

To all members of the Facilities Committee

Notice is hereby given that a meeting of the Facilities Committee will be held on
WEDNESDAY 28th October 2026 at 19.30 at the School Green Centre



Bruce Winton
Chief Executive and Clerk to the Parish Council
23rd October 2026

Members: Cllrs Bowler, Boyer, Clarke, Jahromi, James, Johnson (Chair), Masseron, Peer, A Pollock

Agenda

126. Public Questions

- 126.1 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** any public questions

127. Apologies and declaration of members' interests

- 127.1 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** approval of apologies for absence
127.2 To **RECEIVE** any updates to members' declarations of pecuniary interest, and any related person interests in respect of the agenda

128. Minutes of the previous meeting

- 128.1 To **RECEIVE** and **APPROVE** the minutes of the Facilities Committee held on 30th September 2026 as a correct record of the meeting and to authorise the Chair to sign the same*
128.2 To **CONSIDER** matters arising from the minutes

129. Padel Tennis

- 129.1 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** progress and the next steps for the provision of padel courts at High Copse Pavilion

130. Sports Master Planner

- 130.1 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** the initial report from the sports master planner regarding future sports provision at High Copse Pavilion, Millworth Lane and the Manor Ground**

131. Update from Facilities Manager

- 131.1 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** an update on activities from the Facilities Manager**

132. High Copse Items

- 132.1 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** an update on matters discussed at the meeting with Shinfield Cricket Club and any consequent actions
- 132.2 To **RECEIVE** and **NOTE** the decision of the Full Council regarding cricket at High Copse Pavilion for the 2027 season
- 132.3 To **RECEIVE** and **NOTE** the condition report relating to the playing surfaces at High Copse and an update on completed or proposed renovation works**
- 132.4 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** an update on the installation and operation of the irrigation system at High Copse Pavilion
- 132.5 To **RECEIVE** and **NOTE** an update on the Football Foundation grant claim relating to the perimeter fencing
- 132.6 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** an update on car park usage and any requirement for overflow parking
- 132.7 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** observations previously raised concerning the operation and management of High Copse Pavilion, including whether there is merit in exploring alternative management arrangements
- 132.8 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** a proposal for hedge planting on the western edge of the site*

133. Millworth Lane Items

- 133.1 To **RECEIVE** and **NOTE** an update regarding the proposed fitness centre at Millworth Lane
- 133.2 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** an update on the proposed lease arrangements with Shinfield Tennis Club**

134. School Green Centre and School Green

- 134.1 To **RECEIVE** and **NOTE** an update on the redecoration of the Pound Green Room, Three Mile Cross Room, and Grazeley corridor and the provision of new furniture
- 134.2 To **RECEIVE** and **NOTE** the next meeting of the Catering Working Party will be on Friday 30th October

135. Allotments

- 135.1 To **RECEIVE** and **NOTE** a verbal update from the Allotments' Working Party
- 135.2 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** a report with recommendations following the Allotment AGM meeting held on 13th October*
- 135.3 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** an update on the future availability and management of plots affected by flooding at Orchard Rise allotments
- 135.4 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** an update on the proposed perimeter fencing and secure gate at Hartley Court allotments.
- 135.5 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** the outcome of Full Council's consideration of the proposed High Copse allotment site
- 135.6 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** options and costs for routine pest-control arrangements across the Council's allotment sites*

136. Ryeish Green Pavilion

- 136.1 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** update on the Council's retained landholding at Ryeish Green Pavilion and the process for market testing following the decision of Full Council on 21 October 2026.

137. Land Matters with the University of Reading (UoR)

- 137.1 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** a verbal update on land matters following the joint meeting with the University of Reading held on 14 October 2026.
- 137.2 To **RECEIVE** and **NOTE** an update on the use of the land adjacent to the Manor Ground as a cycle track
- 137.3 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** any other updates on land matters with the UoR

138. Parish Wide Items

- 138.1 To **RECEIVE** and **NOTE** an update on the relocation and management of waste bins within the parish
- 138.2 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** an update on improvements to Deardon Orchard and the costs of the proposed next phase
- 138.3 To **RECEIVE** and **NOTE** an update on the installation of parish noticeboards at Frensham Green and High Copse Pavilion
- 138.4 To **RECEIVE** and **NOTE** an update on the installation of photovoltaic panels at School Green Centre and the Manor Ground Pavilion

139. Correspondence

- 139.1 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** any correspondence received

140. Date of Next Meeting

- 140.1 To **NOTE** the next meeting of the Facilities Committee will be held on Wednesday, 25th November 2026 at 19:30

* Report attached ** Report to follow

Minutes of a meeting of
The Facilities Committee
held on Wednesday 30th September 2026
at the School Green Centre commencing at 19:30

Present: Cllrs Bowler, Boyer, Johnson (Chair), Peer & A Pollock

Attending: B Winton (Clerk)
M Kalsi-Spiller (Deputy Clerk)
S Ali (Facilities Manager)
4 Members of the public

26/FC/110

Public Questions

110.1

A member of the public asked whether it is viable to play cricket at High Copse Pavillion.

