



**Watery Lane Allotments
& Leisure Gardens**

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Watery Lane Allotment and Leisure Gardens Association Management Plan - Dated 7th December 2017

The Watery Lane Allotment and Leisure Gardens Association management plan is in two parts.

Appendix A

Site Management plan

Appendix B

Three Year Project Plan – Third Year



Appendix A

Watery Lane Allotment & Leisure Gardens

Site Management Plan.

Review Dated 7th December 2017

Introduction

The Association, formed 2009, works in partnership with Codsall Parish Council who own and administer Watery Lane Allotment & Leisure Gardens. The aim of the association is to promote the interests of all members in their gardening activities and to conduct negotiations as necessary to improve the facilities at the site. The people who will benefit from the site are the potholders of the 143 allotments and other members of the community who access the site. The plot holders have lease agreements with the Parish Council. They live in various locations in the area, the main ones being; Codsall, Birches Bridge, Perton, Brewood, Billbrook, Tettenhall and Bishops Wood. The site received the Green Flag Community Award in 2015. This award is awarded to parks and green spaces that achieve a high rating based on eight criteria:

1. A welcoming place
2. Healthy, safe and secure
3. Clean and well maintained
4. Sustainability
5. Conservation and heritage
6. Community involvement
7. Marketing
8. Management

This management plan is intended to provide an overview of current site, site management and future site development plans.

Current Site

Car Parking:

In the last three years the main entrance (southern end) of the site has had graded stone car parking areas build either side of the main tarmac drive. This drive leads on to a narrow crushed stone roadway through the centre of the site, roughly dividing the site into two halves.

Pathways:

Over the last four years an ongoing plan of improvements has been implemented and all plots can now be approached by a level crushed stone pathway. These sustainable and environmentally friendly pathways have now been edged with treated FSC timber planks to retain the stone and facilitate easier maintenance.

Boundary Grassed Areas:

Adjacent to the main entrance car parking area there is a grassed area about 30 meters square. There is also a grass roadway running along the far side (east side) of the site, which is parallel to the brook that runs along the edge of the site. These grass areas are currently cut and maintained by members of the association. The brook and banks maintenance is the responsibility of land owner

Boundary Hedges and Fences:

The hedge that runs parallel to road at the front of the site and another hedge that runs along the full length of the near side (west side) of the site are the responsibility of the local Parish Council and Land Owner respectively. At the far end of the site (northern end) the site has fences, which are the responsibility of the Land Owner.

Natural and Wildlife Resources:

The site also benefits from a small Brook, a natural spring, a bird feeding area with hide, bird boxes, bat boxes, a small wild flower meadow, several bug houses, fallen wood piles and a bee hive owned by one of the tenants.

Association Resources:

During the last four years the Association has managed, with the aid of grants, Parish Council Funding and local fund raising to provide the site with the following resources;

Composting Toilet

Small open storage shed

Vandal proof shipping container storage

Large poly tunnel (12m x 4m opened for use December 2016)

Hedge trimmer

Lawn Mower

Various hand tools

Allotment Plots:

The vast majority of the plots are being kept in good or reasonable condition, with some demonstrating conservation techniques in regard to water conservation and encouraging wild life. On occasions, the inspection process has lead to the Parish Council evicting plot holders from the site. In general the site has a good community spirit and very few people related problems.

Site Future Developments

A welcoming Place:

The Parish Council encourages new plot holders to contact a member of the Association and where possible a committee member will introduce new plot holders to the site and explain the advantages of joining the Association. Again, when requested, the committee will arrange for assistance or advice to be given to new plot holders.

Healthy, safe and secure:

The Parish Council has a duty of care regarding use of the site and carries out Risk Assessments. It is recognized that each plot holder has responsibilities in this area, but everyone can be subject to oversight, lapses in judgment or errors. To this end the Watery Lane Allotment and Leisure Garden Association agreed with the Parish Council to assist with the maintenance, safety and security of the site by carrying out three site inspections at appropriate times of the year. The aim is to assist plot holders and the Council in maintaining standards.

Historically the pathways were uneven grassed areas with potential hazards such as loose wood, discarded wire fencing or posts and other trip hazards. This has changed with the majority of paths now leveled and covered with crushed stone. Boarding of the edges of the pathways has been completed and another layer of top surface covering has been applied. The main gate is closed at night and valuable equipment secured in the vandal proof Lock Up container.

