

SUTTON-IN-CRAVEN PARISH COUNCIL

SUTTON-IN-CRAVEN ALLOTMENT STRATEGY



INTRODUCTION

The provision of allotments by local authorities is a statutory duty. Sutton-in-Craven Parish Council will continue to provide and promote allotments not only because of this statutory requirement but because allotment gardening can make a valuable contribution to the Parish's sustainability by providing health, social, economic and environmental benefits.

Allotment gardens and spaces to grow food are an important part of the green space and leisure provision. They contribute to the retention of traditional skills and wisdom as well as being highly beneficial to the wildlife area.

The demand for allotments in Sutton-in-Craven has increased dramatically with a constant waiting list.

Current house building trends are towards smaller gardens, as pressure increase to optimise building land, and some householders have no individual garden. These circumstances disadvantage those on lower incomes. Allotments provide an opportunity to adjust this imbalance.

Allotments have evolved through a varied history of social and economic change the most notable in the Second World War where the famous 'Dig for Victory' campaign exhorted and educated the public to produce their own food.

When food shortage threats ceased, the need and demand for allotment plots declined. Allotment provision and land allocation also reduced as land was required for new functions.

There is no set size for allotments but the most common plot is 1 rod, an ancient measurement equivalent to 302 square yards or 253 square metres.

THE AIMS OF THE ALLOTMENT STRATEGY

In order to address the increase in demand, it is the aim of this strategy to concentrate on delivering a more accessible and sustainable allotment service, to ensure that the provision of allotments is an efficient and effective service and that the allotments are cultivated to the highest possible standards.

CURRENT PROVISION

The Site

Sutton-in-Craven operates one allotment site at Bridge Road, off Holme Lane.

The site is divide into 23 plots.

Current Rent is £24 per full sized plot, £12 mini plot.

Management

The Allotment site is currently managed on behalf of the Parish Council by the Parish Clerk and Allotment Officer. The Parish Clerk and Allotment Officer deal with day to day administration of the Allotments, including:

- Collecting and administering rents
- Administering tenancies
- Letting plots and new tenancy agreements
- Enquiries from prospective tenants including site visits
- Inspecting plots on a regular basis
- Resolving disputes and dealing with complaints
- Arranging day to day maintenance of the site

Rules and Regulations have been drawn up these explain what can and cannot be done on the site.

Liaison with Tenants

The Parish Council liaises with the Allotment Officer/tenants over any matters brought to their attention. Tenants can attend Parish Council Meetings or request a meeting with the Allotment Officer / Clerk to discuss matters of common interest.

Self-Management

It is the policy of the Parish Council to encourage allotment holders to participate in the running of the site, and ultimately to self-manage the site.

Site Maintenance

In addition to arranging for cutting the grass along the main track, the parish council considers the maintenance needs of the site.

There is no mains water supply to the site.

Inspections are carried out annually.

Those tenants of plots identified as severely underused or neglected will be contacted to ensure action is taken by the tenant to cultivate the plot. If no action is taken within the specified time then the Council will put in progress the process for terminating the tenancy.

Acceptable reasons are ill health. In these cases, a tenant needs to advise the clerk or Allotment Officer in writing that they are unable to garden their plot until a specified time and this needs to be not greater than one year. Otherwise the Council will be entitled to re-let the plot.

For further information please see the Rules & Regulations.

DEMAND FOR ALLOTMENTS

April 2014 the current waiting list is 30. Potential tenants are added to the waiting list on a first come, first served basis, according to the criteria described below.

Target areas of strategy

- Ensuring sufficient Allotments
- Promoting Allotment Gardening
- Encouraging sustainability
- Providing Good Administration
- Maintaining Adequate Resources

Ensuring Sufficient Allotments

It is the Policy of the Parish Council to meet its legal obligation to provide allotments in Sutton-in-Craven, for the residents of the Parish.

The Parish Council owns no other suitable land other than the existing site off Bridge Road. It is not anticipated that the Parish Council will sell this site or have an opportunity to buy additional sites in the near future (the Parish Council have written to local landowners to try and obtain land).

The aim therefore is to maximise the use of the existing site.

It is therefore the Councils Policy to accept new applications for allotments only from persons resident in Sutton-in-Craven Parish.

In addition to a 'residents' only policy, the Parish Council may exceptionally accept applications from voluntary community groups for the tenancy of allotment (s), where the proposed use is beneficial to the residents of Sutton-in-Craven.

If there are no Sutton-in-Craven residents on the waiting list for an Allotment then the Parish Council may consider offering the vacant allotment to a non-resident of Sutton-in-Craven if the plot is vacant for 3 months or longer.

Promoting Allotment Gardening

Current Position

Details of the Allotment site appear on the Parish Council Web site.

Details may also be displayed on Parish Council noticeboards.

Encouraging Sustainability

To encourage and where possible support good environmental practice including the use of organic alternatives to fertilizers and pesticides.

To promote composting and similar alternative methods.

To consider opportunities for improved wildlife habitats.

Use of rainwater capture by individual plot holders to be encouraged.

To promote recycling on the site.

Maintaining Adequate Resources

The Parish Council needs to balance the benefits of the allotments provision against the cost to the residents of Sutton-in-Craven via the Council tax precept.

The Parish Council aim is to make the allotment site self-financing.

The level of rents, key plot deposits plus any concessionary schemes is considered annually and any changes are introduced on the first of October.

Proposals

The Parish Council aims to make any allotment sites self-financing and to review rents and control expenditure to this end. In future all new tenants will only be offered/allowed one plot. Where existing tenants have multiple plots this will be allowed to continue until a change of tenancy.

The Parish Council policy is to make each vacated plot sufficiently attractive for letting, which could at one extreme include the use of external contractors to clear a plot, at the other, it could include offer of a rent free period to compensate the new tenants for having to clear the plot.