Steve from Larkstel Ltd was invited to speak regarding irrigation and the playing surfaces of High Copse Pitches as well as Manor Ground. It was recommended that High Copse is not currently able to be used for cricket but for football. There was also a recommendation for a change in ground materials to help irrigation at High Copse Pavillion. Manor Ground is not built on sand.

The committee felt reassured with Larkstel Ltd.'s representative that the maintenance is in hand.

26/FC/111

Apologies and declarations of Members' Interest

111.1 Apologies had been received from Cllr Clarke, James and Jahromi.

- 111.2 Declarations of Members' pecuniary interests and any related person interest

There were no other declarations of Members interests or related person interests.

26/FC/112

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

- 112.1 The minutes of the Facilities Committee meeting held on 2nd September 2026 were approved as a correct record and signed by Cllr Johnson

Proposed: Cllr Bowler
Seconded: Cllr Boyer
Approved: Unanimously

- 112.2 The following matters arising from the meeting held on 2nd of September 2026 were discussed:

- 95.1 Clerk to consider the viability of bringing sports surface management in house.

This was on the agenda at item 114.1

- 97.2 Cllr Johnson to arrange a meeting with the WBC sports lead.
(26/FC/69.2)

This had not been done.

ACTION - Cllr Johnson to arrange a meeting with the WBC sports lead

- 97.2 Cllr Johnson to arrange a meeting with Virtu Juniors and include the
(26/FC/78.1) Facilities Manager.

This was no longer required.

- 97.2 Clerk to reclaim the grant for the fence at High Copse Pavillion from the
(26/FC/85.2) Football Foundation when the work has been completed and invoiced.

This will be done when final invoice has been paid.

ACTION - Clerk to reclaim the grant for the fence at High Copse Pavillion from the Football Foundation when the work has been completed and invoiced

- 97.2 Cllr Johnson and Clerk contact Lidl to ask whether it would consider an
(26/FC/85.2) InPost locker facility on its site.

This has not been done but is in progress.

ACTION – Clerk to contact Lidl about an InPost locker facility.

98.2 Deputy Clerk to add the Padel Working Party Terms of Reference to the agenda for the next Full Council meeting.

This has been done.

99.1 Facilities Manager to monitor actual use of the High Copse car park at peak periods to establish the need for overflow parking.

The Facilities Manager and Clerk have discussed the potential implications for an overflow carpark. This will be monitored by CCTV, and the Facilities Manager will provide an update at future meetings. However as there had been no matches there was nothing to report.

ACTION: Facilities Manager to provide an update on overflow parking at the next Facilities Committee meeting.

99.2 Clerk to claim the Football Foundation grant when the fencing work is completed and invoiced.

See above.

99.3 Facilities Manager to obtain the required quotations for sports-pitch irrigation and make a recommendation to the committee.

This was on the agenda at Item 117.6

99.4 Facilities Manager to confirm the location for the picnic benches.

This has been done. The benches to due to arrive in approximately 4 weeks.

ACTION: Facilities Manager to arrange installation of benches when delivered.

100.1 Clerk to commission the initial phase of work from the sports master planner.

The work had been commissioned and the outcome will be added to the agenda of the next Facilities Committee meeting.

ACTION – Clerk to add report from the sports master planner to Facilities Agenda

100.3 Clerk to co-ordinate the inputs regarding the draft licences.

This had been done.

101.1 Facilities Manager to deliver the redecoration and associated works by early November.

This will be completed in the October half term holiday.

ACTION: Facilities Manager to provide update for the committee.

103.3 Facilities Manager to develop a plan of action for plots affected by flooding at Orchard Rise allotments.

This was on the agenda at Item 120.2.

103.4 Facilities Manager to develop plans for a perimeter fence and secured gate at Hartley Court Allotments.

We still need to consult with the allotment holders.

ACTION - Facilities Manager to develop plans for a perimeter fence and secured gate at Hartley Court Allotments

106.1 Deputy Clerk to add the waste bins item to the agenda for the next Facilities Committee meeting.

This was on the agenda at Item 123.1.

106.4 Clerk to draft proposals for permanent barbecue sites within the parish.

This will come forward to a future meeting.

ACTION: Clerk to draft proposals for permanent barbecue sites within the parish.

107.1 Clerk to establish further details about the proposed allotments at High Copse, including any potential Section 106 funding available.

This was on the agenda at Item 117.7.

108.4 Deputy Clerk to add relationship management between users of parish-operated sports facilities to the agenda for the next Facilities Committee meeting.

This was on the agenda at Item 117.8

26/FC/113**Padel Tennis****113.1** An update on the padel courts development

It was agreed that High Copse should be the site for Padel in the parish. The consensus would be to build for 3 courts and but only install 2 initially. The pre-application and subsequent work would should be led by an external provider.

