

HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE

Date: Monday, 4 July 2022

Title: Allotments - Waiting List

Contact Officer: Maintenance & Environmental Services Officer - Angus Whitburn

Background

The Witney Allotment Association (WAA) Chair has asked for permission from the Town Council to close the waiting list for allotment plots. The WAA has recently completed a process of cleaning up the waiting list but even after this over 200 applicants remain. With an average of 6 applicants a week and less than 1 plot a month becoming available, they feel closing the list would best help them to manage the shortage of plots.

Current Situation

In theory, closing the waiting list would help as most join because of the long wait time. By removing the option they would be left with just residents expressing a keen interest in renting allotments. Many that were left on the list for years ended up owning plots at Windrush Place and have struggled to manage them to the standards of the WAA. Although the Association does have the power to remove plot holders for not maintaining plots this can incur costs and takes time.

The solution they need is a way to keep the list open but only for those keenly interested.

An alternative solution to the WAA request could be to put a cap on the waiting list and then set a number of applicants to be accepted each year. This could be in the form of a yearly clean-up of the list where all on it are emailed for their interest and if they do not respond in 6 weeks they are removed. Those genuinely interested in the allotment would express a constant desire to keep their name on it whereas those that have just added their name would miss these communications.

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 with regard to its facilities and services it operates.

Risk

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

By closing the list it could be perceived that a service is being taken away from Witney residents.

Financial implications

- There are no financial implications as the Town Council does not administer the allotments.

Recommendations

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

1. Consider the request from the Witney Allotment Association to close the Allotments Waiting List.
2. If agreed, delegate to officers to communicate with them about the best practice for closing the list. And the possibility of reopening it for additional periods throughout the year.