unworked for a considerable length of time. I suspect I will encounter this problem for some time until I have offered plots to all the people who joined the list during lockdown in 2020.

I have reinstated my regular site visits and hope to get on site every 6 weeks. The initial visit in early August resulted in 74 letters being sent to tenants for unworked plots, following on from the letters, 13 plots were handed back. My follow up visit on the 28th September saw a big improvement with only 25 individuals to contact about their plots, these letters will be circulated on 4th October.

The waiting list currently stands at 172 individuals.

Allotment site	Number of plots per site	Number on the waiting list	Change since last meeting
Aynam Road	3	8	+1
Canal Head	20	39	+5
Castle Drive	9	7	No change
Castle Haggs	33	39	No change
Castle Haggs Ext	47	40	+2
Coley Barn	44	19	-1
Crow Tree	24	21	+1
Greenside	48	24	+1
Natland Road	19	18	+1
Rinkfield	32	27	+2
Sandylands	25	15	+2
Sedbergh Road	42	5	+1
Shaw's Brow	22	19	+2
Town View	19	13	+2
Underley Hill	27	10	+2
Underley Road	36	11	-1
Wattsfield	42	25	+1

Vacant Plots

19 plots are vacant.

Number of Plots Let Since Last Meeting

I have let 5 plots since the last meeting.