Proposed: Cllr Johnson
Seconded: Cllr Bowler
Approved: Unanimously

ACTION – Padel to be added to the agenda for Finance & General Purposes Committee on 14th October

ACTION – Clerk to carry out a noise assessment at High Copse Pavillion. Clerk to also liaise with the Engagement Manager at University of Reading and carry out the necessary legal checks to ensure transparency for the padel courts to move forward.

26/FC/114**Management of council sports pitches****114.1** The establishment of an investigation bringing management of sports pitches in house

The Clerk set out the considerations that would need to be addressed if this concept was to be taken forward. Members resolved to bring sports pitch management in house.

Proposed: Cllr Boyer
Seconded: Cllr Johnson
Approved: Unanimously

The Clerk was asked to investigate whether there was any case for bringing ancillary green space maintenance in house.

ACTION – Clerk to investigate whether there was any case for bringing ancillary green space maintenance in house

26/FC/115**Update from Facilities Manager****115.1** An update on activities from the Facilities Manager

The Facilities Manager provided a summary of his activities for the month. Members agreed that they would like to see a similar report each month.

ACTION – Facilities Manager to collate a report to update on activities for the next Facilities Meeting. Deputy Clerk to add as an agenda item

26/FC/116**Ryeish Green Pavilion****116.1** An update on Ryeish Green Pavillion

It was agreed that there should be no movement on Ryeish Green Pavilion until there had been the opportunity to consider it as part of a wider sports strategy.

ACTION – Clerk to check how much land is retained by Shinfield Parish Council at Ryeish Green Pavillion.

26/FC/117**High Copse Items****117.1** Consider an update following notification to Shinfield Cricket Club

The Clerk has issued a formal letter to Shinfield Cricket Club, on behalf of the Council, advising them that they will no longer be able to use High Copse Pavillion but will maintain use of Manor Ground subject to strict adherence to the rules confirmed by the Council.

A meeting was scheduled with Shinfield Cricket Club, the Clerk, Deputy Clerk and Cllr Johnson at 16.00 on Friday 2nd October at School Green Centre.

ACTION – Cllr Johnson to report back on the outcome of the meeting

117.2 The process for cricket at High Copse Pavillion from 2027 onwards

Having considered the advice of Larkstel, it was agreed that the committee would add a recommendation to Full Council to not play cricket at High Copse in 2027.

Proposed: Cllr Johnson
Seconded: Cllr Boyer
Approved: Unanimously

ACTION – Clerk to add a recommendation to NOT play cricket at High Copse in 2027 to Full Council on 21st October

117.3 An update on car park usage

There was nothing to report as football has not been played in September.

117.4 An update on the installation of the perimeter fence around the pitches

The perimeter fence has been installed with wooden material around the pitches.

ACTION – Facilities Manager to create signposts to keep dogs off the pitches.

- 117.5 An update on water irrigation for the sports pitches at High Copse
- The Facilities Manager provided an update on quotes for the irrigation work.
- ACTION: Facilities Manager to progress with the process of arranging irrigation for High Copse pitches**
- 117.6 An update on High Copse Allotments
- Members discussed the request from WBC to take on management of the allotments proposed for High Copse including the possibility of being paid a commuted sum to do so.
- ACTION – Clerk to refer the decision regarding allotments at High Copse to Full Council**
- 117.7 How the council can manage relationships between users of sports facilities operated by the parish.
- A policy has been drafted by the Clerk but the discussion was deferred to the next meeting.
- ACTION – Draft Relationship policy to be added to the agenda for the next Facilities meeting**
- 117.8 Management of High Copse Pavilion
- Cllr Masseron had made a suggestion on management of High Copse pavilion, but the Clerk had omitted it from the agenda. While members discussed the suggestion this item would be added to the agenda for the next Facilities meeting for formal consideration.
- ACTION – Clerk to add a formal discussion of Cllr Masseron’s suggestion regarding management of High Copse Pavilion to the agenda of the next Facilities Meeting**

26/FC/118

Millworth Lane Items

- 118.1 An update on the sports master planner for Millworth Lane
- The work has been commissioned with a view to it being ready for the next Facilities meeting.
- ACTION: Clerk to update the committee at the next meeting for the sports master planner.**

- 118.2 An update regarding the planning application for the Fitness centre at Millworth Lane
- Shinfield Parish Council are awaiting a formal decision from Wokingham Borough Council regarding the planning application.
- 118.3 An update regarding the draft Heads of Terms between Shinfield Parish Council and the Tennis club
- A meeting will be fixed by the Clerk and the Tennis Club to discuss the draft Heads of Terms.
- ACTION – Clerk to set a meeting date with the Tennis Club regarding the draft Heads of Terms.**

