

Extending the current SAA Plot area

To the parish Council

On behalf of the SAA, I approached Graham to request the opportunity to address the parish Council to discuss the extension of the current Shapwick allotments space into the current spare grassed area to the east of the plots. This request is based on three changes since our last conversation, the detail of which is below.

Extra Capacity for New Members

The current Allotments which are now mature and well maintained are at capacity. Having discussed the likelihood of any change to that position with all of the allotment holders at the end of last year, it's unlikely that any space will be made available at least this year and probably next. We have had up to three requests for an allotment space open, but with no movement we have had two drop out and are currently down to one very keen neighbour on Bridewell Lane. I have also been in contact and showed around two new people moving into the village, who have shown a strong interest and will apply as soon as they have resident status.

Additional small plots for existing members with small plots

With the current bee mound effectively land locking the remaining grassed area, I have had interest from existing allotmenters for new space to extend current plots or create additional small plots for specific crops and/or those that would like some additional growing space. This would leave the entire remaining space under the control of the SAA and ensure the area is both tidy and regularly well maintained, as is the rest of the allotment area. The shape and allocation of the remaining area would leave 2 meters between boundaries as per the original layout.

Health & Safety

As you are aware, during recent storms and high winds we have had several branches fall onto Plot 1 and the shed from the tree to the north of the shed within the churchyard. With Shapwick Jam funding, and on behalf of the church, we had previously arranged for several lower branches to be removed (under approval from SCC). In recent high winds, branches have broken from the top of the tree and fallen onto Plot 1 and into the churchyard. Although we are actively pursuing a short-term solution with the vicar to remove hanging debris from the top of the tree as well as additional lower branches (through funding provided by the church), the risk of more branch debris from the top of the tree falling on the allotment plots still remains.

My suggestion, which I have discussed with the allotment holder, is to request an additional area from within the subject grassed area to move plot 1 back by at least half its current length to leave an open area under the tree. Although we will make arrangements to restrict access in very windy conditions, it removes the real risk to individuals of hanging debris and also to property damage.

To conclude

- The SAA will continue to operate within the rules and agreement signed with the PC, but just extend the area as discussed above, with a plan submitted to the PC as an addendum 1 to the agreement.
- SAA will take on responsibility for the remaining area and adopt the remaining hedge (internal and planting) area removed for the bee mound creation (to allow access for any Electricity Board maintenance to the pole).
- Accept a small increase to the rental for new plots for 2026 onwards
- Continue to support the PC and the Church to resolve the current debris and lower tree limb removal and update the agreements with SCC
- Be willing to make arrangements to meet with the Conservation officer

Simon Dawes

Chairman

SAA