



Littlehampton Town Council

Allotment Strategy

2023 to 2033



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Supporting Documentation:

Appendix 3 – Asset Report and Site Report

Appendix 4 – Littlehampton Town Council Finance Report

Appendix 5 – Tenancy Agreement

This document was developed with input from:

Organisation	Position and Name
Littlehampton Town Council	Community Resources Officer
Littlehampton Town Council	Assistant Town Clerk
Littlehampton Town Council	Responsible Financial Officer
Littlehampton Allotments and Leisure Gardens Association	Chairperson
Littlehampton Allotments and Leisure Gardens Association	Site Representatives

Alongside this document an engagement exercise was also undertaken using a questionnaire that was available to all current allotment holders and has been used to further shape this document. Details of the questionnaire and responses are set out in Appendix 2.

Introduction

This strategy aims to make allotments enjoyable, inclusive, sustainable and affordable for the residents of Littlehampton.

It is produced by Littlehampton Town Council who work collaboratively with the Littlehampton Allotments and Leisure Gardens Association to deliver allotments and support the town's community.

The strategy is informed and will be guided by evidence from an engagement exercise undertaken in Spring 2022 and sets down current practices and future ambitions. Progress with delivering the Strategy will be reviewed annually through an Action Plan, Appendix 1, and monitored by the Town Council's Community Resources Committee.

Littlehampton's allotment community consists of approximately 350 food growers with 396 plots as at 31 July 2022* on 6 sites. The strategy emphasises increasing the number of people growing high quality local food by ensuring the availability of good quality land. It promotes a self-sustaining and efficient service, encourages site participation, while fostering biodiversity, organic practices, good food and healthy living. It encourages a co-operative approach.

1. Littlehampton Town Council Policy Aims and Objectives

1.1. Mission Statement

The Town Council is committed to providing, maintaining and developing services and local initiatives which will improve the quality of life of the residents of Littlehampton and Wick. The strategy will offer plans on:

- allotments and biodiversity
- allotments and good health
- allotments and disability
- allotments as community areas of cultivation
- energy and climate change
- healthy eating and sustainable food supplies
- multilingual communication
- organic allotments

*This number will change as more sites become available and plots are divided.

1.2. Principal Aims

The Town Council will serve the community by:

- Providing and maintaining a range of public services and seeking to develop effectively other services, either directly or by supporting local organisations and other providers
- Actively pursuing our representative role.

1.3. Allotment-specific Aims and Objectives

Meeting the Need for Allotments

- To meet, where practical and reasonable, demand from the community for allotments.
- To seek new provision for additional allotments as a result of new housing developments.
- To work with the developer to deliver new allotment sites derived from the “North Littlehampton” development.
- Rationalising the sites if opportunities arise and consideration of alternative ways to manage sites e.g., Community Interest Companies, Charities, formalised horticultural groups, land swaps.

Promoting Allotment Use and Good Husbandry

- Promote the benefits of allotments to residents and encourage all sectors of the community to take up plots.
- Maintain and keep in a neat and tidy manner all open spaces and empty plots.
- Ensure that plot holders are aware of the need to report the occurrence of notifiable weeds such as ragwort.
- Seek to improve accessibility and environmental practice by the Council and plot holders across the sites.
- Provide a pest control service with an appropriately qualified organisation or individual.
- Encourage plot holders to report crime and anti-social behaviour to the Police and Town Council.
- Act on poorly or non-cultivated plots in line with the Tenancy Agreement.

Improving the Financial Position of the Service

- To seek to improve the gap between income and expenditure.
- Seek to let all available plots, with the exception of “landlocked” plots, which will either be the subject of short term lets or held vacant until a suitable opportunity becomes available to realign neighbouring plots with full access.
- Look to the Littlehampton Allotments and Leisure Gardens Association to apply for funding and work on initiatives to benefit the allotment sites.

Excellent Administration of the Service

- Seek to let a plot within four weeks of it becoming vacant.
- Target 98% occupancy rate.
- To keep plot holders up to date and informed of changes through the periodic publication of a newsletter and through liaison with site representatives.
- Hold at least three meetings of the Allotment Working Group each year.
- Review the allotment Tenancy Agreement at least once during the period of the Strategy.

Improving Sustainability

- Including the possibility of creating an “organic” allotment site in North Littlehampton if there is the demand.
- Investigate potential green waste collection.
- Research composting options.

Ensuring the Service is Properly Resourced

- Inspect sites at least monthly – open to members.