26/FC/119

School Green Centre and School Green

- 119.1 An update on the redecoration of the Pound Green Room, Three Mile Cross Room and Grazeley corridor and the provision of new furniture.
- This has been approved and the end of October the redecoration with panels, painting and cupboard removal will be completed.
- 119.2 An update on the implementation of recommendations for the Café as approved at Full Council on 23rd September 2026.
- The Full Council approved that the Café Manager will focus purely on management of the café. The Café Manager will start on 26th October with a focus on engagement and improvement of use of the café.
- The intention is to arrange a Catering Working party meeting at the end of that week so the members can hear directly from the new Catering Manager.
- ACTION – Clerk to Arrange a Catering Working Party meeting**

26/FC/120

Allotments

- 120.1 A verbal update from the Allotments' working party
- The next gathering for allotment holders will be the AGM on 12th October.
- 120.2 An update on revising the allocation of plots affected by flooding issues at Orchard Rise allotments
- A plan of action was still being developed for the site.
- ACTION - Facilities Manager to develop a plan of action for plots affected by flooding issues at Orchard Rise allotment.**

- 120.3 An update on responses from Hartley Court allotment holders to install fencing and a secure gate

The Facilities Manager has been provided with a quote.

ACTION – Facilities Manager to develop plans for perimeter fence and gate at Hartley Court Allotments

26/FC/121

Land Matters with the University of Reading (UoR)

- 121.1 An update on the use of the land adjacent to the Manor Ground as a cycle track

A temporary track has been made at the site. Members of the public with their property opposite the proposed site have asked for the removal of temporary orange fencing, obstructing the view.

ACTION – Clerk to ask for an extension of licence to the end of June 2027 for the cycle track

ACTION – Facilities Manager to remove temporary orange fencing

- 121.2 Any other updates on land matters with the University of Reading

The council was awaiting UoR decisions. The next UoR Council meeting was advertised as 24th September, but no communication had been received from the University. There was a joint SPC/UoR Meeting scheduled for 14th October at 18.00.

26/FC/122

Energy Matters

- 122.1 An update on the purchase and installation of PVC panel at Manor Ground and School Green Centre

The consultant was working on the detailed specification which would then go on Find a Tender for 3 months. The expectation is still that School Green Centre, and the Manor Ground are completed by end Feb 2027.

The Clerk was meeting the consultant on the 9th October for more information on the specification.

Parish Wide Items

- 123.1 An update regarding the potential relocation of waste bins within the Parish.

Members considered the proposals for relocation of bins and agreed some immediate actions:

- Remove the bin at 250 Hyde End Road
- Provide an additional bin for the entrance to the Manor Ground mountain bike trail field

The relocation of waste bins was approved to be done when staff resources were available.

ACTION – Facilities Manager to implement the bin relocations as discussed at the meeting

ACTION – Community Engagement & Events Officer to investigate any other areas where waste bins would benefit residents

- 123.2 **An update on the improvements to Deardon Orchard including implementation and costs with the first phase of work**

Members considered the report and quote for Stage 1 remedial works (£8,236.50 + VAT) and including the need to provide fencing along the western edge of the orchard. Members approved expenditure up to £10,000 + VAT (to come from S106 commuted funds). The chair thanked Ian Young for his efforts in progressing this matter.

It has been approved and the first stage is commencing but works have not started.

ACTION – Facilities Manager to order fencing for the western end of the proposed planting

- 123.3 An update on parish notice boards at Frensham Green and High Copse

They are on order and will be installed as soon as they arrive as well as the benches. Delivery was expected within 4 weeks.

26/FC/124

Correspondence

124.1 An update on any correspondence received

There has been no correspondence received.

26/FC/125

Date of Next Meeting

To **NOTE** the next meeting of the Facilities Committee will be held on Wednesday 28th October.

The meeting ended at 21.30.

List of Actions

<u>Minute</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>
97.2	Arrange a meeting with the WBC sports lead.	Cllr Johnson
97.2	Reclaim the Football Foundation grant for the fence at High Copse Pavilion when the work has been completed and invoiced.	Clerk
97.2	Contact Lidl about an InPost locker facility.	Clerk
99.1	Provide an update on overflow parking at the next Facilities Committee meeting.	Facilities Manager
99.4	Arrange installation of the benches when delivered.	Facilities Manager
100.1	Add the sports master planner report to the Facilities Committee agenda.	Clerk
101.1	Provide an update to the committee on the redecoration and associated works.	Facilities Manager
103.4	Develop plans for a perimeter fence and secured gate at Hartley Court Allotments.	Facilities Manager
106.4	Draft proposals for permanent barbecue sites within the parish.	Clerk
113.1	Add padel to the Finance & General Purposes Committee agenda for 14 October.	Clerk
113.1	Carry out a noise assessment at High Copse Pavilion; liaise with the Engagement Manager at the University of Reading; and carry out the necessary legal checks to ensure transparency for the padel courts to move forward.	Clerk
114.1	Investigate whether there is a case for bringing ancillary green space maintenance in house.	Clerk
115.1	Collate a report updating the next Facilities Committee meeting on activities.	Facilities Manager
115.1	Add the Facilities Manager's activities report as an agenda item.	Deputy Clerk
116.1	Check how much land is retained by Shinfield Parish Council at Ryeish Green Pavilion.	Clerk
117.1	Report back on the outcome of the meeting with Shinfield Cricket Club.	Cllr Johnson
117.2	Add a recommendation not to play cricket at High Copse in 2027 to the Full Council agenda for 21 October.	Clerk
117.4	Create signs to keep dogs off the pitches.	Facilities Manager
117.5	Progress the process of arranging irrigation for the High Copse pitches.	Facilities Manager

