

## WEST SWINDON PARISH COUNCIL

### Leisure & Amenities Committee

#### Allotments Report

##### 1 Background:

- 1.1 The *Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908* imposed a duty on councils – which remains in force - to provide allotments if six or more people say that they want them. West Swindon Parish Council is meeting its obligations under the duty through the allotment site at Blagrove.
- 1.2 The Blagrove Allotment Site currently has thirty one tenant allotment holders, of whom, six do not live in the Parish.
- 1.3 The site has a number of issues relating to drainage, limited parking for allotment visitors, and, access is made by driving along the cycle/footpath to Blagrove. Despite this, it is a popular site and has a waiting list of twenty interested residents.
- 1.4 It is difficult to know exactly what the demand for an allotment is in West Swindon as many residents have allotments in other parts of the town. Now that the whole of Swindon is parished, any resident seeking an allotment must apply to either their Parish Council or go direct to other Parish Councils.
- 1.5 Costs vary from one Parish Council to another although most offer a preferential rate to residents living within the Parish. Plots also vary in the sizes that are available. Example prices are

	<b>Cost for Full Plot</b>	<b>Cost for Half Plot</b>
<b>South Swindon Parish Council</b>		
<i>Residents in the Parish</i>	£45.90	£22.95
<i>Residents outside of the Parish</i>	£61.20	£30.60
<b>Stratton St Margaret Parish Council</b>		
<i>Residents in the Parish</i>	£58.80	£29.40
<i>Residents outside of the Parish</i>	£87.65	£44.10
<b>West Swindon - Blagrove</b>	£61.20	£30.60

- 1.6 West Swindon Parish Council could consider creating additional allotment sites however the cost of doing so could be significant. Allotment sites should meet the following criteria:
- Sufficient land to provide between 25 and 50 half plots (7,500 sq.m. or around the size of a football pitch)
  - Good vehicle access (from a road, not along footpaths / cycle tracks)
  - Access to a nearby mains water supply
  - No underground Services
  - No archaeology
  - Not subject to flooding
  - Must be on relatively flat and open ground with suitable soil for cultivating vegetables

- Not shaded by nearby hedgerows or trees
- Minimal impact on local residents (especially visual & nuisance)
- Planning & land designation / covenants (loss of public open space)
- Easily reinstated to open space should demand falls in the future

1.7 A review of potential areas for allotment sites in West Swindon a few years reported that there no areas of open space that could fit the criteria above. The report did conclude that there could be consideration of creating community garden schemes where one area of land is cultivated by a community of gardeners, and/or, the installation of raised beds for community planting could be a means of addressing some of the soil condition issues.

*Summary:*

1.8 In summary, West Swindon Parish Council is meeting its obligations to provide allotments in the Parish. West Swindon residents can apply to neighbouring parish councils for an allotment and in some instances, these allotments could be closer to a resident than those at Blagrove.

1.9 The current annual cost of an allotment in West Swindon is comparable in price to the charges set in other parishes, although the variance in sizes makes an exact comparison difficult.

## **2. Recommendations**

2.1 Councillors to consider whether the current allotment provision is sufficient or whether to instruct the Parish Manager to report to a future meeting on options for additional provision for community growing within the Parish.

2.2 Councillors to consider the pricing set for allotments at Blagrove for 2018/2019 to remain unchanged.

2.3 Councillors to consider whether they wish to set a rate for non Parish residents to be applied from 2019/2020

2.4 Councillors to consider whether to provide a financial contribution to West Swindon residents taking allotments in other parishes.

2.5 Councillors agree that any full size plots that are vacated at Blagrove allotment site, are returned to half size plots where possible.

2.6 Councillors consider adoption of the draft Tenancy Agreement proposed.

**Paula Harrison**  
**Parish Manager**