

Full Council

Date:	27 April 2021
Title:	Allotments & Community Orchard
Contact Officer:	Andrea Oughton, Asset Manager

Purpose of the Report

1. To agree in principle that, subject to changes in the Deed of Variation between the respective developers and South Oxfordshire District Council, and practical completion certificates being issued, the Town Council take on ownership and management responsibilities for the new allotments at Hode Garth (Bellway, Site C) and allotments and community orchard at Purser Crescent (Persimmon, Site D).

Background

2. Land to the south of Wenman Road (Site C) was allocated in the Thame Neighbourhood Plan for delivery of 187 homes. The site has now been built and occupied. Part of the granted permission was the delivery of an allotment site (Appendix 19a) consisting of 17 allotment plots, car park and shed with electricity and water supply, W/C and cycle parking provision (Appendix 19b).
3. Land to the west of Thame Park Road (Site D) was allocated in the Thame Neighbourhood Plan for the delivery of 175 homes. The site is currently part built out and occupied. Part of the granted permission was the delivery an allotment site and community orchard consisting of 12 allotment plots, car park, toilets (Appendices 19c and 19d).

Next Steps

4. The Town Council agrees, in principle, to take on ownership and management responsibilities of the two allotment sites and community orchard.
5. SODC to draw up a 'Deed of Variation' to allow the allotments and community orchard, once completed and signed off, to be handed to the Town Council.
6. It is anticipated Practical Completion Certificates will be issued by SODC in June / July 2021.
7. Bellway and Persimmon are maintaining a list of enquiries from people wishing to rent an allotment. These enquiries will be passed to the Town Council, once legal ownership of the sites is completed.
8. The intention is for groups of interested people to form allotment associations on each site. Town Council officers will provide support to help set up the associations. It is anticipated each association will run along similar lines to that of Stones Close Allotment Association.

Resource Appraisal

9. There is a proven need for allotment space. Both sites have received enquiries from residents wishing to rent an allotment.

10. Management plan to be drawn up and approved to ensure smooth and efficient running of the site. Allotment Associations to be formed. Officer time required for initial set up.
11. It is hoped volunteers (possibly through Thame Green Living) will maintain the community orchard in conjunction with the Town Council's Maintenance Team.
12. Income received from the sites via s106 funds to be held by the Town Council in Ear Marked Reserves.

Risk Assessment

13. No interest from local people to form an allotment association. The Town Council will need to manage the sites and rental payments for allotment plots. Impact on Officer time.

Legal Powers

- Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 ss 23, 26 & 42
- Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 & 10

Recommendation:

- i) To agree in principle that, subject to changes in the Deed of Variation between the respective developers and South Oxfordshire District Council, and practical completion certificates being issued, the Town Council take on ownership and management responsibilities for the new allotments at Hode Garth (Bellway, Site C) and allotments and community orchard at Purser Crescent (Persimmon, Site D).*