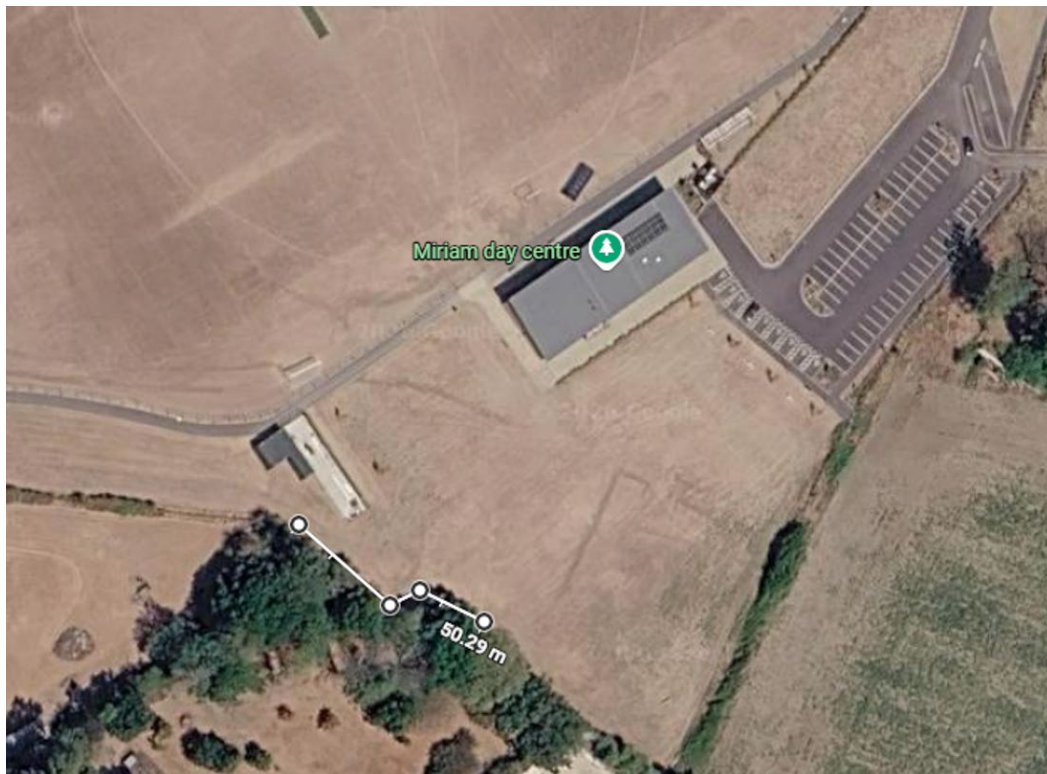
117.6	Refer the decision regarding allotments at High Copse to Full Council.	Clerk
117.7	Add the draft relationship policy to the agenda for the next Facilities Committee meeting.	Deputy Clerk
117.8	Add a formal discussion of Cllr Masseron's suggestion regarding management of High Copse Pavilion to the agenda for the next Facilities Committee meeting.	Clerk
118.1	Update the committee at the next meeting on the sports master planner.	Clerk
118.3	Set a meeting date with the Tennis Club regarding the draft Heads of Terms.	Clerk
119.2	Arrange a Catering Working Party meeting.	Clerk
120.2	Develop a plan of action for plots affected by flooding at Orchard Rise Allotments.	Facilities Manager
120.3	Develop plans for a perimeter fence and gate at Hartley Court Allotments.	Facilities Manager
121.1	Ask for an extension of the cycle-track licence to the end of June 2027.	Clerk
121.1	Remove the temporary orange fencing.	Facilities Manager
123.1	Implement the bin relocations discussed at the meeting.	Facilities Manager
123.1	Investigate any other areas where waste bins would benefit residents.	Community Engagement & Events Officer
123.2	Order fencing for the western end of the proposed planting at Deardon Orchard.	Facilities Manager

Boundary Hedge Planting at High Copse Pavilion

The Clerk has been in extended conversation with a resident regarding public intrusions into a field where the resident keeps alpacas.

