

HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE

Date: Monday, 8 November 2021

Title: Hailey Road Allotments Vehicular/Pedestrian Gates

Contact Officer: Operations & Estates Advisor - John Hickman

Background

The purpose of this report is to update councillors regarding the new allotment fencing and a renewed request for new vehicular and pedestrian access gates on the Hailey Road entrance.

Current Situation

New fences along the Eastern and Southern Boundaries of Hailey Road allotments have been installed and an email has been received on behalf of the Witney Allotment Association (WAA) to say how pleased they are with the outcome.

There is, however, still an issue with individuals walking through the site and climbing over the gate from the Hailey Road entrance and WAA are requesting that two areas of the old fence are removed by the works team. The WAA would also like new 2m high gates fitted in replacement for the 5-bar pedestrian and vehicular gates currently fitted.

The current wooden 5-bar gates are lockable, as was requested by the WAA at the time but there appears to be an issue with a minority of allotment holders leaving them open. It is then unclear to the public that access is not permitted, and school children use the route through the allotments as a shortcut to Woodgreen School.

Previously requested, the resolution made by this committee in May 2021 was to concentrate on the fencing at the site before consideration was given to changing the gates which were fitted in 2019, at a shared cost to the Town Council and WAA.

Environmental impact

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make regarding its facilities and services it operates.

Members should consider that disposal of sound wooden gates to be replaced with metal (would not necessarily solve the issue) would have an environmental impact by creating unnecessary waste. The manufacturing process for metal gates would increase the Council's carbon footprint.

Risk

In decision making Councillors should consider any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

If fitted, 2m high steel gates would be over 300mm higher than the boundary fences either side. Members of the public would still be able to scale these gates by using the boundary wall to the neighbouring property and it may meet with objection from residents.

There is a reputational risk, if agreed, as gates only 3 years old would be discarded – this could be mitigated if another suitable location could be sought.

Financial implications

- There will be an associated cost implication to replace the existing gates and would need to be taken from the allotment's renewal fund.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and consider the following:

1. If replacing the gates as requested would be an appropriate response to the issues raised by the Witney Allotment Association; and/or
2. That further dialogue takes place between the Town Council and Witney Allotment Association on the best way of securing the site.