

Proposal to fence the allotments

Background

The Parish Council owns and provides two amenities for the community - the Cricket with its play equipment and the allotments

Both PC amenities serve a small proportion of the population of the village - the play equipment benefits the approximately 20 children of an age to benefit, and the allotments up to 20 allotment holders and their families.

There is only one statutory duty which falls to all parish councils: to provide allotments where there is a need for them and that need can reasonably be met.

The allotments were developed out to their current extent about 17 years ago. This was paid for by external grant funding from MSDC. It included an allotment plot for the Youth Club, which they cultivated until the Youth Club ceased operation.

The allotments are self financing, with the rents sufficient to cover outgoings but still affordable for potential tenants whatever their financial circumstances.

The rents provide a small surplus to cover basic repairs and maintenance, on the basis that the Trust pays for materials and the allotment holders do the work themselves.

In the 20 years I have been worked on the allotments the Trust has not asked for any financial support from the Parish Council.

The current issue

For the past 3 years tenants have been suffering damage to their crops, which has been getting worse as muntjac numbers increase year on year.

This proposal has come before the council for consideration because the Trust does not have the financial resources to cover these costs, and the job is probably too large for some of the older tenants to do themselves, though they could help with site preparation and clearance work if necessary.

As an allotment holder I understand the frustration tenants experience when their crops are eaten or damaged by muntjac, and as a trustee I see it as my role, along with the other trustees, to act in the interests of all allotment holders.

The costs of the work would be borne by the PC from CIL monies, with no additional charge to tenants or to the council tax payers of Drinkstone either for the capital project itself or for ongoing maintenance.

Next Steps

Both Michael and Paul have described the process so far and pointed out that there are a few wrinkles to be ironed out, especially at Gedding Road.

I would ask that the Council at least agrees in principle to support this project, subject to details being agreed.

Daphne Youngs