Community Horticultural Projects

- Support, where possible and reasonable, people in the community with disabilities to work an allotment.
- To let plots predominantly to residents of Littlehampton. Should local community initiatives come forward looking to utilise the accessible plots, consideration may be given to extend beyond Littlehampton but only in exceptional circumstances.

What Tenants Want

- To work closely with the Littlehampton Allotments and Leisure Gardens Association and site representatives through the Allotments Working Group to ensure that the needs and views of the plot holders are considered.

2. Allotment Sites*

Worthing Road

This is our largest site and has recently undertaken development to improve accessibility of allotment plots. Sited near the main road, it is easily accessible and has several sections for parking. It is important to note the new Holly Drive allotments will be near to this allotment site.

Number of plots: 213

Fort Road

This is a medium site offering allotments in a well-developed residential and industrial area. Parking is limited at site due to the nature of the location.

Number of plots: 40

Howard Road

This is our smallest site with a few plots in a residential area. Parking is available and the site is easily accessed by foot from the town.

Number of plots: 14

Kingley Gate

This site came on board in 2018 as part of the development of Kingley Gate by Barratt Homes. There are a mix of plots and also offers accessible plots. Parking is available on site.

Number of plots: 22

*Plot numbers will vary due to splitting

Mill Lane

This is our second largest site located by the Viridor waste centre. It has a mixture of plot sizing and limited parking on site. The road directly outside the allotments offers alternative parking arrangements.

Number of plots: 73

Trinidad

This is a medium site located near Lyminster Road. This site is currently bordered by vacant properties, creating issues in relation to pest control. Parking is limited but adequate.

Number of plots: 34

3. Engagement

Allotment holders were invited to participate in an engagement exercise in Spring 2022 to obtain views and opinions on the service and provide a forum for ideas for improvements that can be made.

Information from the engagement exercise is within this report and a summary of the findings has been compiled in Appendix 1.

4. Littlehampton Allotments and Leisure Gardens Association – LALGA

Site Associations are official groups that bring together the allotment community on a voluntary basis. They may oversee the smooth running of an allotment site, undertake minor repairs, offer members opportunities to buy seeds or compost at a discount and represent the views of its members to others. A Site Association can also provide a point of focus to help create community spirit. Site Associations can join the national society which gives access to legal advice and wholesale supplies. They can also apply for grant funding for on-site activity. LALGA are the site association that is currently operating on the Town Council's allotment sites and membership is voluntary.

5. The Pandemic and our Allotment Sites

In light of the recent pandemic, it is important to highlight the impact on our allotment service and review what these sites delivered to our community. Throughout the pandemic we managed to keep our allotments open due to them being in an open environment and forming part of people's daily exercise.

In terms of provision of service, the pandemic highlighted issues around distancing and close working. We developed a Risk Assessment to ensure staff safety and that also enabled us to deliver continuation of service. Should further restrictions come into force we would be able to maintain the service with little disruption.

The pandemic brought issues with the cultivation of plots as plot holders went through their own issues, ill health, bereavement and long periods of isolation all made plot holders reluctant to return to normal activity. It also became evident that prospective plot holders need alternative options to view plots and guidance on expectations when taking on a plot.

The pandemic has seen Littlehampton Town Council change the communication methods it has in place and move to a newsletter via email. This has allowed

Littlehampton Town Council to continue providing information in relation to the allotments when face to face meetings or conversations had not been possible.

It is important to note the pandemic has brought a significant shift in the need within Littlehampton for open space. This has been further exacerbated with the current cost of living crisis and as such demand for our allotments continues to grow. In 2018 we had no residents on the waiting list and at its peak in 2021 we had 220 on the list. This trend looks set to continue.

6. Current and Prospective Plot Holders

The allotment sites in Littlehampton have a wide-ranging demographic and are truly representative of the community they serve. In the main the survey feedback showed plot holders felt a sense of community at allotments and the benefits attributed to running an allotment in terms of mental health and physical health was very evident.

Allotments come with challenges around individual life impact, and this is a tricky balance to strike. We have seen more than ever during the pandemic how sickness, injury, family issues and work stress can lead to allotment holders falling behind on general management of an allotment. This can lead to the plot becoming overgrown with weeds. During the growing season this could happen in as little as two weeks and can result in increased complaints.

Once a plot becomes overgrown following a life trauma it is often very hard to bring the plot back and leads to failed inspections and significant admin time trying to resolve issues. This issue can be better managed with more significant input from the Littlehampton Allotments and Leisure Gardens Association and creating a support network plot holders can sign up to. Supporting plot holders going through life issues are one of the most time-consuming aspects of managing allotments and this strategy will look at ways to lessen the impact this can have on managing the sites.

