

Executive Committee

Astwood Bank and Feckenham

9th December 2009

FECKENHAM ALLOTMENTS

(Report of the Head of Environment)

1. Summary of Proposals

To seek Members' approval to give a grant of £5,000 to Feckenham Parish Council / Village Green Trust towards the purchase of the Feckenham Allotment Site from its current owner, so that the site is maintained as allotments.

To seek Members approval to vire £5,000 from a number of Environmental Services budgets to a budget from which the grant can be paid.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to RESOLVE that

- 1) a grant of £5,000 be made to Feckenham Parish Council / Feckenham Village Green Trust towards the purchase of the Feckenham Allotment Site;
- 2) authority be delegated to the Head of Environment and the Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services to negotiate the terms under which the grant is given; and
- 3) permission be given to vire £5,000 from existing Environment Services budgets as detailed at para 3.2 to fund the grant payment.

3. Financial, Legal, Policy, Risk and Sustainability Implications

Financial

- 3.1 Feckenham Parish Council/Feckenham Village Green Trust have requested that the Redditch Borough Council give a grant towards the purchase of the Feckenham allotment site on Moors Lane which is currently up for sale.
- 3.2 It is suggested that a grant of £5,000 is made as a contribution towards the purchase cost and this can be found by vireing money from the following budgets.

Code	Description	£
0160 4170	Landscape and Countryside - Materials	2000
0160 4351	Landscape and Countryside - Consultant Fees	1000
0720 4700	Waste Collection General – Publicity and Promotion	1000
0774 3207	Parks and Open Spaces - Signs	500
0774 4150	Parks and Open Spaces – Operational Equipment Purchase	500

- 3.3 Current cost to run Feckenham Allotments is £250 for the rent to the current owner. The scheduled maintenance is a little over £200. Water charges for 12 months are approx £100.

Legal

- 3.4 By section 3 of the 1908 Act, it is made the express duty of every allotment authority, where they are of the opinion that there is a demand for allotments in their area, to provide a sufficient number of them, and to let them to persons resident in the area. If the duty is not carried out, an interested person would be able to apply for judicial review, and seek a mandatory order, in accordance with Part 55 of the CPR. The 1908 Act further requires that the authority must take into consideration any representation in writing made to them by any six registered parliamentary electors or council tax payers resident in the area, to the effect that the circumstances of the area are such that it is the duty of the allotments authority to “take proceedings” for the provision of allotments.

Policy

- 3.5 The Council currently rents the allotment site at Feckenham for the provision of allotments. There are 17 plots and 15 tenants with 12 on the waiting list.

The provision of allotments contributes to the Council’s priority clean and green - The Council will develop attractive open spaces, taking enforcement action against littering, fly tipping and other behaviour detrimental to the environment, where appropriate, and supporting measures to tackle climate change.

Risk

- 3.6 If there were to be no allotments in Feckenham residents could require the Council to provide a site (see above) which could cost considerably more money than assisting the Parish Council / Village Green Trust to buy the site.

Climate Change / Carbon Management

- 3.7 Allotment gardening provides residents with the opportunity to grow their own food which helps to reduce the amount of food miles.

Report

4. Background

Redditch Borough Council currently rents the allotment site in Feckenham from the current owner and provides 17 plots.

5. Key Issues

- 5.1 Feckenham Parish Council wishes to purchase the allotment site on Moors Lane to maintain the allotment facilities in Feckenham and have approached Redditch Borough Council for a grant to assist with the purchase of the site.
- 5.2 The Council was offered the site but considered it to be too expensive. If the Parish Council / Feckenham Village Green Trust do not secure the funds to purchase the site then allotment provision in Feckenham would be lost.
- 5.3 Officers have looked at the budgets and believe that the £5,000 can be found from existing budgets with no detriment to the service provision.
- 5.4 The terms under which the grant is given would need to be negotiated and agreement would need to be reached on what will happen if the site is sold in the future.

6. Other Implications

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Asset Management | - The management and maintenance of the site would become the responsibility of the Parish Council / Trust. |
| Community Safety | - None. |
| Human Resources | - None. |
| Social Exclusion | - Allotments provide a low cost way of producing fresh fruit and veg. |
| Environmental/sustainability | - Allotments can provide valuable wildlife habitats for certain species such as slow worms and bees. |

7. **Lessons Learnt**

None.

8. **Background Papers**

None.

9. **Consultation**

This report has been prepared in consultation with relevant Borough Council Officers .

10. **Author of Report**

The author of this report is Guy Revans, Head of Environment who can be contacted on extension 3292 (e-mail: guy.revans@redditchbc.gov.uk) for more information.

11. **Appendices**

None.