



REPORT FOR DECISION

Item No:- FC24/82

Committee:-	Finance and Governance Committee
Date:-	23 rd April 2025
Author:-	Martin Hammond, Clerk
Report Title:-	Improvements to Allotments
Wards Affected:-	Avondale Grange, William Knibb and St Michaels/Wicksteed

1. Purpose of Report

To seek the committee's approval to undertake improvement works to the Council's allotments, as described in the report.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that authority be given to the clerk to commission works to

- Replace the fencing at Margaret Rd
- Install vehicular hardstanding at South End Allotments

and that a decision about the affordability of a new pedestrian gate at Northfield Avenue be taken in the light of the budget remaining after these works are completed.

3. Information

3.1. The Allotments Working Group met in February 2025 with the two allotment associations officers to consider the needs of the associations and potential improvement works. The minutes of the working group are attached as Appendix One.

3.2. The works that had taken place in 2024 had been welcomed by the associations. The minutes also describe minor projects and other activity during 2024 and projects intended for implementation or completion in 2025. The meeting concluded that there were three investment priorities for 2025:-

- New pedestrian gate (and possibly adjacent fencing panels) at Northfield Avenue in the style of that already done. A reserved matters planning application would be needed for the gate design, .
- Creation of additional hardstanding for parking at South End Allotments .

- Fencing along the Margaret Rd frontage of the Margaret Rd allotments – up to 200 metres of fencing – which had been the subject of a several break-ins recently.

3.3. Since the meeting, estimates for doing the two larger pieces of work have been obtained, as follows

- Fencing to Margaret Rd allotments - £8000 - although this could be less if KTC procured the materials and skip rather than the contractor as VAT would be recoverable that way. On top of this cost will be planning approvals needed for this new fencing, which is likely to cost about £500
- Hardstanding to South End Allotments £6000.

3.4. An estimate has not been obtained for the new pedestrian gate at Northfield Avenue as yet, for reasons set out below.

3.5. The budget for allotment works is £12,850 for the 25/6 year. The likely costs of the works above is £14,500, although it is possible that actions taken to minimise VAT will reduce it to just level with the budget. Given that, it is proposed that the pedestrian gate on Northfield Avenue is left until the outcome of these two other projects are known, and a decision taken later in the year to go ahead with that. (Planning permission will also be needed for the pedestrian gate as this is currently a reserved matter on the existing planning approval).

4. Consultation and Engagement

The works have been developed in consultation with both allotment associations.

5. Finance, Legal and Resource Implications

The Budget is £12850 in 2025-6

6. Climate change implications

None particularly – there is some loss of a grassed area on South End Allotments but the new hardstanding will enable a better means of collecting and storing wood chippings.

7. Policy Implications

The Council's policy is to support and sustain the local allotments.

The fencing at Margaret Rd will improve site security and reduce ASB and criminal damage.

Background Papers

Quotations received for two projects

Minutes set out below.

Previous reports

Allotments WG 13.2.25

APPENDIX ONE - MINUTES OF ALLOTMENTS WORKING GROUP

ALLOTMENTS WORKING GROUP – NOTES OF MEETING HELD ON 13TH FEBRUARY 2025 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, Andy Blackshaw and Keith Mayes (South End
Allotment Association)
Martin Hammond KTC Clerk

Item Number	Description
1	<p>Introductions and apologies</p> <p>No apologies</p>
2	<p>Review of Initiatives during 2024</p> <p>The principal works to allotments during 2024 were reviewed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Fence replacement at Northfield Avenue – completed in February 2025 by Dave Deacon fencing at a total cost of £6200, including the planning application fee and the cost of a banner which can now be re-used on other schemes. This has been a cost effective improvement to the site. b) Brook clearance at South End allotments – by Ferndale Arboriculture at a cost of £2400. This had made a significant difference to the site, to the brook’s functionality and to sight lines across the allotments. c) Love Wildlife grants at South End Allotments. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Night garden - Butterfly Moth and Bat enrichment b. Nesting bird habitats <p>These two projects were substantially underway, having been delayed by illness. Andy to send over photos of completed works to Martin for wider promotion.</p> <p>Southfield School had cleared their boundary with South End Allotments of overgrowth and spreading trees, following successful contact last year.</p> <p>There had also been some legal costs in getting the allotments registered with the Land Registry under KTC’s name.</p>

	Overall, the total works had come in within budget for the year.
3	<p>Outstanding actions</p> <p>a) Clearance of land at Scott Rd – there had been no joy with Probation but in the meantime, the KAA had been approached by someone interested in taking a lease for the whole of the former small holding site. It was</p> <p>AGREED that Russell and Martin would meet to assess how realistic the offer was and whether it was worth taking further.</p> <p>b) Flailer deployment at southern end of South End Allotments – Claire had successfully secured a commitment from Leicester Housing Association to clear the boundary with their property, and to dispose of material dumped onto the allotment land. Once this was done, it would be possible to get a flailer in to clear the land and return it to productive use.</p> <p>AGREED to address once LHA had cleared the land.</p>
4	<p>Priorities for 2024/5</p> <p>Several priorities were discussed;-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New pedestrian gate (and possibly adjacent fending panels) at Northfield Avenue in the style of that already done. A reserved matters planning application would be needed for the gate design, . - Creation of additional hardstanding for parking at South End Allotments . - Fencing along the Margaret Rd frontage of the Margaret Rd allotments – up to 200 metres of fencing – which had been the subject of a several break-ins recently. <p>AGREED to explore costs and potential contractors in more detail for all three projects and submit to Finance Committee in due course.</p>
5	<p>Seed exchanges in 2025</p> <p>KAA would welcome sponsorship, as in 2024, from the Town Council, for their annual meeting and seed exchange on 19th September. The Town Council would also check with Groundwork and the Nature Group to see what they were planning.</p>

	An event in Northampton called Seedy Saturday was brought to the meeting's attention and it was agreed that this was a possible model for an event in Kettering.
6	AOB It was noted that insurers were making it difficult to keep bees on an allotment and that a £50 additional fee was being sought to do so.
	Meeting closed at 7.08pm