Currently a band of the boundary area is being allowed to grow long to discourage the public approaching the fence but that is not acting as a sufficient deterrent.

Subject to the outcome of the Padel noise assessment (which may require other noise attenuation measures) it is proposed to plant a mixed native hedging pack for an approximately 50m length staggered planting to create a 3m deep strip along the length of fence. This would require approximately 350-400 plants. The mix is approximately 50% Blackthorn, 30% Hawthorn and 20% Beech.



The hedging stock is described as:

“The hedging species that make up these mixed native hedging packs are ideal for fields and gardens, providing year round interest and a diverse habitat for wildlife. By planting this type of hedging you can help to preserve the heritage of the British countryside and halt the decline of our native hedgerows, ensuring our native wildlife has an ideal and familiar environment in which to thrive. This hedging mix is also more tolerant of exposed locations and is therefore the better option when considering mixed native hedging as opposed to the hawthorn based mix. Bare root packs are available from November to mid/late May, using cold stored plants towards the very end of the season. The species in these packs have been selected to provide a long period of interest for humans (in flower, berries, leaf colour, leaf shape) as well as varying wildlife foods and shelter.”



While the hedge was establishing itself it would be protected by the longer grass and temporary fencing.

The estimated cost to purchase the stock is £400 + VAT. If approved it is hoped to be able to arrange volunteers to help plant the stock.

Allotment Management and Engagement Proposals

Purpose of the report

To consider proposals arising from discussions at the 2026 Allotments AGM concerning:

- allotment inspections and site management
- induction and support for new tenants
- enforcement of tenancy conditions
- communication and engagement
- site-specific maintenance and security issues
- the management and reallocation of vacant plots

The proposals respond to concerns raised at the AGM while establishing a more consistent and constructive approach to managing the Council's allotment sites.

Proposed site representation and inspection arrangements

The AGM discussion identified the need for clearer local points of contact, improved recording of inspections and stronger support for plot holders. It was suggested that site representatives could act as local contacts, support new tenants and reduce routine enquiries directed to the parish office.

The existing inspection recording application is difficult to use and there may be better systems available to use.

Proposal 1

That the Committee:

- approves in principle the establishment of an Allotment Site Representative scheme for each allotment site
- agrees that the proposed role should include:
 - acting as a local point of contact
 - welcoming and informally supporting new tenants
 - identifying emerging site issues
 - encouraging compliance with allotment rules
 - referring any concerns or recommendations Council officers
- requests officers to prepare a role description, boundaries of responsibility and recruitment process for approval
- confirms that site representatives would not have authority to issue warnings, make tenancy decisions or commit Council expenditure

Proposal 2

Officers should investigate suitable digital software or an application for recording inspections, photographs, actions, and follow-up dates.

New tenant induction

A more structured induction process was suggested to help would be allotment holders to understand the level of commitment required to successfully manage a plot.

Proposal 3

To implement a two-stage induction process:

- An initial workshop for people joining the waiting list
 - These would be held quarterly and those joining the waiting list would not progress up the list until they had attended a workshop. The workshops would cover:
 - the practical realities of maintaining an allotment
 - the expected time commitment
 - minimum cultivation and maintenance standards
 - relevant tenancy conditions and Council rules
 - the support available to tenants
 - Ideally an existing allotment holder would be present
- A second practical induction for applicants approaching the top of the list
 - To be provided shortly before an applicant is offered a plot and to include:
 - confirmation that the applicant still wishes to proceed
 - an explanation of the allocation and inspection process
 - practical introductory growing guidance
 - an introduction to the relevant site representative or mentor
 - information about reporting problems and contacting the Council

Allotment starter pack and handbook

The AGM supported the production of a pack containing site contacts, supplier information, water-collection guidance, plot-planning advice, recommended maintenance hours and frequently asked questions. It was proposed that the pack should be available to existing as well as new tenants.

Proposal 4

That the Committee approves the preparation of a comprehensive Allotment Tenant Handbook and Starter Pack, to include:

- key Council and site contacts
- a summary of tenancy conditions
- expected cultivation and maintenance standards
- guidance on planning and maintaining a plot
- water use and water-collection guidance
- compost, manure and woodchip information
- permitted and prohibited activities
- arrangements for inspections and enforcement
- frequently asked questions
- details of mentoring and local support

The handbook should be:

- provided to every new tenant
- made available electronically
- offered to existing tenants
- reviewed periodically to reflect changes in Council policy and operational arrangements

Review of the enforcement procedure

Concern was raised that the existing process for dealing with neglected plots is too lengthy. Suggestions included a probationary period for new tenants, shorter enforcement timescales and a clearer warning and improvement process.