Alongside this is new plot holders who take on a plot without fully understanding the work involved and experience the reality that it can sometime take a year or more before they can realise their ambitions. Roughly 30% of plot holders take up a plot and do not manage to the required standard in the first three months. The expense involved in these plots is significant and leads to us getting plots back outside of the growing season that have not yielded any crops.

The Tenancy Agreement needs re-focussing to emphasise the work involved, manage expectations and to consider changes in personal circumstances. E.g., historic arrangements where some plot holders have multiple plots, what happens when a plot holder dies, tenancies in joint names.

Future Work

- Develop a handbook to give out to all new plot holders giving further insight into managing an allotment and Littlehampton Town Council expectations. This would be in a far more customer friendly format and can be made in different languages to meet the needs of the diverse allotment community.
- Look to improve the method of reporting issues and highlight this process within the handbook.
- Review the Tenancy Agreement to provide a framework for probationary reviews, joint tenancies, consider allowing a close relative to inherit a plot if they are also a

resident, not allowing individual tenants or tenants of the same family to have more than one plot while there is a waiting list.

- Look to improve communications with Littlehampton Allotments and Leisure Gardens Association and site Reps. in relation to known plot holder issues at sites.
- Add allotments to any council wide business continuity plan.

7. Community Plots

Community allotments can be used by organisations for their own projects which benefit local people through reducing isolation, developing new skills, encouraging physical activity, improving mental health and promoting healthy eating, among many other benefits. Community plots need to be properly managed and focused on core aims and objectives. Some of these are summarised below:

- Improve physical wellbeing by engaging in physical skills graded and adapted to their abilities.
- Prevent risk of falls and social isolation by helping build a sense of community and gentle activity in a meaningful way.
- Improve sense of purpose and meaning by learning skills and sharing knowledge in horticulture – e.g., planting, and growing fruit and vegetables, basic tool maintenance.
- For people to feel connected to their community.
- To build resilience and healthy coping strategies by engaging in a positive and meaningful activity and community.
- Set aspirational goals and work hard to achieve them.
- To provide a step-down approach for current allotment owners who no longer feel able to manage their allotment alone or without adaptation.
- To provide an opportunity for people to gain skills that can help them manage their health condition.
- To provide opportunity to gain skills that can support individuals as part of returning to a work environment.

It is Littlehampton Town Council's intention to engage with local community groups and develop initiatives to ensure these plots are best utilised to meet the Town Council's core aims and objectives. Schools, Youth Groups, doctors' surgeries and charity organisations who require outside space will be approached to engage in community projects.

Community plots can be a stepping-stone to residents undertaking a plot of their own or just an opportunity to learn new skills and meet new people.

This project can link into the newly formed Food Network and open up a forum for Littlehampton Town Council to show its commitment to tackling food poverty and food awareness.

Future Work

- Engage with Littlehampton Allotments and Leisure Gardens Association to support, promote and develop community plots.

- Engage with local groups and develop a recognised community programme at the allotments.
- Develop the aims and objectives and report on achievements.
- Look at new allotment sites and how this initiative can be put into further sites.
- Look at available space at sites and other uses like a community growing space to improve biodiversity and offer alternatives like herb gardens.
- Run open day events to allow the community at large access to the allotments for a small fee that helps sustain the community projects.
- Support a Littlehampton Food Network initiative.

8. Support Network

Support networks are crucial to develop the community feel of the sites and ensure plot holders are supported during challenging times. The engagement exercise asked our allotment holders about our sites and options for improving support and the ideas below are drawn from these findings.

Future Work

- Introducing a buddy system for allotments allows plot holders another avenue to manage their plot. It is inevitable during the course of life people will have extended time frames they can't visit a plot and a plot buddy could assist with this.
- This buddy would not be the named lead and ultimately not accountable for the terms and conditions of the Tenancy Agreement. They would however be offered preferential rights to take the plot on should the plot holder no longer want the plot. We could extend the offering to preferential rights to a plot at that site after a set period of time.
- Look to the Littlehampton Allotments and Leisure Gardens Association for volunteers to offer support for plot holders and formulate groups that can undertake general maintenance tasks.
- Collaborate with the Littlehampton Allotments and Leisure Gardens Association to arrange meet the expert sessions for plot holders to ask questions and get advice from experienced plot holders.