The management teams over the past five years have overseen various developments and improvements to the site. As well as the car park and pathways, a small trading shed, composting toilet and secure Lock Up container for equipment and trading goods have been installed. Many of these improvements have the intention of making the site a secure and safer place to be. Working and even relaxing on the site can add to the health and wellbeing of the plot holders. Developments have been funded by grants from the Lottery fund, local Co-operative Society, Association funds and funds from both the local Parish Council and District Council.

Clean and well maintained:

The regular inspections by members of the management team and Association volunteers help to identify potential problems with the site so they can be quickly resolved. Mowing of grassed areas, Tree maintenance including trimming and cleaning of the toilets, go a long way to establish a clean and well maintained site.

Sustainability:

Through newsletters and the website, the members are and will continue to be encouraged to use sustainable and eco friendly methods of cultivation. In order to assist in site maintenance the committee intends to use the newsletters, the website and AGM to encourage more members to volunteer for working parties. If this is achieved, a schedule of these working parties will developed and posted on the notice boards and web site. It should be noted that we support the local Community Payback Scheme by utilising their minor offenders to carry out maintenance work on the site. Members working parties are only needed for more specialized tasks such as erecting the poly tunnel, grass cutting and production of local signage; all of which are currently well supported by members.

Conservation and heritage:

The natural spring has been conserved and in areas where it was causing problems, ducted underground to the adjacent brook. The edge of the brook has been left to grow wild to encourage wild life and an area at the northern edge of the site has been given over to a flower meadow and the location of the bee hive. Bird boxes and Bat boxes are

located in the less active areas of the site on the mature trees alongside the brook. Some of the onsite trees have been managed to preserve shape and stability. The wood from this action, along with fallen rotting wood has been collected in wood piles in various locations as protection and potential homes for wild life. This is in addition to there are two bug house constructions. It is the intention of the committee to maintain, develop these resources and where practical make additions to wildlife protection.

Community involvement:

The committee tries and will continue to foster a sense of community via its management of the site. This is achieved by developing activities for the members and, along with the support of the Parish Council, opening the site for use of the local RSPB association and the local scout group. Annual Best Plots competitions with small financial prizes are also used to encourage communication, plot improvement and a sense of fellowship. The Management team intend to persuade the Parish Council to allow an Open Day or School Visit Day, but will have to overcome a perceived general sense of unease to the idea.

Marketing:

The Allotment facilities are promoted on the Parish Council web site and also on the Association web site. Due to the nature of the allotment site, with a waiting list, it is not considered appropriate to further market the site to a wider audience. Funding agencies have plaques placed strategically adjacent to the areas of improvement supported by them. The Association does run a website (<http://www.dig-it.btck.co.uk>) which is promoted on the Parish website and the Association headed stationary. This has generated site visits from several other allotment sites in the area and two requests for access to our Association documentation.

Site Management

One of the main priorities of the committee is to continue to work with the local Parish Council and District Council in a spirit of cooperation and stable working practices, to promote the interests of all plot holders in their gardening activities and to improve the facilities at the site, in a manner that demonstrates mutual respect. This manifests as meetings with the Parish Council Green Spaces Committee and Parish Clerk at scheduled meetings throughout the year. Monies for site maintenance and improvement are obtained from the Parish Council, being funded from the plot holders rent payments. Large scale projects have been funded from grant organizations.

The management team is elected by association members at the Annual General Meeting. The management team meets monthly to manage the association affairs, including future projects and several times a year with the local Parish Council to discuss any potential issues and future plans. The association, with help from some very dedicated members, undertakes fund raising activities such as the sale of gardening products, plants and an Annual BBQ. These monies are used to fund site improvements and occasional social events such as talks by visiting specialists.

The management team carries out, on behalf of the Parish Council, several plot inspections through the year to ensure the site is safe and secure and that the plots are being maintained in accordance with the lease agreement. The association uses a letter based system to try to encourage any plot holders failing to meet the required standards

to improve. If this fails, after several attempts, the matter is handed over to the Parish Council for further action.

The site entrance is cause for concern, with several near misses reported by members. The committee has contacted the Parish Council, the Highways department and the local MP, all to no avail. The response seems to be based on the Highways department opinion that this is a rural access, is safe and as such does not require further improvements in signage or other measures to improve safety. The committee will continue to appraise the matter and try to ensure that access to the site can be improved.

The management team also arrange for members to benefit from access to free manure, free compost, some common garden products for sale and possible assistance in cases of illness.