Proposal 5

That the Committee:

- agrees that the allotment inspection and enforcement procedure should be reviewed
- asks officers to prepare a revised procedure incorporating:
 - clearly defined minimum cultivation standards
 - a consistent inspection and evidence-recording process
 - written notification of identified concerns
 - a defined period in which tenants can make improvements
 - appropriate arrangements for extensions where there are exceptional circumstances
 - escalation where insufficient improvement is made
 - clear authority for tenancy termination decisions
 - records of warnings, responses, inspections, and decisions
- asks officers to consider the introduction of a formal probationary period for new tenants
- requires the revised procedure and any associated amendments to tenancy terms to return to the Committee for approval before implementation

Review of the AGM format

A subject at each AGM is a desire not to have issues stored up across the year and the Allotments Working Party was established after the 2025 AGM to help address this concern.

Proposal 6

That the Allotments Working Party is asked to consider whether the AGM in its current format is still the most effective means of constructive communication between the council and allotment holders. If not, to then bring forward proposals for amending the AGM format and/or alternative means of creating effective dialogue.

Communication audit

Plot holders reported concerns about poor communication, although the discussion also recognised that emails and text messages had been issued and might not always have been read. An email verification exercise and confirmation of contact details were suggested.

Proposal 7

That the Committee:

- approves a one-off audit of allotment tenant contact details
- asks all tenants to verify their preferred email address, telephone number and emergency contact details held by the Council
- requests that officers review records of communications issued concerning allotments

Use of social media

Officers do not feel that Council business should be conducted through Facebook, WhatsApp or similar. The preferred approach was to retain email as the official channel while potentially using allotment Facebook groups for general reminders and updates.

Proposal 8

That the Committee confirms that:

- email, telephone and in person visits are the principal means of official communication
- social media may be used for general reminders and signposting
- service requests, complaints, tenancy matters and reports requiring action should not be managed through unofficial Facebook groups
- any social-media post should direct tenants to the Council's approved contact route

Site-specific works

Issues raised included sheep fencing at Hartley Court, security fencing at Clares Green/Church Lane and continuing work to improve occupancy at Orchard Rise.

Proposal 9

That the Committee requests:

- an inspection of the sheep fencing at Hartley Court, including the risk of animals becoming trapped
- an assessment of present and proposed security fencing at Clares Green/Church Lane and any other vulnerable sites
- a brief update on the measures being taken to improve plot occupancy at Orchard Rise
- a report back identifying:
 - works considered necessary
 - estimated costs
 - available budgets
 - any works requiring separate Committee authority

Vacant and abandoned plots

Concern was also raised at the AGM about the length of time plots had remained unallocated, including an allegation that one had been unallocated for more than two years. A five-year plot-level report was requested so that this could be tested against evidence.

Proposal 10

That the Committee:

- notes the reported backlog of vacant or abandoned plots
- requests a plot-by-plot schedule identifying:
 - the current condition of each plot
 - whether formal tenancy action is outstanding
 - whether clearance is required
 - whether the plot can/should be divided
- approves the preparation of options and comparative costs for the following options:
 - clearance by the Council's grounds team
 - a dedicated temporary labouring resource
 - external contractors
- requests a five-year report showing, for each plot where records permit:
 - the start and end date of any previous tenancies
 - gaps between tenancies
 - any recorded reason for any significant delay

Allotment Pest Control

Background

At a meeting of the Recreation & Amenities Committee on 27th September 2022, it was resolved not to renew annual pest control contracts and address specific issues as they arise.

Since then, ad-hoc call outs cost about £1,000 per annum.

However, since that decision in 2022 there has been an increase in pest reports across all sites exacerbated by a series of mild winters. The matter continues to be raised at allotment working party meetings and was again raised at the most recent AGM.

Members are asked if they would reconsider the current approach to pest-control.

Quotation

The Clerk has tasked the Allotments Officer with obtaining up to date quotes and they would recommend using a different company who have quoted as follows:

Contract term: 12 months
Service frequency: Monthly
Number of allotment sites: 8

Proposed Service

Installing a targeted network of 44 lockable, tamper-resistant plastic bait stations. A minimum of four stations will be installed at each location, with additional stations allocated to the larger sites. Rather than placing stations at fixed intervals throughout every allotment, they will be positioned in targeted areas where rodent activity is present or most likely to occur, including:

- Composting and refuse areas
- Sheds and communal structures
- Confirmed rodent runs and burrows
- Boundaries adjoining fields, gardens or watercourses
- Areas where sightings or damage have been reported
- Feed-storage areas and other potential food sources
- Locations providing suitable harbourage

This targeted programme will allow rodent activity to be monitored and controlled while keeping the number of bait stations, rodenticide usage and overall cost proportionate to the evidence found.

The stations may be repositioned within or between the allotment sites as activity changes. Station positions and treatment levels will be reviewed during every visit, taking account of our inspection findings and reports received from Shinfield Parish Council and individual allotment holders.