9. Finance

The allotments come at significant financial cost to the Council and this strategy aspires to better manage the extent of the subsidy. It is always appropriate that the Council looks at innovative ways of running its services and reducing costs. The proposed objective of this strategy is that by the end of year five, fees will cover two thirds of the overall running costs. This comes at a time when the UK economy is experiencing a severe cost of living crisis and a period of rapidly increasing inflation. In recent years the increase in fees for the allotments has not kept pace with the increase in costs and if this continues the gap between income and expenditure will continue to grow. The scale of the problem can be seen from the figures in the tables that follow.

9.1. Allotments Income and Expenditure

	Actual Budget 2021 to 2022	Projected Budget 2022 to 2023	Projected Budget 2023 to 2024	Projected Budget 2024 to 2025
Total Expenditure	£84,428	£91,780	£92,131	£94,247
Allotment rent income	£17,701	£18,155	£19,064	£20,017
Expenditure less income – net deficit	-£66,727	-£73,625	-£73,067	-£74,230
Cost per household – based on 10,072 households @Dec.2021	£6.63	£7.31	£7.25	£7.37

The projections above were calculated assuming a 5% increase from 2022 to 2023 onwards and show the gap between income and expenditure is widening without taking into consideration the current level of inflation which at the time of writing – August 2022 – is 10% and rising. The 2022 to 2023 agreed fee increase of 2.5% will not come close to meeting the increases in costs now faced by the Town Council and the situation therefore needs to be addressed.

The anticipated growth in the number of plots which are due to be delivered as part of the new development in North Littlehampton will not generate sufficient additional income to help bridge this gap and will need additional resources to manage. It is also likely that only one site will be delivered within the first five years of the Strategy. Projecting the costs going forward without taking the new sites into account highlights the scale of the problem which is not sustainable long term.

9.2. Current Allotment Fees

Plot Size	2022 Price Per Rod £7.59	2023 Price Per Rod £7.78
Small Size Plot 62.5M ² =2.5-Rod	£18.98	£19.45
Medium Size Plot 125M ² =5-Rod	£37.95	£38.90
Large Size Plot 250M ² =10-Rod	£75.90	£77.80

Alongside these fees is the current deposit of £50 per new let and £5 deposit for the key to the sites. The 2022 to 2023 agreed increase of 2.5% equates a projected increase in income of £454. Increases in staffing, materials and utilities costs at the time the budget for 2022 to 2023 was set were estimated at £3,080 and are now expected to be much higher.

9.3. Common Issues

One main reason plots are handed back to us is as a result of the plot becoming overwhelming and the plot deteriorates. Whilst we retain the £50 deposit this invariably does not cover the cost of returning the plot to a condition it can be re-let. The average cost for getting a 5-rod plot back from overgrown to a suitable condition is £100. Removing waste from a plot adds to this cost.

Larger 10-rod plots can reach £500 in costs with poor structures and accumulation of materials.

The process for managing renewals and terminations is hugely time consuming and involves several officers in different departments to process. Also, the process of monitoring plot holders in relation to managing plots and working with them to resolve has a significant time element attributed to it.

The waiting list currently stands at 130 as at August 2022 and to process letting out new plots and update the waiting list again takes up significant officer time.

The number of sites is increasing, and each site brought in will bring a financial burden. If significant changes do not come out of the strategy allotment costs may bring challenges on budgets in other council areas.

We currently take a key deposit that is returnable once we have the key back. It is both practical and less time constraining to get keys cut in steel. The cost of the deposit needs to be in line with the cost of the key to be cut.

Locks at the sites are heavily used and vital for the protection of the sites so we make sure these are of good quality.

Future Work

- To keep pace with increases in costs and meet the stated objective of reducing the gap between expenditure and income, it has been agreed that with effect from January 2024 the level of fees will be increased by 10% and that future increases should be at a minimum of the rate of inflation. This was agreed by the Community Resources Committee at the meeting held on 8 November 2022 (Minute 48.2. refers). Going forward, this can be re-assessed in light of increased letting opportunities and the growth in households, with the caveat that future increases in fees must be pegged to the Retail Price Index as a minimum. It should be noted that Allotments legislation requires annual rent fees to be set a year in advance.
- In 2022 the Town Council embarked on a Digitisation Project which it is hoped will see our systems updated to allow online renewals and payments, offer direct debit options and possibly further discount if this option is taken up. Rather than a full year payment we will explore monthly payments, and this would mean the process for cancellation is far smoother.
- Look to introduce a waiting list admin fee to cover the costs of processing payments, viewing and getting tenancy agreements in place, covered by residents on the waiting list. This was not supported by the majority who participated in the engagement exercise. An alternative would be to look at introducing a higher first year fee for new plot holders e.g., £100 with a refund of 50% at the end of the first year if the allotment is in in good condition i.e., meeting the standard level of cultivation as per the Tenancy Agreement.
- Twenty-five to thirty pounds was considered to be representative of the actual cost of administering the waiting list. This list should also be set up through a computer-based system, reducing staff time. The digitisation project being investigated by the Town Council should deliver efficiencies in the administration process – promoting changes in a positive light.
- Review the deposit fee structure so that it better reflects the size of plots and the probationary period. This could take the form of staggered payments or standardised deposit fees based on the most common plot sizes of 2.5, 5 and 10 rods to £10 per rod with a minimum of £30. This could be investigated alongside the Digitisation Project work.