In consultation with the Parish Council the Association has applied again for the Green Flag Community Award. The philosophy of management team has been to use drivers to strive for continual improvement of the site. The Green Flag Community Award with its Field Recommendations is seen as a way of maintaining focus on improvement. As recommended, a Project Plan was developed and a copy of the December review of the plan is included.



The Poly tunnel opened for use 8th December 2016



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Appendix B

Watery Lane Allotment & Leisure Gardens Three Year Rolling Project Plan

Review Dated 7th December 2017

Introduction

The Watery Lane Management Team was proud to have achieved the Green Flag Community Award and agreed to try and improve the site in line with the Field Assessment Recommendations. To this end, a running three year project plan has been produced, updated annually and identifying completed projects. Due to financial constrictions, it is anticipated that not all of these plans will come to fruition in the time frame of the plan. The plan is therefore intended as a mechanism for ensuring that development requirements maintain focus, even if not achieved. Further to this, the entries in the plan have been given priorities, with most effort directed at the highest priorities.

Watery Lane Allotment Association

Three Year Project Plan Spreadsheet

ID	Priority	Lead Officer	Action Requirement	Progress	Actions	Target Date
1			Implement an Annual Health and Safety review.	Agreed	Completed	Completed
2			Consider a 'just in case' plan should there be any dog fouling.	Very few dogs are seen on the site, but this will be investigated as one of the lower priorities.	Completed – No further action as sign banning dogs has been posted.	Completed
3			Arrange a meeting with the Parish Clerk to discuss the tenancy agreement to refer to 'health and safety and a council policy regarding the use of Peat.	The Parish clerk has indicated a reluctance to make changes to tenancy agreements.	John Davis produced a discussion document that was presented to the Parish Council 8 th February 2018. Awaiting feedback	31 st May 2018
4			Propose to the Parish Council an Annual Open Days (promoted on the Council web site) that will allow Parishioners to see the work carried out by the Council in relation to Open Spaces, conservation and the promotion of healthy life styles.	Propose to the Parish Council an Annual Open Day (promoted on the Council web site) that will allow Parishioners to see the work carried out by the Council in relation to Open Spaces, conservation and the promotion of healthy life styles.	No progress in 2017. To be proposed as an agenda item with the Parish Clerk for the next scheduled meeting in 2018	13 June 2018
5			Discuss monitoring of current operations and how to encourage as much recycling as possible.	Yet to be discussed.		July 2018
6			Improve Main Access to the site.	The Highways department have stated that the entrance is safe, with the existing signage and road markings and Parish Council do not have sufficient funds to make significant changes. Will be maintained on plan for annual review.	Wait for the new housing site plans and review impact	August 2018

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7	Monitor the wildlife, keeping records of species and numbers for the site. Possibly, by forging links with other clubs that maintain an interest in wildlife.	The Association already has links with the local RSPB group who are also interested in other wildlife and habitat. There are also annual reports obtained from the local Bee keeper regarding Bee population.	Initial contacts show no significant interest in progressing. Existing links will be maintained.	Completed
8	Endeavour to involve members in the site maintenance programme and promote regular work party parties on the site.	There is limited requirement for working parties as we assist the community payback scheme management by utilising their offenders to work on the allotment site. Also a number of our members work on site with the construction of the poly tunnel, production of site signage, maintenance of compost bins , grass cutting and other items such as building bug houses and bird boxes.	The situation will be reviewed annually in December	December 2018
9	Explore how much rainwater can be collected on site, which could be used to reduce mains water usage.	Although water storage in communal areas is not practical, many plot holders already utilise the roof space of their sheds to trap water into butts. The committee will investigate ways to promote this activity and look at any other suggestions members can provide.	The site officer discusses water storage and options with all new plot holders and looks for opportunities to encourage existing plot holders to make improvements	Ongoing
10	Continue to maintain standards through the regular individual plot inspection and attention to communal areas. Where possible the Association should aim to reduce the number of plots requiring action following inspections by continuing to work with plot holders.	Three inspections are planned for the coming year, supported by actions to encourage improvement where required.	New inspection team appointed at November committee meeting	Ongoing

