Potential Allotment Tenants
Neighbouring residents
Parish Councillors

Minutes from the meeting of potential allotment holders and nearby residents held on 27th July 2009 at 19:30 in the Chelveston Village Hall.

Dear Sir/Madam,

Cllr Adrian Dale (Chairman of the Parish Council) outlined the history of providing amenities in the village, since the 1995 Parish Appraisal. He then went through potential sites in the parish close to Chelveston and the current proposed site in the 4.5 acre field next to Disbrowe Court.

The proposed site would be one acre, containing 15x 10 pole (302½ sq.yds / 253 sq.m) plots. Allotments are classed as agricultural (s336(1) Town & Country Planning Act 1990) and the use of the land for such purposes does not constitute development (s52(2)(e) Town & Country Planning Act 1990). Accordingly allotments are permitted outside the village development boundary.

Nearby residents expressed concern on a number of issues – loss of privacy, loss of access to natural amenity (the stream), noise, smell, vermin, traffic and parking.

Cllr Dale explained there were three interests that needed to be balanced – the parishioners need for allotments (as evidenced by a valid petition under s23 The Small Holdings & Allotments Act 1908), the resident’s concerns regarding impact on their property and the landowner’s right to beneficial use of his land.

The potential allotment tenants suggested the following mitigations to allay the residents concerns –

- The allotment site to be located at the south end of the field, thus out of sight of residents due to the natural contours of the field.
- Allotments gardens are only to be leased to resident parishioners, thus eliminating the need for tenants from other villages driving to the site. Tenants may hold more than one plot if surplus plots are available (not exceeding 4 plots per tenant).
- No bonfires on site (to be added as a tenancy clause), thus removing potential nuisance.
- Parish Council to provide standardised sentry huts, thus avoid loss of visual amenity through "shanty town" of self-built huts.
- Parish Council to provide exterior post and wire fencing to protect the site from vermin.
- Tenants to provide 1,000 gallon tank on site, for water use, thus avoiding need for piping in water.
- Tenants will generally be expected to walk to the site, but on occasions e.g. when moving heavy items (and in keeping with disability discrimination legislation) vehicle access will be required. Parish Council to provide new field gate (with landowner’s consent) at the end of the public maintained highway, with a small parking area to the north of the allotment site.
Tenancy clauses to require tenants not to park in Disbrowe Court (private road), not to block the public maintained highway known as Joes or High Lane, nor to proceed past the publicly maintained highway onto the footpath or bridleway (private land).

The landowner had advised he required a 10ft strip all the way round the field perimeter, so that he could maintain the hedge and fences. This would also permit the Disbrowe Court residents to continue to access the natural amenity (stream).

The landowner was looking for the “going rate” for the allotment site. The Parish Council had obtained average figures from the National Society of Allotment & Leisure Gardeners. The potential tenants agreed these sums were in line with their expectations.

In response to a question on livestock, it was explained there is a statutory right to keep hens (but not cockerels) and rabbits, so long as they are not a nuisance. Any other livestock would require the Parish Council’s consent as part of the tenancy agreement.

The meeting was undecided as to whether the Parish Council should be requested to apply for a Stopping Up Order for the publically maintained highway, since it would serve the allotments in its present form.

In response to a question on timescales, it was suggested that getting the site ploughed before winter should be the target.

The Parish Council will consider the above suggestions at its next meeting, scheduled for Tuesday 1st September 2009.

The meeting closed at 20:30.

Yours sincerely,

Mark H Hunter
Clerk to the Parish Council
Chelveston-cum-Caldecott