- We can offer plots that are in a poor condition with no deposit effectively sold as seen. This would mean the new plot holder would have a big initial job but allows a plot to become available if the deposit amount is too high. This would also reduce the financial burden on Littlehampton Town Council.
- Remove the option for a rotavation. This reduces time impact for officers, and it is well documented that rotavation leads to weeds being bedded into the ground and creating issues further down the line. If removed plot holders have a far more sustainable and manageable plot.
- Reserves – This is a common approach to budgeting for larger items over a longer time period. For example, if the condition of an item gives it three years estimated life span, apportion three payments over three years to cover the cost of this item. This reduces the financial burden in one year.
- With the renewals process add in an element to include proof of address. This allows a checking process to ensure plot holders meet the Terms and Conditions of the tenancy. Investigate the possibility of a discount to those in receipt of benefits or a pension. The Council would need to obtain evidence, and this would be explored as part of the digitisation project.
- Look to introduce one-off charges for keeping poultry or bees on the sites to cover additional admin, monitoring, and pest control costs.
- Increase Key deposit to £10.
- When advertising fees put into context by using comparisons e.g.: fruit and vegetable prices.
- If any new sites are offered in the future a viability report needs to be undertaken to understand if they are required and what cost this would come at.

10. Site Condition Reports

Fort Road
Howard Road
Kingley Gate
Mill Lane
Trinidad
Worthing Road

- The condition report highlights boundary issues in terms of establishing ownership and maintenance.
- We have limited budget set aside for boundary repair. We could pursue an alternate option of introducing double hedge rows at sites. This would take some time to establish but allows us to improve habitat with a natural barrier. These hedgerows would be a thorny variety to provide the protection we need. This option has to be balanced with the increase in the maintenance workload for the Amenity Team.
- We have a large number of trees at our allotment sites, and these will all require a degree of maintenance. Whilst there are controls within the tenancy agreement regarding the introduction of trees, there are number that have seeded impacting on maintenance responsibilities. As the new sites become available the Council is moving away from introducing too many trees because of the problems caused by root systems favouring better fencing and hedging for boundaries.

- We have recently seen failure in the water system at Howard Road and with the age of most of our sites it may be the case that the incoming water services are not plastic. It is suggested further investigation is made into the water services allowing us to be more proactive and plan future maintenance requirements.
- Put in place a plan of action to improve equipment to better meet the needs of the allotment sites and improve efficiencies. Better equipment could also be used to process waste like a chipper and go towards reducing green waste costs.
- Build relationships with local colleges to offer work areas for horticulture qualifications where the students are also Littlehampton residents. In effect building employability for residents whilst tackling site maintenance issues.
- Survey water systems at sites.

11. Pest Control

The current pest control contract services cost has increased and is likely to grow further as more sites come online.

We have yearly additional costs with the allotments from dealing with moles, wasp nests and rabbits. The cost of this fluctuates but runs between £1,000 and £2,000 a year.

Future Work

- Extend the contract period for pest control looking at a potential cost saving on a long contract.
- Consider removing hens from sites. The biggest issue we have with rats at sites is partly due to the draw of food from the coops. If we look to remove poultry at site, we could significantly reduce the costs attributed to pest control. Alternatively, we would seek to recoup known costs from allotment holders with chickens and charge for housing of chickens. The suggested cost would be £25 per annum.

12. Administration

- Renewals
- Daily checking of payments
- Cancellation or Terminations
- Offering and Letting a plot
- Inspection
- General enquiries. Responding to general enquiries, waiting list, etc.

The current system for processing payments and refunds is very antiquated and resource heavy. This is being reviewed as part of the Digitisation Project.

