



WELCOME

ALLOTMENT CONFERENCE

Wednesday 10 November 2021

ROLE OF UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

- **Section 23 of the Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908.**

If the council believes that there is a demand for allotments; they have a statutory duty to provide a sufficient number of plots.

UCKFIELD ALLOTMENTS

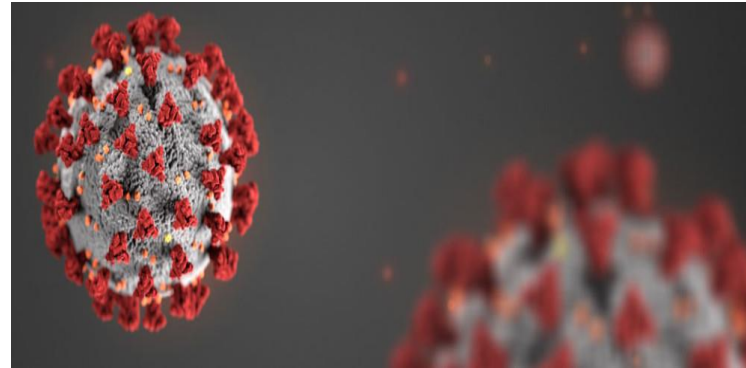
- **THERE ARE 238 ALLOTMENTS IN UCKFIELD**
- Bell Lane
- Bird in Eye
- Framfield Road East
- Framfield Road West
- Ridgewood
- West Park

**AS OF SEPTEMBER 2021
not including the WATER CHARGE**

- **COST OF ALLOTMENTS TO UTC = £21,040**
(£88.40 PER ALLOTMENT)
(without provision for taps, pipes and fencing)
- **CURRENT INCOME RECEIVED = £4,378**
(£18.39 PER ALLOTMENT)
- **UTC IS THEREFORE SUBSIDISING
ALLOTMENTS
AT APPROX. £70.01 PER ALLOTMENT**

**Unfortunately the difference in costs
versus income is not sustainable...**

INCREASED COSTS FACING LOCAL AUTHORITIES...



ALLOTMENT WORKING GROUP

ORIGINALLY SET UP IN JAN/FEB 2021 TO LOOK AT:

- **Costs vs fees and charges**
- **Rules and regulations**
- **Relationship between UTC and Allotment holders**



Reviews would also be undertaken of the cemetery, sports grounds and buildings over the next two years.

FEE STRUCTURE

- Detailed research undertaken into comparisons between fees and charges on sites across East and West Sussex;
- Review of allotment sizing, along with fees for water, deposits and concessions;
- It was agreed by the working group that a basic admin fee was needed to offset some of the Town Council's costs;

ALLOTMENT WORKING GROUP INITIAL PROPOSAL

- 12 months notice would be required to change the fees and charging structure;
- Original proposal was therefore intended to start on 1 April 2022, with 12 months notice from 1 April 2021;
- The intention was to simplify the administration of the annual invoicing to one annual payment by incorporating a standard charge for water on top of calculated fees.

ALLOTMENT WORKING GROUP INITIAL PROPOSAL

- Proposals were presented to E&L Committee on 22 March 2021;
- No objections were received;
- Staff circulated correspondence to Allotment Holders for 1 April 2021;

FEEDBACK



FEEDBACK RECEIVED

Allotment holders felt:

- Uckfield TC had not engaged or consulted prior to the changes;
- It was a shock, no substantial changes had been made to the fees and charges since 2012 and this would be a steep increase for some;
- The new proposed fees and charges did not assist with providing fairness;
- Uckfield TC were not strict enough in enforcing the rules and regulations;
- Didn't feel it was value for money;
- Concessions had not previously been promoted widely enough – some people receiving some who were eligible were not;

WE LISTENED...



Environment & Leisure Committee agreed in May 2021 that the working group should reconvene to fully discuss the feedback received, the proposed changes, ways to engage the association and with tenants, the to discuss the future of allotment provision.

ALLOTMENT WORKING GROUP REVIEW

- A review was undertaken of the tenant correspondence received;
- A full review was undertaken of income vs expenditure;
- We met with the tenants who were leading the petition;
- We have met with the Allotment Association;

ALLOTMENT WORKING GROUP

ROUND 2 - OUTCOMES OF REVIEW

- Maintain original pricing structure;
- Keep concessions;
- Retain deposits at fee of £52;
- Continue to keep water a separate charge from rental fees and charges. Plus these are a recharge based on the bills received from utility company;
- Introduce a £15 admin fee for all allotment plots regardless of size;

COSTS TO UCKFIELD TC

- Not including actual cost of materials for fencing/pipes/taps, annual costs in region of = **£21,040 (£88.40) per allotment**
- Income received now (not water) = £4,378
- £15 admin fee per allotment = total of £3,570
- Uckfield TC will still be subsidising = **£13,092 (£55.00 per allotment)**

ALLOTMENT WORKING GROUP ROUND 2 – NEW PROPOSAL

**Due to the need to give allotment tenants
12 months notice.**

**Notice will be given on 1 April 2022, for
the new pricing structure to start from:**

APRIL 2023

MOVING FORWARD

- All allotment holders will be encouraged to join the Allotment Association;
- The Town Council will continue to work closely with the Allotment Association with six monthly meetings;
- We would also recommend that a site rep is identified for each site, who can liaise with the Allotment Association and Town Council about issues arising on their allotment, and under-utilised plots

RULES AND REGULATIONS (TENANCY AGREEMENT)

- Uckfield TC will be undertaking a full review of the rules and regulations ready for the new pricing structure and tenancy agreements to be issued in April 2023;
- This will include looking at late payments or non-working of allotments to ensure good utilisation of allotment plots;
- Method established to improve communication between Uckfield TC and the Allotment Association;
- Uckfield TC will work with the Allotment Association to find grants/offers which will benefit allotment holders;

RULES AND REGULATIONS (TENANCY AGREEMENT)

- Uckfield TC will also be setting out in the tenancy agreement the frequency of certain grounds works and the months in which these works will be undertaken i.e. grass cutting/hedge cutting;
- This is to ensure that the tenancy agreement becomes a clear contract presenting what you should expect of us, and what we should expect of you as landlord/tenant

FENCING HEDGES AND CLIMATE CHANGE

- Deer fencing at the Framfield site alone would cost more than £14,000;
- Fencing and timber is in short and expensive supply;
- Climate change needs us to look at other ways to protect boundary lines;
- Uckfield TC will be looking at creating hedgerows using British/Native species;
- Allotment holders will also be encouraged to fence off their own areas to provide additional protection;

WATER

- We are in a water stressed climate – too much and too little;
- Household demand for water is a high proportion of effective rainfall;
- Water costs have increased year on year;
- Allotment holders will be encouraged to have water butts and tanks on allotments to cut down water usage;

FUTURE PROVISION OF ALLOTMENTS

- Currently over 100 people are on waiting list for allotments;
- New builds could mean demand will increase further;
- Uckfield TC are looking at providing allotments on UTC available green space;
- Uckfield TC will also be asking developers to provide allotments under section 106 provision;

FUTURE PROVISION OF ALLOTMENTS

**ALLOTMENTS AND GREEN SPACE ARE
MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER**

**We need to work together to ensure that the
residents of Uckfield can have the best we
can provide**

**THANK YOU
FOR LISTENING !**

