

Gravel Pit Field Allotment Association Presentation - January 2010



Introduction and Agenda

Presentation by Suzanne Allen (Chairperson) and Stephen Oxley (Association Member)

Gravel Pit Allotment Association ask that “The Parish Council support and pass a formal vote this evening to ratify our Community Allotment proposals”.

Tonight we will discuss our: Aim, Progress to date, Examples of questions we have considered, Benefit to Parish Council and Programme to April 2010.

Aim of the Gravel Pit Field Allotments Association

Our aim is to:

Enable Parishioners to grow their own food where they have no current provision or opportunity

However...

We now understand 'Community Allotments' incorporates much more than just allowing individuals to grow their own food

Aim of the Gravel Pit Field Allotments Association

We see wider community engagement and involvement

- There will be those who wish to 'quietly garden', and for some who perhaps feel isolated within the community, there will be an opportunity to meet people and develop links which may otherwise never happen
- As work begins on the site, we expect interest will be heightened and be a talking point within the community
- We now plan for elements of education for holders and our wider community in a range of skills. This along with the potential for greater social interaction will provide real added value for our community

Examples of our Progress to Date

- Allotment Association has been formed
- National Allotment Society membership in order to gain best practice knowledge and insurance provision
- Website has been established to promote our work and in future to be a platform to share ideas and knowledge
- Measured survey of the site has been undertaken
- Plans have been drawn up
- Cost and risk feasibility study has been undertaken
- Big Lottery funding application has been made
- Land title has been sought
- Fundraising by GPAA members has commenced and offers of support from local businesses are very encouraging to date

Examples of Issues and Questions Considered

Is Interest in Allotments real?

- Q: How many Parishioners have expressed an interest in the allotments?

A: Twelve to date with a further expression last week

- Q: How much goodwill has already been invested by all involved?

A: We have benefited from over £10,000 worth of investment 'in kind' for website development, measured plans and project feasibility work and have very positive offers of further support from local businesses and individuals. We are also fortunate and appreciative to have received Parish Council support in establishing land title and offering water supply provision

Examples of Issues and Questions Considered

Other Parishioners and wider community

- Q: Will GPAA add to the local council tax burden for Parishioners?
A: No, we are fundraising, providing our own time and expertise and gaining much goodwill from local farmers and businesses
- Q: What will those not interested in allotments gain from this?
A: GPAA are already bringing Parishioners together and providing interest in Parish Council activity. We also plan to hold events of interest to all in the village hall, drive links with our local school and develop wider educational opportunities

Examples of Issues and Questions Considered

Tenancy Arrangements

- Q: How do we propose arrangements be established?
A: Our proposal is for the GPAA to adopt a National Allotment Society standard tenancy agreement with the Parish Council (subject to your agreement) and adopt a similar National Allotment Society standard tenancy agreement with plot holders.

Examples of Issues and Questions Considered

The Site

- Q: Will the proposal result in traffic and parking problems?
A: Traffic Impact – We have accommodated parking for all plots within our proposals, however we expect to draft a green travel plan to encourage walking/cycling to the site in place of car travel
- Q: What if the GPAA fails after a short period of time?
A: In the unlikely event that we fail to sustain allotments, the site would still have the advantage of betterment for the Parish Council and therefore greater rental potential

Parish Council Benefit from our proposals?

- Benefit from local and regional press coverage in respect to a community based initiative
- Being seen as a 'Beacon' Parish Council where other communities are considering their own local food initiative
- Reducing ongoing liability to maintain and manage the site and therefore Parish Council tax precept burden
- Gaining financial betterment of the site without substantial investment

BUT most importantly:

- Using a Parish Council asset to provide and support a wider community based initiative thereby increasing opportunity for improving social cohesion in the Parish

What next - January to April 2010?

- Formal Parish Council ratification
- Contamination soil sampling of the site to confirm that it is fit for human food production
- Agreement and engrossment of tenancy and plot holder agreements including agreement on the length of lease and setting of annual rent
- Progress Big Lottery funding application
- Start physical work onsite (from 1st April)

Given all that has already put in place and the local commitment/work that has gone into our work, we are asking the Parish Council to ratify our proposals this evening

Thank You