Currently renewals commence in October. This means that processing generally completes in January. It is better in terms of plot turnover that the end date for renewals is 31 March – links with end of year and could lead to Littlehampton Town Council getting back plots that are in better condition and where it is easier for new tenants to commence with allotment preparation and planting.

The engagement survey asked plot holders their view on adding an administration charge to cover costs, but this met resistance.

Future Work

- Invest in a new financial management system that improves all elements of financing in relation to allotments.
- Move the renewals date to fit with end of year processing and better allow for plot turnover at the right time of year.
- Set up a digitisation of the system to field enquiries and renewals as a self-service, reducing administration time.
- Tighten up the tenancy agreement to provide more clarity on process.
- A more transparent reporting method is suggested, and this could be investigated through the Digitisation Project work. This in turn could be used to provide information for the newsletter, leading to a better understanding by residents of both the process and investment required to maintain the sites.

13. Participation and Self-Management

With the increased pressures on budget and the expanding portfolio of allotments, improving self-management could be considered. Below details the different options around this.

- **Dependence** – neither plot holders nor associations play any practical part in site management beyond exchange of information, perhaps through a site representative.
- **Participation** – plot holders informally accept responsibility for minor maintenance works, and some mechanism may exist – such as an allotments forum – for the views of plot holders or site representatives to be canvassed on capital expenditure and repairs.
- **Delegation** – a properly constituted allotment association accepts formal responsibility for a range of duties under licence from the local authority, under financial arrangements that release a proportion of rental income for this purpose. For example, the association may arrange tenancies, collect rents and carry out regular maintenance duties, but leave the local authority to carry out repairs, pay for overheads such as water, and undertake all legal formalities.
- **Semi-autonomy** – the allotment association leases the site from the council, arranges tenancy agreements and reinvests revenue, which it manages on maintenance, repair and capital items. The council retains the right to review the lease at periodic intervals and has defined oversight and strategic functions. Associations which have implemented fully accountable schemes for devolved management straddle the boundary between the allotment and community gardening movements.

The greater the degree of self-management, the more potential there could be to achieve savings. The appropriate level of devolution will depend on the ability and willingness of plot holders and their associations to manage their sites.

14. Incentives

Should shared management become an option, the Council could look to compensate Littlehampton Allotments and Leisure Gardens Association representatives with discounted or free allotment fees on their designated plot.

Future Work

- Littlehampton Allotments and Leisure Gardens Association support – Work with the Association to launch allotment working days, three full days a year. We would support this group with collection of waste material. They would focus on general maintenance and utilise skills within the Littlehampton Allotments and Leisure Gardens Association membership base.
- Grant funding could be a significant boost to sites but the process of applying is time consuming. Local authorities are not always eligible and therefore where appropriate the Town Council could look to work with Littlehampton Allotments and Leisure Gardens Association to access grants.

15. Land, Plot Size and Plot Splitting

The size of the plot is changeable and as new plots come on board further micro plots are being introduced as starter plots for new plot holders.

As 10-rod plots become vacant, we have been splitting plots into 5 rods to offer further availability. The same process can take place for 5-rod plots.

Pre-existing agreements are in place which mean some plot holders have more than one plot.

Larger sites like Worthing Road have large areas of unused land. This land could be offered to community groups to enable other activities such as art, nature clubs or scented gardens.

Future Work

- Look to continue splitting plots, offering more availability for residents and more plots for less experienced growers.

16. Sustainability and Utilities

Littlehampton Town Council need to ensure that all council facilities continually improve to better meet sustainability, improve biodiversity and offset carbon emissions in line with the Environment Policy. Working with sustainability experts where possible, we should look to review how processes are completed at sites and better use of the environment.

Future Work

- Composting solutions – We generate a lot of green waste and could look at new innovative solutions to process this green waste in a manner that it could be sold on as compost once suitably processed.
- Look at other sustainable options for water supply at the allotments. This would need specialist advice, but rainwater harvesting and something we can put forward as part of any shed agreement.
- Work with local students who are looking to gain skills in sustainability offering our sites as a project.

17. Tenancy Agreement

The tenancy agreement sets out the contractual arrangements for the landowner Littlehampton Town Council and the tenant. This document sets out the requirements for managing an allotment and protocol Littlehampton Town Council take in relation managing the allotment in line with conditions set out within it.

One weakness in the information we provide is the languages this document is set up in. We have a diverse range of allotment holders and for many English is not their first language. It should be an ambition to get documents translated into several languages to enable a clear and concise information to all.