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11	Ensure that where possible sustainable materials are used e.g. FSC wood.	It is accepted that this is a valid point and will be taken into consideration when future acquiring of wood chip is made. Will be maintained on plan for annual review.	All 2017 wood purchases were from TFM, a sustainable supplier	Ongoing
12	That the Association members continue the current maintenance program for the open grassed areas, the land alongside Moat Brook and the road side hedge.	This is a current and ongoing program. Will be maintained on plan for annual review. An additional wild flower area has been created parallel to the brook.	Actions completed for 2017	Ongoing
13	Encourage a greater take up of Association membership by plot holders.	The committee agreed to be more proactive with encouraging new members to join the Association. Will be maintained on plan for annual review.	Membership increased to 89% of plot holders in 2017	Ongoing
14	In partnership with the Parish Council endeavour to ensure that the existing facilities continue.	Will be maintained on plan for annual review.	A letter from the Parish Council in 2016 confirming stability of the site for at least the next five years.	Ongoing
15	Maintain active awareness of grant opportunities for site improvement and development.	This is an ongoing process. Will be maintained on plan for annual review.	Two grants obtained in year 2017/2018 as well as financial support from the Parish Council	Ongoing
16	Develop a series of raised beds for use for the less able members of the community.	Plot 42 has been allocated by the council for the project. £750 grant obtained to initiate the project. The plot will be developed in phases as monies become available.	Material has been obtained for the first bed and work is due to commence in April 2018.	Ongoing

Watery Lane Allotment Association Three Year Project Plan Spreadsheet

17	Develop an Environmental policies that will establish how much pesticide/herbicide is used on site and where appropriate suggest alternatives.	The Association recognised that it has no mandate to prescribe usage in these areas and can only make recommendations. This item will be maintained on the plan for annual review.	No action at this time.	Ongoing
18	Green Flag Feedback – Consider the replacement of the main gate.	Rather than replace the gate, it was decided to refurbish the existing posts and gate	Work completed	Completed
19	Green Flag Feedback – Consider obtaining expert advice on wild flower beds and enhancements to the river bank. The environmental agency should be considered for the latter.	Discussion point for 2018		Ongoing
20	Green Flag Feedback – Risk assessments for those who maintain the site would be advisable.	Discussion point for 2018		Ongoing

Watery Lane Allotment Association Three Year Project Plan Spreadsheet

Completed Objectives

Complete the timber boarding to the constructed Pathways.	Approximately 10% of paths to be completed	Completed	Completed
Protect the pathways with a top coat of crushed stone.	The pathways already had a sound base, but needed a topcoat to complete the installations. Having obtained the correct grade of stone work continued.	Completed	Completed
The Risk Analysis sheet could be extended to include water supply and footpaths on the site.	Agreed	Completed	Completed
Develop a 3 Year Project Plan.	Agreed	Completed	Completed
Monitor the site for graffiti and vandalism.	To be added to the Plot inspection process.	Completed	Completed
Develop a 'welcoming point' for visitors, such as flower bed and sign that announces the Association and could act as a focal point on the site.	This sounded like a good idea and was discussed and agreed at the December committee meeting	Two flower planters and a picket fence to boarder part the road are to be constructed	Completed
Implement an Annual Health and Safety Policy review.	Agreed	Reviewed at the December 2016 committee meeting	Completed

Watery Lane Allotment Association Three Year Project Plan Spreadsheet

<p>Make the entrance sign more welcoming and increase the information to include information about the site, for example: who owns it; who manages it; the opening and closing hours; a telephone number and a website or email address. Introduce a sign on the site that includes reference to 'no dogs' and access restrictions.</p>	<p>John Davis produced a discussion document for presentation to the Parish Council, who agreed to the new signage</p>	<p>John Davis to obtain new signage and Dennis Hutchinson to install.</p>	<p>Completed</p>
<p>In partnership with the Parish Council endeavour to ensure that the existing facilities continue. The Association could actively seek new suggestions and ideas from members and non- members.</p>	<p>This is already and ongoing process. Regular meetings with the Parish Open Spaces Committee and Parish Clerk take place. It is known that the Parish Council has no intention of disposing of the Allotment site in the foreseeable future (at least five years). Support for the site is also forthcoming from the District Council and the local Member of Parliament.</p>	<p>A letter from the Parish Council in 2016 confirming stability of the site for at least the next five years. A suggestion box on site has been made available on the web site</p>	<p>Completed</p>
<p>Consider ways to further promote the site in partnership with Codsall Parish Council.</p>	<p>The Parish Clerk has indicated a reluctance to increase the promotion of the site significantly.</p>	<p>The parish Council do not wish to further promote the site</p>	<p>Completed</p>