



REPORT FOR DECISION

Item No:- FC23/075

Committee:-	Finance and Governance Committee
Date:-	1 <sup>st</sup> May 2024
Author:-	Martin Hammond, Clerk
Report Title:-	Allotments
Wards Affected:-	William Knibb and Northfield and St Michaels

### 1. Purpose of Report

To seek approval for two items of expenditure to improve allotments at Northfield Avenue and South End.

### 2. Recommendations

That

- a) The quote by company C in the sum of £ 5506 be approved for fencing replacement at Northfield Avenue
- b) The quote by Fernwood Arboriculture in the sum of £2400 plus VAT for brook clearance at South End Allotments be approved
- c) The minutes of the Allotment Working Group on 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024 be noted

### 3. Information

- 3.1. The Allotments Working Group met with both local allotments associations in February to consider priority investments in allotments for 2024/5 and to review what had occurred during 2023-4. The minutes are attached as Appendix A below.
- 3.2. Since the minutes were agreed, Southfield School have agreed to carry out a survey of their trees which border the allotments at South End and to carry out remedial work and trimming as required.
- 3.3. It was agreed at the Allotments Working Group that there were two priorities for expenditure in 2024, which were
  - Replacing the wooden fencing on the northerly part of Northfield Avenue Allotments which is at the end of its natural life.

- Cutting back undergrowth and self set bushes along the length of the Slade Brook as it passes through the allotment site.

### **3.4. Northfield Avenue Fencing**

- 3.4.1. The proposal is to replace the fencing with taller metal mesh fencing, similar to that installed at Windmill Avenue allotments. The proposed works cover about a third of the total length of fencing on Northfield Avenue – the remaining two thirds of fencing, whilst of the same construction, is in slightly better condition, but is buttressed by hedge and bushes and is sat on top of a steep bank, so is much more resistant to intrusion. The northerly section abuts the highway much more closely and the footfall into and from Rothwell Rd is quite significant because of the hospital.
- 3.4.2. Planning consent will be required for this work – an application can be made which covers all the fencing on Northfield Avenue, so that the rest of the fencing can be done at a later date without re-applying.
- 3.4.3. The proposed works can also include the replacement of the gate at the southern end of the allotments (Opposite the junction with Meadow Rd) with a like for like replacement, which will be included within the planning application.
- 3.4.4. Quotations were obtained by the Allotment Association from three contractors and were received as follows:-

Company A	£ 7,813 plus VAT including new gate
Company B	£23,246 plus VAT including new gate
Company C	£ 5,506 plus VAT including new gate

### **3.5. South End Allotments Brook Clearance**

- 3.5.1. The brook is narrow throughout its run through the allotment site and easily choked with natural growth, and the channel can become overwhelmed with storm water and detritus emerging from the culvert from the north during periods of heavy rain. The undergrowth and bushes on the bank make it more likely that water overtops the bank and deposits detritus on allotment plots.
- 3.5.2. A quote was obtained from a local arboricultural company – Fernwood Arboriculture – in the sum of £2400 plus VAT. They intend to do the work in September-October after the nesting season has ended.

## **4. Consultation and Engagement**

The priorities were identified as part of regular engagement with the allotment associations

## **5. Finance, Legal and Resource Implications**

The Council has a provision of £11,000 for works to allotment sites in the 24/25 year. There is therefore enough slack to allow for any unforeseen costs arising from either contract. Any overspend can be met from the community infrastructure fund.

## **6. Climate change implications**

Maintaining allotments in good condition helps encourage use of the sites, which in turn generates local produce, enhanced bio-diversity and contributes to good mental health for those with an allotment.

## **7. Policy Implications**

The Council's policies are

- To engage with the allotment societies, review the condition of the allotment sites, and explore how it can support the creation of new allotment plots to meet rising demand
- Ensuring that the services it provides are appropriate and well managed and as sustainable as possible
- Within its own remit, strive to protect, restore and enhance our local biodiversity and the natural world that surrounds us and of which we are all a part and will strive to take the most sustainable approach to the design and delivery of its own services
- To support measures to improve physical and mental health wellbeing, through its own services and in partnership with others.

### Background Papers

Quotations received

Minutes of Allotments Working Group 29.2.24

## APPENDIX ONE

### ALLOTMENTS WORKING GROUP – NOTES OF MEETING HELD ON 29<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2024 IN THE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICE, 10 HEADLANDS, KETTERING

Present: Cllrs James Towns (Chair) Carolyn Carter and Keli Watts (KTC)  
Russell Attwood and Mike Thurland (Kettering Allotments Association)  
Claire Humphrey, and Keith (South End Allotment Association)  
Martin Hammond KTC Clerk

Item Number	Description
1	<p><b>Introductions and apologies</b></p> <p>No apologies – Cllr Watts would have to leave shortly after 7pm.</p>
2	<p><b>Review of Initiatives during 2023</b></p> <p>The principal works to allotments during 2023 were reviewed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) Windmill Avenue fencing £16,800 completed and everyone very satisfied. Security and sense of security at the sites had greatly improved.</li><li>b) Removal of asbestos at Margaret Road allotments - £830 – Town Lottery Grant – again, satisfactorily completed for less than expected cost.</li><li>c) Tree surgery, Northfield Avenue, - completed by NNC as they were mostly highway trees that needed attention, works undertaken recently.</li><li>d) Love Wildlife grants at South End Allotments.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Night garden - Butterfly Moth and Bat enrichment</li><li>b. Nesting bird habitats</li></ul>These two projects were due to be completed shortly having been delayed by illness. Claire to send over photos of completed works to Russell and Martin for wider promotion. .</li><li>e) Emergency fence repairs at South End Allotments – carried out very quickly this time last year.</li></ul>
3	<p><b>Outstanding actions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) Clearance of land at Scott Rd – not very urgent but MH to chase Probation who had said the works were on their forward work programme about 9 months ago</li><li>b) Tree maintenance by Southfield School, South End Allotments. MH to try new contact at Southfield</li><li>c) Flailer deployment at southern end of South End Allotments – less urgent now, bur still needs the land</li></ul>

	properly clearing of overgrown area and building detritus from adjacent site,
<b>4</b>	<p><b>Priorities for 2024/5</b></p> <p>Two priorities were discussed;-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fencing Northfield Avenue near Rothwell Rd bridge. Two quotes had already been obtained by KAS and the cheapest was £8000. The works consisted of replacing up to 139 yards of deteriorating fencing with wire mesh fencing (as per Windmill Ave) to prevent trespass and fly tipping. There was a separate need to replace the gate at the southern end of the site, opposite the Meadow Rd junction, but it was agreed that this was less urgent.</li> <li>- Brook clearance, South End Allotments. The brook blocked easily because of compacted materials on the bank, and given the wider topography of Kettering, the brook here tended to collect quite a lot of detritus from the watercourse up stream.</li> </ul> <p><b>AGREED</b> to explore costs and potential contractors in more detail for both projects and submit to Finance Committee in April.</p>
<b>5</b>	<p><b>Seed exchanges in 2024</b></p> <p>The Town Council had agreed to sponsor two seed exchanges, one by Groundwork in May and one by KAS in September. The KAS date for their wider event for allotment holders was now fixed for 27<sup>th</sup> September.</p>
<b>6</b>	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Contact details for South End on KAS website – Russell agreed to change the description for South End.</li> <li>b) Frenches Field – no prospect in the medium term of this site being developed for the football club.</li> </ul>
	Meeting closed at 7.45pm

Signed.....