

Meeting	Parks & Open Spaces Committee
Date	13th May 2025
Report Title	Leisure Garden Report
Agenda Reference	16
Author	Jackie Fawcett, Office and Community Administrator

Recommendations

1. To note the report and the dates for the Leisure Garden Competition and the Annual Plot Holders meeting.
2. To consider uses for Plot 20B Goodearl which will be available after the Grounds Maintenance Facility build – see plot holder suggestions within the report.

Leisure Garden Representatives

In October, we implemented a new communication system by appointing Leisure Garden Representatives for each of our sites. These representatives now serve as direct liaisons with the Council through the Office Administrator and convene quarterly meetings to address concerns and share ideas.

Leisure Garden Inspections

Our Leisure Garden Representatives now assist the Office Administrator with site inspections. The first inspections of 2025 occurred on Friday, April 11th. Plot holders were informed of all scheduled inspection dates in our Spring Newsletter.

After the inspections, polite reminders and non-cultivation letters were dispatched to tenants (see below). Additionally, the Office Administrator has been making 'Well Being' calls to those tenants identified by their representatives as not maintaining their plots.

Current Stats

Site	Number of Plots	Waiting list
Rose Walk (RW)	79	12
Goodearl (GE)	46	4
Ventnor Close (VC)	51	2
Tadpole		30
Any Plot		12

Inspection Stats

Site	Number of Plots	Polite reminder letter	Non-cultivation letter	Vacant plots (through latest comms)
Rose Walk (RW)	79	3	2	0
Goodearl (GE)	46	3	2	2
Ventnor Close (VC)	51	1	1	0

This exercise did result in three tenants no longer wanting their Leisure Gardens. The inspections will be done every 6 weeks during the growing season.

Annual Leisure Garden Competition

Save the dates: Tuesday 22nd July / Monday 6th October 2025



The 2025 Leisure Garden Competition will be launched on Monday 16th June. The Marketing & Events Co Ordinator will create posters and a social media campaign to share with tenants.

Leisure Garden judging is due to take place on Tuesday 22nd July and Councillors are invited to be involved in the judging panel.

Winners are to be announced at the start of the Summer Extravaganza campaign during National Allotment Week (11th -17th August) and prizes will be presented at the Annual Meeting on October 6th.

Correspondence

Last year to save costs, we tried to obtain email contact information for more of our tenants, reducing the email deficit from 56 to 40 tenants, which leaves 22% who do not have access to or do not wish to be contacted via this method.

Grounds Maintenance Facility – Opening

We will be inviting our Leisure Gardeners to the official opening of the GMF – date to be confirmed. Once complete we are hoping to reinstate the plots that were used during the build.

Annual Plot Holders Meeting

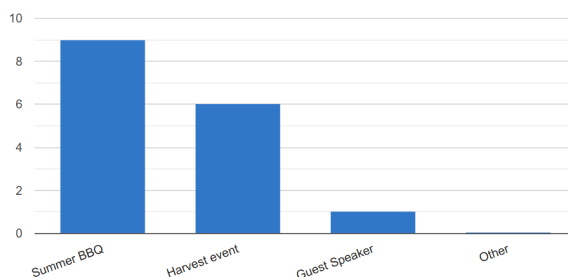
Save the date: Monday 6th October 2025

Communications will go out to plot holders a month before.

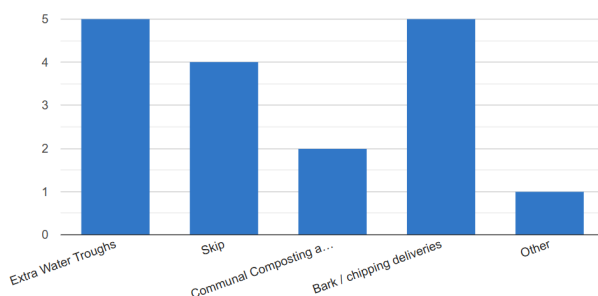
Annual Survey Results

A disappointing 8% of respondents for our Annual Survey. This has now been included in two of our newsletters. A sample of the results are shown in the graphs below. We are considering a Communal BBQ at Rose Walk for all leisure gardeners; tentatively booked for Friday 1st August 2025 at 5pm.

Would you be interested in participating in any of the following communal event with all sites?



What upgrades are most important to you?





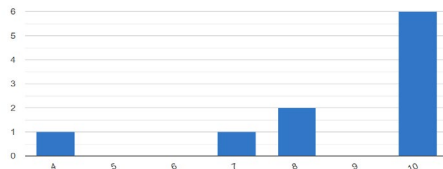
Signage

To improve the signage at all sites with our branding for increased professionalism and identification.

Leisure Garden Rents

The Deputy RFO/Finance Officer will be taking the new leisure garden rent suggestions to Finance & Policy Committee in June and the rent notifications will be sent in August ready for official invoicing in September. The rent year is 1st October – 30th September.

Do you think your site fees are good value? (10 being very good).



Leisure Garden Newsletter

Since our last update, we have published 3 issues of our Leisure Garden Newsletter. This has been well received by tenants with 70% opening the attachment in their browser and 16.5% in their email. We now have regular features, top tips, a seasonal recipe supplied by Rusland Cookery School, hints and advice and much more.

Notice Boards

We still require notice boards updates; this has been mentioned again in the 2024 survey. Plot holders agree this is a great communication tool.

Rose Walk notice board is to be repositioned nearer to the entrance of the site.

Ventnor Close there will be a new notice board purchased and located at the bottom pedestrian entrance to the site.

Goodearl to be repositioned on completion of the GMF.

Water Troughs

The trough which is currently behind the fence at Goodearl is to be reinstated closer to the entrance to service the plots on the other side. Gardeners are also encouraged to collect rainwater for their plots via water butts etc.

Community Plot – Ventnor Close

Work is underway to tidy up the community area at Ventnor Close. This will now be regularly maintained by HWPC, and the large beds will be lined and filled with gravel, utilising pots for growing; to keep maintenance to a minimum. The first event of 2025 will be hosted during half term as a children's community event.

Terms and Conditions

Our Terms & Conditions were last updated 22.11.22. A few issues have recently arisen regarding Greenhouses and larger structures being erected on plots which need clarification.

Plot 20B Goodearl

Goodearl Plot 20B floods so it is difficult to keep tenants on the plot. We are looking at suggestions on how the plot can be utilised once the Grounds Maintenance Facility is finalised:

- A tenant has enquired for permission to plant a small border of wildflowers adjacent to the shipping container.
- Goodearl would be the best site to trial an **accessible plot** with raised planters for people with disabilities to rent.