

ALLOTMENT REPORT

AGENDA ITEM No. 6

MEETING: ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
DATE: 8th JULY 2026
REPORT BY: GROUNDS MAINTENANCE SERVICES CO-ORDINATOR

1.0 Allotment Inspection Reports

Inspection Date – 22nd June 2026

AYCLIFFE VILLAGE

CHECKED	ASSESSMENT																								
Grass	Date of cuts: W/E 28/6/26, 14/6/26																								
Boundaries	OK																								
Access Road	OK																								
Water Supply	OK																								
Litter & Rubbish	Clear																								
Vacant Plots	None																								
Number on waiting list	62																								
Condition of Plots	<p>P = Poor over 50% uncultivated, letter required; M = Monitor; V = Vacant; Vm = Vacant requires GATC maintenance work; U = Under Offer</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 16.6%;">1a</td> <td style="width: 16.6%;">1b</td> <td style="width: 16.6%;">1c</td> <td style="width: 16.6%;">1d</td> <td style="width: 16.6%;">2a M</td> <td style="width: 16.6%;">2b</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>4a P</td> <td>4b</td> <td>5a</td> <td>5b</td> <td>5c</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6a M</td> <td>6b</td> <td>7a</td> <td>7b</td> <td>8</td> <td>9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10</td> <td>11</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	1a	1b	1c	1d	2a M	2b	3	4a P	4b	5a	5b	5c	6a M	6b	7a	7b	8	9	10	11				
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Other Comments	Nothing to add.																								

BYERLEY PARK

CHECKED	ASSESSMENT																		
Grass	Date of cuts: W/E 28/6/26, 14/6/26																		
Boundaries	OK																		
Access Road	OK																		
Water Supply	OK																		
Litter & Rubbish	Clear																		
Vacant Plots	None																		
Number on waiting list	96																		
Condition of Plots	<p>P = Poor over 50% uncultivated, letter required; M = Monitor; V = Vacant; Vm = Vacant requires GATC maintenance work; U = Under Offer</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 16.6%;">1 P</td> <td style="width: 16.6%;">2</td> <td style="width: 16.6%;">3</td> <td style="width: 16.6%;">4</td> <td style="width: 16.6%;">5</td> <td style="width: 16.6%;">6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7</td> <td>8a</td> <td>8b</td> <td>9</td> <td>10</td> <td>11</td> </tr> <tr> <td>12</td> <td>13</td> <td>14</td> <td>15</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	1 P	2	3	4	5	6	7	8a	8b	9	10	11	12	13	14	15		
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Other Comments	Nothing to add.																		

FINCHALE ROAD

CHECKED	ASSESSMENT																														
Grass	Date of cuts: W/E 28/6/26, 14/6/26																														
Boundaries	OK																														
Access Road	OK																														
Water Supply	OK																														
Litter & Rubbish	Clear																														
Vacant Plots	None																														
Number on waiting list	80																														
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Other Comments	Nothing to add.																														

CLARENCE CHARE

CHECKED	ASSESSMENT																																																						
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Boundaries	OK																																																						
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Number on waiting list	108 for an allotment, 9 for a pigeon site, 6 for a beekeeping plot.																																																																																																																																																										
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Other Comments	Nothing to add.																																																																																																																																																										

2.0 Waiting Lists

2.1 There are currently 197 people on the waiting list for an allotment, 98 for a poultry site, 9 for a pigeon plot and 6 for a beekeeping plot. Please note that some people are on the waiting lists for multiple allotment sites, including pigeons, poultry and beekeeping plots.

3.0 Update on St. Oswald's Allotments – Pigeon Plot 5 and 6

3.1 With reference to the report at the last meeting, the majority of the rubbish on these plots has now been removed from the site, and any additional waste that requires removal will be covered from the £100 deposit.

4.0 Update – Beekeeping Plots

- 4.1 A site visit on the 1st June from the Regional Bee Inspector was well attended, and well received by Aycliffe Beekeepers Association (ABKA), and the bee keeping tenants on the St. Oswald's Allotments Site.
- 4.2 Generally the feedback was very positive, but the inspector did suggest two possible changes for consideration:-
1. The tenancy agreement should be amended to refer to a maximum of two colonies rather than two hives. This reflects modern beekeeping practices, as long hives can accommodate more than one colony within a single hive structure. In addition, beekeepers may keep a small nucleus colony (nuc) for the purposes of colony management, including splitting colonies to control population growth, reducing swarming risk, and supporting the re-establishment of weakened or lost colonies.
 2. Apiary Plots 6 and 7 should be relocated to the area occupied by the original apiary plots. It is considered that the current location is less suitable for beekeeping due to its close proximity to the roadway, public footpaths, and neighbouring allotment plots. As a result, bee colonies are subject to higher levels of disturbance from passing pedestrians, vehicles, and general site activity than those located within the original apiary area.
- 4.3 Following these proposals, both tenants who would be affected by the relocation of the apiary plots have confirmed their support for the move. Should Members approve the proposal, they are willing to temporarily relocate their hives to an alternative site to enable the necessary works to be undertaken.
- 4.4 The majority of timber from the existing plots can be reused in the construction of the new plots, with any additional materials required to be funded through the Allotment Maintenance Revenue Budget.
- 4.5 An alternative to relocating the plots within St. Oswald's Allotment site would be to relocate the 2 plots to Clarence Chare Allotment site which does not currently have any bee plots.