Initial Station Allocation

The proposed starting allocation is:

- Millworth Lane – 8 stations
- Arborfield Road – 4 stations
- Clares Green Road – 7 stations
- Recreation Lane – 8 stations
- Hartley Court – 4 stations
- Church Lane – 4 stations
- Orchard Rise – 4 stations
- Deardon Way – 5 stations
- Total: 44 bait stations

This allocation is not permanently fixed. Stations may be moved or repurposed according to inspection findings, reported sightings and changing patterns of activity.

Monitoring and Allotment-Holder Feedback

The effectiveness of the programme will depend on a combination of professional monitoring and information received from allotment holders.

A technician will attend once per month. Sightings, burrows, droppings, damage or other signs of activity may occur between scheduled visits and will be investigated as part of the visit.

Shinfield Parish Council and individual allotment holders will therefore be encouraged to report activity promptly, including the precise location wherever possible. This information will help us target treatment, reposition stations and respond to changes more effectively.

Rodenticide Selection and Application

Where toxic treatment is required, Harmonix Rodent Paste, containing the active substance cholecalciferol, will be used.

Harmonix has been selected because its approved label permits professional use in open areas, making it suitable for the allotment sites covered by this contract.

Cholecalciferol is a non-anticoagulant active substance. It is not persistent or bioaccumulative in the same way as second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides and generally presents a lower risk of secondary poisoning to birds of prey and other non-target wildlife. However, it remains a professional-use rodenticide and will be handled and applied responsibly.

Rodenticide will only be placed where evidence of activity and the site-specific Environmental Risk Assessment justify its use. Stations without confirmed activity may contain Detex non-toxic monitoring blocks instead.

Treatment will therefore be adjusted according to the evidence found, with Harmonix used for confirmed activity and Detex monitoring blocks used at inactive or monitoring-only locations.

All treatment will be carried out in accordance with:

- The approved product label
- COSHH requirements
- The Campaign for Responsible Rodenticide Use (CRRU) UK Code of Best Practice
- Current UK rodenticide stewardship requirements
- The findings of the individual site Environmental Risk Assessments

CRRU Stewardship and Environmental Protection

In accordance with the Campaign for Responsible Rodenticide Use—CRRU UK Code of Best Practice:

- An Environmental Risk Assessment will be completed for each site.
- Rodenticide will not automatically be placed throughout every station.
- The areas treated with rodenticide will be kept to the necessary minimum.
- Locations presenting an unacceptable risk to wildlife will not be baited.
- Non-toxic monitoring bait will be used where active infestation has not been confirmed.
- Rodenticide will be removed following control or after consecutive inspections showing no pest-rodent activity.
- All bait usage, consumption and treatment decisions will be recorded.
- Proofing, habitat management, waste control and other non-chemical measures will be recommended where appropriate.
- Any dead rodents found during inspections will be removed and disposed of safely.

Where active treatment requires inspections more frequently than the routine monthly monitoring visit, additional follow-up visits will be arranged in accordance with the product label and site risk assessment.

Monthly Monitoring Service

All eight allotment sites will be inspected during one combined monthly visit. Approximately one and a half hours will be allocated to each scheduled monthly visit.

During each visit, our technician will:

- Inspect the targeted bait stations
- Record bait consumption and evidence of rodent activity
- Replenish or adjust treatment where required
- Use Harmonix only where active treatment is justified
- Use Detex monitoring blocks at appropriate inactive locations
- Remove rodenticide where continued use is no longer justified
- Check the condition and security of the stations
- Relocate stations according to recorded activity
- Investigate reports received from allotment holders
- Identify harbourage, food sources and environmental concerns
- Record recommendations and remedial actions
- Update the relevant digital treatment records

Initial Set-Up

The initial set-up will include:

- Supply and installation of 44 plastic bait stations
- Initial monitoring and rodenticide treatment where justified
- Identification and warning labels
- Preparation of individual site maps

- Site-specific Environmental Risk Assessments
- Establishment of monitoring and treatment records
- Creation of a digital reporting folder for each site
- Individual QR codes providing access to the relevant site records

Digital Reporting

Each allotment site will have its own digital treatment record containing:

- Environmental Risk Assessment
- Site map and bait-station locations
- Monthly inspection findings
- Rodent activity and bait-consumption records
- Details of treatment undertaken
- Recommendations and remedial works
- Photographic evidence where appropriate

Monthly Visit Cost

Cost per monthly visit covering all eight sites: £175.00 + VAT

There will be 12 scheduled monthly visits per year:

Any exceptional treatment requirements or additional visits outside the agreed monthly service will be discussed and authorised before additional charges are incurred.

First Year and Subsequent Year Costs

First-Year Quotation

Supply of 44 plastic bait stations: £308.00 + VAT

Initial installation, account set-up and treatment: £399.00 + VAT

12 monthly visits at £175.00 per visit: £2,100.00 + VAT

Total first-year cost: £2,807.00 + VAT

Ongoing Annual Cost

12 monthly visits at £175.00 per visit: £2,100.00 + VAT