Some of the document needs review or rationalisation to ensure it follows good practice and does not by its own wording add additional burden to Littlehampton Town Council or plot holders that is unnecessary. For example, to not allow keeping bees at site as the potential for cost in staff time dealing with complaints, managing and calling the beekeeper if a situation arises is a greater risk than allowing this practice to occur.

Future Work

- Create all documents in the language of the plot holder taking on the plot.

18. Future Growth

With developments in Littlehampton continuing to grow as part of some developer agreements allotments will continue to be delivered alongside the new developments. We have two known developments happening in North Littlehampton. It is important that this document is reviewed alongside any new sites to ensure they meet the aims and objectives of the council and offer the best facility for the community they serve.

As sites increase the net deficit could potentially increase making it even more important to get new sites set up with a long-term approach. E.g., fencing is constructed from a long-lasting material that is suited to prevent pest access.

Develop a monitoring tool to measure and review performance of the strategy once it was approved and in operation.

19. Allotment Legislation and Modern Interpretation

What is an Allotment?

Section 22 of the Allotments Act 1922 defines an allotment garden as: "An allotment not exceeding forty poles in extent which is wholly or mainly cultivated by the occupier for the production of vegetables or fruit crops for consumption by himself or his family".

This description remains important because it defines the permitted use of an allotment plot. Provided it is used mainly for growing vegetables or fruit part of the plot can be used for growing flowers, as a leisure area or for keeping small livestock and surplus produce can be shared with others.

Littlehampton Town Council's allotment rules define the permitted use of an allotment as follows: "The allotment is rented to the tenant for the purpose of recreational gardening and or the cultivation of herb, flower, fruit and vegetable crops".

Littlehampton Town Council's rules define how much of the allotment needs to be cultivated further as per section 2 of the Tenancy Agreement.

The Law on Allotments Section 8 of the Allotments Act of 1925 gives protection to land acquired specifically for use as allotments, so-called statutory allotment sites, by the requirement for consent of the Secretary of State in the event of sale or disposal. However, land which was originally acquired for other purposes, and which has been used for allotments in the interim – temporary allotments – is not protected in this way.

Local Context and Other Local Plans and Policies

Arun District Council Leisure and Cultural Strategy

[Leisure Cultural Strategy for Publication April 14](#) – arun.gov.uk

West Sussex County Council Prevention Assessment Teams

[Health and wellbeing | Living independently | West Sussex Connect to Support](#)

Sussex Community NHS Health 4 Families Programme

[Health4Families Programme \(West Sussex\)](#) – [sussexcommunity.nhs.uk](#)

The National Allotment Society

Social interaction on sites – [NAS-110-Policy-Document-110-SOCIAL-INTERACTION-ON-ALLOTMENT-SITES.pdf](#) – [nsalg.org.uk](#)

Community Access and Security – [NAS-Policy-Document-104-COMMUNITY-ACCESS-AND-SECURITY.pdf](#) – [nsalg.org.uk](#)

Use of land designated for allotments for other forms of gardening – [NAS-107-Policy-Document-USE-OF-LAND-DESIGNATED-ALLOTMENTS-FOR-OTHER-FORMS-OF-GARDENING.pdf](#) – [nsalg.org.uk](#)

Allotment facilities in Growing in the community: a good practice guide for the management of allotments. [growing-community-second--8f5.pdf](#) – [local.gov.uk](#)

Appendix 1 – Five Year Action Plan

No.	Action	By Whom	Time frame
1	Approval of the Strategy	Community Resources Committee	October 2022
2	Fees and Charges by the end of year five, fees will cover two thirds of the overall running costs.	Allotments Working Group and Recommendation to the Community Resources Committee	2028 to 2029
3	Ensure Allotments are included as part of the Town Council's formal Business Continuity Plan	Council Policy Review	
4	Investigate and introduce more efficient invoicing, tenant records, the renewals process, introduction of scaled fees for deposits and concessions	Via Town Council Digitisation Project	2023 to 2024
5	Review the Tenancy Agreement	Allotments Working Group and Recommendation to the Community Resources Committee	Summer 2023
6	Sustainability – improve measures through investigation of green waste initiatives, composting, biodiversity	Officer investigation and implementation	Summer 2023
7	Trial and if successful implement "Buddy" system	Officer investigation and implementation	As part of 2024 renewals
8	Develop Allotment Handbook	Officer & Allotments Working Group investigation and implementation	Spring 2023
9	Develop Community Growing Initiative including an Open Day	Officer investigation and implementation	Spring 2023
10	Annual Review of Strategy and Progress with Action Plan	Community Resources Committee	October 2023 onwards

Appendix 2 – Consultation Questionnaire Feedback

Allotment Survey Results

How often do you visit your plot?