- 4.6 Clarence Chare was previously highlighted as a potential site for apiary plots.
- 4.7 Located at the end of the Clarence Chare allotment site, this would minimise any disturbance from / to other allotment tenants. The footpath on St Cuthbert's Way is approximately 15m away and protected by a large hedge and trees, in addition hives would be faced east to promote flight away from the footpath.

- 4.8 Further to the previous concerns about the bees raised by allotment tenants discussed at the last meeting of the Environment Committee, officers have received a complaint in writing from a disgruntled pigeon keeper.
- 4.9 The complainant has raised concerns regarding the presence and behaviour of bees at the St. Oswald's Allotment Site, describing the issue as a potential health and safety risk to allotment users, visitors, and Town Council staff.
- 4.10 The complaint states that incidents of people being chased and stung by bees occur regularly, particularly in the vicinity of the existing hive locations. The complainant believes there are too many hives on the site and that some are located too close to areas frequently used by allotment holders and pigeon fanciers. Concern is expressed about the two bee plots adjacent to Pigeon Plot 1 and near allotment plot 104, where users must pass close to the hives to access other plots.
- 4.11 The complainant reports having been stung multiple times each year, including four times during the current season, and states that other site users have experienced similar incidents.
- 4.12 The complainant acknowledges that one aggressive hive has recently been removed but questions whether it could have been relocated elsewhere. They also express frustration that measures and advice provided by beekeepers, such as avoiding scented products, walking away slowly, and waiting for seasonal changes or hive management interventions, have not resolved the issue quickly enough.
- 4.13 Officers are dealing with this complaint under the Council's Comments & Complaints Policy and it is considered that the implementation of the advice from the Regional Bee Inspector will address the main parts of the complaint.
- 4.14 However, the complaint requests that the concerns are also reported to the Environment Committee so that the Council can consider what further action can be taken to address the situation and reduce the risk posed by bees at the site.
- 4.15 Although tenants have raised concerns in previous years, which beekeepers and ABKA have responded to promptly and appropriately, this is the first formal complaint the Council has received about bees at St. Oswald's Allotments.

5.0 Permission to Extend Allotment

- 5.1 A 'raised bed' allotment tenant at Clarence Chare has requested permission to fence off and extend his allotment onto an area of unused land adjacent to his plot.



- 5.2 Currently the raised bed plots at Clarence Chare offer no space for additional buildings and/or storage.
- 5.3 The land would not be used for cultivation but would be used to create an area where he could put a small shed, to store his tools, and a greenhouse to set his plants at the allotment rather than at home.
- 5.4 The photograph below shows the approximate size (3m x 8m) and location of proposed extension: -



- 5.5 The current annual rent for the raised bed plots is £54.50, which is comparable to a traditional allotment in Band D (Between 225 Metres and 300 Metres Squared) so this request would not require any additional charges to be applied.

6.0 Request by Clarence Chare Tenants

- 6.1 A request has been received from the tenants, via the site Representative, at Clarence Chare allotments who have asked for permission to create an area to store wood chippings.
- 6.2 At present any wood chippings are currently tipped in an area of the car park. The problem with this is that as tenants take what they need the pile begins to spread out, and it ends up as a thin layer of chippings spread over a larger area.
- 6.3 Tenants have requested that the Council remove any of the old wood chippings and create a level area prior to the construction beginning.
- 6.4 Tenants have explained that they are willing to source materials to create the bay and complete the works themselves. However, as the landowners, and given the site is also accessed by Garden Guild members as well as allotment tenants it would be advisable to have any works of this nature completed by Works Section staff.
- 6.5 If the work is to be completed by the Council works staff, there will be a small cost, dependant on the materials that can be sourced/recycled from local businesses.

7.0 Avian Flu

- 7.1 Avian flu remains a highly dynamic situation, and its prevalence can change over time.

8.0 Recommendations

8.1 It is recommended that Members: -

- i. Receive the report,
- ii. Approve the changes proposed by the Regional Bee Inspector,
 - a. Agree to the changes to the tenancy agreements,
 - b. Agree to relocate two beekeeping plots to either:-
 - i. Elsewhere on the St. Oswald's site; or
 - ii. Clarence Chare Allotment site.
- iii. Receive the overview of the complaint received in relation to the bee plots and advise officers of any further actions they wish to be taken to address the situation and reduce the risk posed by bees at the site.
- iv. Agree to the extension adjacent to raised beds at Clarence Chare,
- v. Grant permission to create an area to store wood chippings at the Clarence Chare Allotments site, undertaken either by:-
 - a. Allotment tenant volunteers; or
 - b. Work Section Staff.

Contact Officer: Lee Williams