

Notes From Allotment Working Party Meeting - Tuesday 10 June 2025

Members present:

Katy Cena (KC) (Allotments & Administration Officer)

Richard House (Grounds Team Manager)

Bill Jerman (Allotment Holder)

Bob Sanderson (Allotment Holder)

Toby Kewen (Allotment Holder)

1. Welcome & Introduction

Bill Jerman who recently joined was introduced to everyone on the WP

2. Twice Yearly Skip

Success of last year's skip the only issue was that people were waiting for the skip to arrive

A twice yearly skip was discussed and members of the WP thought that it was a good idea, Bill mentioned to Richard that the grounds team were particularly helpful during the last skip day in May. Everyone agreed that the skip was a great success and that an additional skip would be welcomed. Richard said it would be primarily for the allotment holders but the grounds team could also make use of it especially if it's not filled up. October was suggested as an appropriate time, as it's the end of the financial year tenants would be giving up their plots and could be wanting to get rid of rubbish.

Richard suggested that the 2nd skip could be in the second or third week of October but not during the October half term as some of the team who would be helping with the skip would be on Annual Leave then.

Action: KC to recommend a second skip in October at a forthcoming CA/OS meeting – before October.

3. Swap Shop Station

KC discussed her idea of a swap shop station and showed pictures of what it would be like. She said the location would be next to the noticeboard which is on the right hand side as you come into the allotment site on the main track. Members of the Working party agreed that this would be a good idea but would need to be monitored. Only seeds, plants and vegetables would be left there. There was a suggestion about making it more of a communal area and adding some benches. Antisocial behaviour has been raised an issue in the past whereby empty bottles of alcohol have been left behind from people congregating and this could encourage people from outside the allotment site to congregate, however the option for benches has not been ruled out for the future. Bob mentioned that he was disappointed that they could no longer donate their fresh produce to the local foods banks/Swindon food collective. KC mentioned that plot holders could use FB to donate food to local families if they wish.

Action: KC to propose the swap shop station at the next CA/OS meeting in July.

4. A Reminder of The Bonfire Ban in August

KC reminded members of the working party about the bonfire ban in August and requested that they report any instances of bonfires to the office. Signage would be put on the gates to remind plot holders. KC explained to Bill the reasons including complaints received in the office from residents of Bellway who had smoke blowing across their gardens and this was more prevalent during August.

Richard also explained that the ground tends to be drier in the summer and there is more chance of the bonfire spreading out of control.

Action: KC to prepare laminated signage for the gates to remind plot holders not to have bonfires during August

5. Annual Allotment Meeting in September

KC reminded the WP of the annual plot holders meeting in September which is on the 29th Sept and that it would be useful for them to attend so at least the plot holders can see who their representatives are. She explained that Cllr Diane Archer (Chair of Community Assets & Open Spaces) would be chairing the meeting. There were some suggestions about making the meeting more inviting which was:

To bring the swap shop to meeting, someone could be brought into sell seeds/plants

KC mentioned what has been mentioned at previous meetings which include queries about wood chip, pest control etc.

Action: KC to consider allotment holders bring their veg/fruit to the meeting to swap and consider inviting a guest speaker.

6. Permission for Working Party Members to be Allotment FB Page and Notice board

KC received some feedback that working party members are not visible. KC suggested that their first names and plot numbers are put on the allotment notice board and on Facebook. Everyone seemed to be in agreement that this would be a good idea.

Action: KC to do a FB post with an allotment map to show the Working Party Allotment Representatives and their plot numbers. This will also go onto the allotment noticeboard.

7. Any other comments/suggestion From The Working Party

Toby wanted to raise the issue of water troughs and often ballcocks often not working. Richard explained the history behind them that he installed taps inside all the water troughs as ball cocks were being misused and expensive to replace. There was a worry that taps were being left on so KC will do a reminder post that all taps need to be turned off. Bob said that paths around plots were not being cut. Bob also mentioned that there was some plastic down one of the paths that was a tripping hazard. It was also suggested that more woodchip is needed. The recent bags of Potash were popular and went straightaway so this needs to be continued. KC reminded the working party of the plot increase of up to 5% that would likely be implemented from October 2025 and there was no objection.

Actions: KC to do a reminder FB post and email to remind people to cut the grass along the paths around their plots, to remind plot holders to switch off the taps on the water troughs after use and that no bonfires are allowed in August.

RH to check the stickers are still visible on the water troughs and take photos of the plastic which is a tripping hazard.

KC to request with the local tree surgeons (who are due to do some work for WPC) to deposit more woodchips when they can.

KC to allow more Potash to be deposited at the allotments when we are offered it.

KC to write a report of the allotment increase for either Julys CA/OS or September CA/OS