Daily	22	21%
Five or six days a week	18	17%
Three or four days a week	46	43%
One or two days a week	21	20%
Less	0	0%

What size is your plot?

10 Rod	44	41%
5 Rod	49	46%
2.5 Rod	6	6%
Other	8	7%

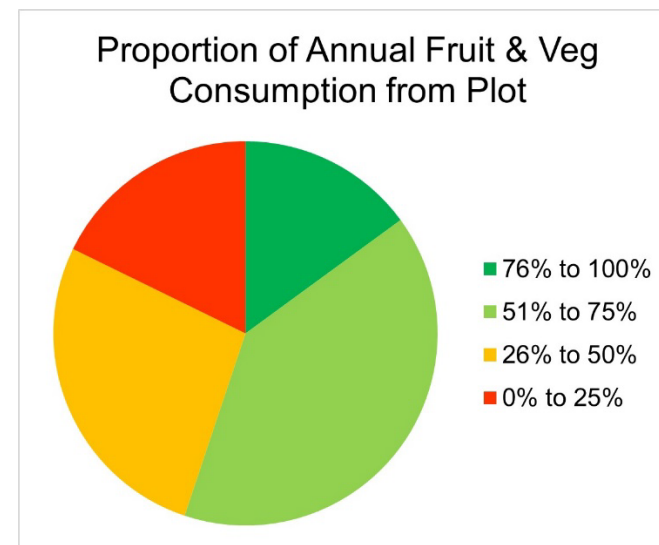
Averaging out over the year what proportion of your fruit and vegetable consumption comes from your plot?

76% to 100%	16	15%
51% to 75%	43	40%
26% to 50%	29	27%
0% to 25%	19	18%

Rate the benefits of having an allotment against the following areas: 1 – Most important to 5 – Least important

I am able to eat healthy food

1	46	43%
2	17	16%
3	8	7%
4	14	13%
5	22	21%



My food is grown with low environmental impact

1	47	44%
2	11	10%
3	12	11%
4	11	10%
5	26	24%

It saves me money on my food bill

1	37	35%
2	15	14%
3	18	17%
4	14	13%
5	23	21%

I am more aware of nature and the environment

1	42	39%
2	15	14%
3	14	13%
4	10	9%
5	26	24%

I can meet and socialise with people of different ages and backgrounds

1	26	24%
2	15	14%
3	35	33%
4	14	13%
5	17	16%

To improve mental health or provide stress relief

1	38	36%
2	15	14%
3	15	14%
4	12	11%
5	27	25%

General exercise

1	43	40%
2	9	8%
3	16	15%
4	17	16%
5	22	21%

Do you feel a sense of community when visiting the allotments?

Strongly agree	31	29%
Agree	54	50%
Neither	19	18%
Disagree	2	2%
Strongly disagree	1	1%

Would you like to see a pairing programme in which experienced growers spend time with new inexperienced growers for advice?

Strongly agree	16	15%
Agree	36	34%
Neither	49	46%
Disagree	6	6%
Strongly disagree	0	0%

Would you like to see a buddy system in place that offers cover when you are on holiday or sick? This buddy would be associated with your plot but not the key lead. The buddy will then have preferential rights to take on your plot if you no longer need it.

Strongly agree	13	12%
Agree	29	27%
Neither	42	39%
Disagree	16	15%
Strongly disagree	7	7%

Do you feel the site safety and security is adequate?

Strongly agree	9	8%
Agree	40	37%
Neither	13	12%
Disagree	28	26%
Strongly disagree	17	16%

We will be increasing community plots that allow for larger group of Littlehampton residents access to an individual plot. These groups will have a focus around youth engagement, residents in financial hardship and wellbeing activities. Do you think this is a good idea?

Strongly agree	30	28%
Agree	32	30%
Neither	37	35%
Disagree	6	6%
Strongly disagree	2	2%

In order for us to deliver improved initiatives at our allotments we would look for volunteers to assist in the delivery of programmes. Would this be of interest to you?

Yes	31	29%
No	76	71%

Do you think the allotments are accessible and inclusive?

Yes	89	83.18%
No	18	16.82%

We are looking to add a charge to residents to on the waiting list. This would cover the administration cost to Littlehampton Town Council. Do you think this is a good idea?

Yes	32	30%
No	75	70%

Do you subscribe to the email newsletter?

Yes	59	55%
No	48	45%