

Bedlinog Allotments Association

Action Plans for 2023 & 2024

Background

The allotments in Bedlinog are located at the end of Hylton Terrace, and with an entrance by the retail shop. There are 15 plots in all at a site that borders the river. The allotments have been in place for some 30 years and for the most part fully occupied. The whole site is on an incline and hardly visible from the road. It is pleasant, generally well-kept and a good and practical asset for the community.

There is a short waiting list of two. Keeping more on the list is unnecessary since some plot holders remain in place over many years. The Clerk and I paid a visit to the allotments on Monday afternoon, 25th September. This was a helpful visit to view the site and meet the leadership of the association. The community council owns the allotments and invested 20k in 2021, including new fencing, original paths, toilet and wash facilities, and raised beds for community and school use. We were told that few wished to have the burden of committee membership, or office holding. This is a common problem among voluntary organisations. As a result, there were few officers, and roles, such as Secretary and Treasurer, had to be shared and very often duplicated among a small number of enthusiasts.

Requirements locally

We were told of a number of issues and items with which the members would welcome assistance. They were also keen to help the community and schools with advice on horticultural matters. The footpaths needed to be better defined with new gravel laid. Rain water was kept in water butts on site. A water supply had been installed with a water meter. There was no electric or gas supply in a hut, used to store tools. Having walked around the site, a number of issues were identified and a list drawn up.

Items needing attention	Approx cost £	Priority
Finish render screed on stores	50-70 (2023)	1
Gravel paths prepare and relay	460	1
IBCs (Intermediate Bulk Container) x 11	120 (2023)	2
New plastic compost bins x 12 from CBC	100 (2023)	1
Skip hire to clear rubbish	250	3
Books for advice on garden techniques	75	3
Working with others to promote growing	150	2
Planting better species for pollinators	200	3
Lay a pond to attract insects	250	2

Issues around allotments

Allotments make an important contribution to local food security; plants and seeds can be swapped among plot holders, but tidiness and maintenance can be a problem. Weeds, such nettles, need to be cleared; on the other hand, they are food plants for several butterfly larvae. Removing dead leaves and stems is an autumn task, but they also may provide cover for hedgehogs and small mammals.

Other issues for the management of allotments may include site repairs and maintenance; management of allotment records (plot-holder database); responding and co-ordinating responses to appeals against notices; payment of bills for water supply and other site expenses. Correspondence and complaints relating to allotment matters is on-going. Gaining enough committee members willing to commit is a problem. Site liaison with elected members may be improved now we have an Allotments Champion.

Conclusions

As Biodiversity and Allotments Champion, appointed by the Community Council my role is to raise issues and bring them to members' attention. Allotments have always been a feature of local communities. I have suggested they apply for some funding in 2023 and next year to ensure a series of improvements. These facilities have an important role to play and it is right that we continue to support them.