

Allotment Sub-Committee Report to F&GC Meeting 26 May 2022

The following items are matters requiring further consideration by the allotment sub-committee, F&GC and the town's allotment societies and appropriate action taken as considered necessary. The priorities stated are notional and are to be agreed by the above. Those items shown in **green** are items that have not been included in the corporate plan monitoring document.

High Priority

- Continue to liaise with Anglian Water & Environment Agency to reduce flooding at South End and Margret Road allotments.
- Removal of Rubbish at Scott Road allotments for H&S reasons and to create approximately twelve additional plots.
- Need to agree new lease with South End Allotment Association.

Medium Priority

- Reduce waiting lists for allotments across Kettering to a targeted performance indicator.
- Improve security of sites.
- Investigate providing mains water at South End Allotments instead of using the water coarse to manually take water, subject to allotment societies preference.
- Clearance of overgrown land & fly-tipping at southernmost part of site at South End allotments to create an area for more plots.
- Land ownership - Transfer of ownership to KTC not registered with Land Registry & NNC have undertook to correct position.
- Two parcels of land excluded from transfer – NNC asked to consider transferring these as well.
- Possible land grab at north eastern corner of South End Allotments site.
- Trees belonging to Southfield School on northern boundary causing problems
- Review of ground rent.

Low Priority

- Give priority to potential allotment holders with no private gardens.
- Implications to Scott Road allotments of possible development at adjoining Frenchies Field for new Kettering Town Football Club
- WCs at Margret Road allotments associated with work with probation scheme.
- Improving condition of access road to Scott Road allotments plus ensuring developer of housing scheme provides swing gate and any drainage system deemed necessary to protect the new public road from muddy run-off.
- Promote community involvement with the allotments.

- Establish appropriate social media presence for the allotment societies.
- Japanese knotweed – cleared from adjacent land. Confirmation required from specialist that removal has been successful.
- Easement to be agreed with WPD to allow them access to their cables – held up in part by need to correct Land Registry records.

Matters Resolved

- Bridge repairs at South End allotments have been completed by Make Woodworking to the satisfaction of the South End Allotment Society.
- Income from 2021-22 collected in error by NNC returned to KTC 29 April 2022.
- Boundary on Whiteford Drive – NNC accepted it is its land.
- Clearance of rubbish from stream – AWA completed
- Northfield Avenue, Western Power Distribution (WPD) have installed high voltage cable through the site, made good the track and provided a new gate to the site as dispensation.

National Media's Positive Reporting on Allotments

Russell Attwood, Secretary of Kettering Allotment Society and the National Allotment Society's East Midlands Mentor appeared as a guest panelist on Radio 4's Money Box programme dedicated to allotments. Recording can be heard at

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0016xr9>

Some positive news about Kettering and our allotments recently in the Times newspaper, as a follow-up on Times Radio station...

Allotment waiting lists keep growing

Britons are digging for victory over the cost-of-living crisis with record numbers signing up for an allotment (Ali Hussain writes). About 120,000 are registered for a local authority plot, up from 90,000 in 2018, the National Allotment Society (NSALG) said.

Typically you have to wait seven years before being allocated a space but in some areas such as Camden, north London, it can take 18 due to high demand. A lucky few have been able to get one in months and are already reaping the rewards. The rising cost of food was the main reason why Maysie Martindale, 49, from Kettering in Northamptonshire, decided to apply for an allotment in August last year. She was granted a space three months later just a five-minute walk from her house. It is shared with a few friends and she pays £17 a year for it.

"We wanted to be more self-reliant as we could see our shopping bills rise," she said. "I used to have an allotment before, but



Maysie Martindale is helped by twins Robert and Ellie, both 7, on their allotment in Kettering, Northamptonshire

gave it up due to work commitments. I took voluntary redundancy in April last year so I had more time." Martindale, who used to work at a cereal factory, is helped on the allotment by her husband Nigel, 58, a software consultant, and their twins Robert and Ellie, both 7.

Getting the vegetable beds ready was hard going to start with but they now have some established plants

including purple sprouting broccoli, strawberries, raspberries, spinach and some fruit trees. "We spend almost every day on the allotment," Martindale said. "We are able to pick lettuce and other salad leaves every time we go. We have been self-sufficient in salads since about March." A fellow allotment holder who has ducks and chickens on her plot sells half a

dozen eggs for £2 and £1 respectively. "This is similar to the cost of free range eggs at a supermarket but the best thing is the kids can just pop down to get them." The family has also established a battering system with other allotment holders, most recently exchanging aubergine plants for lavender. Water is provided free of charge by the council and local tree surgeons

give free wood chips, which can improve the soil and suppress weeds.

Nine in ten local authorities are reporting an increase in demand for allotments, according to a survey commissioned by the NSALG. Almost eight in ten authorities are considering reducing future plot sizes to cater to growing demand while more than a third say they would increase land allocated to

allotments.

The rising cost of food is a key driver for creating more allotment space. Andrew Bailey, the governor of the Bank of England, warned of "apocalyptic" food cost rises as the war in Ukraine pushes up wheat and energy prices. Redrow, the housebuilder, said it aims to create more than six hectares of allotment space — about ten football

itches or 252 full-sized plots — by the end of next year for the use of people within or close to its developments.

The average cost of running a 250sq m plot is about £247 a year. The value of the produce grown on such a space will be at least £1,910, according to the National Allotment Society. This does not take into account the cost of your time of course. The average time spent on a 250sq m plot is about 203 hours a year, so if you factor in the minimum wage of £9.50 an hour that's an additional cost of £1,929.

However, you get the "personal satisfaction of growing your own and getting valuable exercise into the bargain", the NSALG said.

The surge in demand for allotments should be encouraged, leading article, page 33 Gardens special, Weekend

Also a few minutes of Times Radio at 6:55 am on Sunday 22nd May - 55 minutes into the programme

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/radio/show/20220522-11523/2022-05-22?fbclid=IwAR39Wpl6A44vOv3-ewWQnJuf9HbnvmAtLsPgQKLYGrGBIMVOouWzckix4qY>