

Meeting	Parks & Open Spaces Committee
Date	3 September 2024
Report Title	Leisure Garden Rents
Agenda Reference	10b
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Officers Recommendations

1. To approve the increase in leisure garden rents by 3% (rounded to the nearest pound).
2. To approve an additional administration fee of £2 per year for those tenants who have not supplied an email address for correspondence.

Background

The leisure garden rents are increased annually. Historically this has been in line with RPI, however for the past two years it has been frozen at 4% due to the high levels of inflation and cost of living crisis.

All surplus income for leisure gardens in ring fenced for improvements to the leisure garden sites. There is currently £3,471 in an ear marked reserve for this purpose. It is estimated that there will be around £2,000 to add to this fund at the end of the current financial year (dependant on general maintenance requirements). There are plans to improve the car park at the Ventnor Close site, increase water troughs for all sites and repair a gate.

Proposed Leisure Garden Rents for 2024/25

RPI is currently at 3.1% so it is proposed that the increase be set at 3% this year.

Leisure garden rents start annually on 1st October and so span two financial years, half of the rents collected in October are classed as 'receipts in advance' for 2025/26 so will be adjusted accordingly in the accounts.

Rent notifications will be sent during the first week of September and invoices 2 weeks after that date. The correspondence will request that tenants who do not intend to keep their plot after 1st October, are to inform the administrator as soon as possible (to avoid raising an invoice).

Site and Plot Size	Current Rents	With Concession	Proposed Rents	With Concession
Rose Walk				
Full Plot	£44	£33	£45	£34
Half Plot	£30	£23	£31	£23
Quarter Plot	£16	£12	£16	£12
Goodearl				
Full Plot	£37	£28	£38	£29
Three Quarter Plot	£28	£21	£29	£22
Half Plot	£15	£11	£15	£11
Quarter Plot	£11	£8	£11	£8
Ventnor Close				
Half Plot	£32	£24	£33	£25
Quarter Plot	£17	£13	£18	£14



Correspondence

The Administrator continues to improve the paperless system by obtaining email contact information for more tenants. She has managed to obtain email addresses for a further 24 tenants who had previously not supplied these details. There are 32 tenants who have only supplied a postal address. It is recommended that a £2 administration fee be added to those tenants that have not supplied an email address for correspondence. This is to act as an incentive to provide the information rather than to recoup the costs. The cost of a second-class stamp is now £0.85 each. The leisure garden tenants will receive two letters regarding rents, four newsletters and two to three general correspondence notes per year.

As part of the council's community led action plan is committed to 'a green and sustainable place' by reducing the carbon footprint. The purpose of this charge is to encourage our tenants to receive electronic communications rather than using the postal system.