

This report will be made public on
16th July 2020

**Folkestone
Town Council**



Report Number **C/20/268**

To: Full Council
Date: 23rd July 2020
Status: Public Report
Responsible Officer: Town Clerk

SUBJECT: Allotments Rules & Charges

SUMMARY: The report reviews allotments rules and charges for 2021/22.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION:

- 1) The Council is required to assess the options for allotments rents.
- 2) The Council is required to recommend appropriate allotments rental charges for 2021/22.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1) **To receive and note report C/20/268**
- 2) **To consider allotment rents for 2021/22**
- 3) **To approve version 11 of the Allotment Rules**

Aims and Objectives – FTC actively promotes allotment holding and welcomes the current large demand for allotments. If possible, we seek to find new land that is suitable to be turned into allotments to add to our sites at Tile Kiln Lane and Park Farm Road.

Financial Implications – None if the status quo is maintained.

Equal Opportunities – All tenants will be treated equally and with fairness.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Community Services Committee completed its four year allotments rental pricing strategy in 2015, at which time it conducted a ballot of allotment holders to ascertain their preferred level of service and corresponding rental charges.
- 1.2 The ballot results indicated that tenants were clearly in favour of Option D (no change to the existing level of service and for the rent to remain at £0.556p per m²).

2. Current Position

- 2.1 The table below shows budgeted revenue expenditure/income for the 2020/21 financial year based on a rent of £0.556p per m²:

Budgeted Allotments Operating Costs for 2020/21		
Description of Cost	Amount	Notes
Maintenance & Utility Charges PKF £3,000 TKL £3,000	£6,000	Includes gates, fencing, hedge cutting and grass cutting, drainage, tree crowning and clearing, and metered water supply to each site.
Administration	£4,100	Cost of administration of allotments
Total Cost	£10,100	
Less Rents	£9,800	
Operating Deficit	£300	

- 2.2 In 2019/20, the service produced an operating surplus of approximately £190. This is an indication of the fluctuating nature of the annual expenditure on this service. It is therefore recommended that the current rental charge is retained for next year and continues to be monitored on an annual basis.

3. Rent Review

- 3.1 Under the Allotments Act 1950 there is no requirement to exact a full fair rent. Land let by a council for the purposes of allotment gardening shall be let at such a rent "as a tenant may reasonably be expected to pay for the land taking into account the proposed letting terms".

- 3.2 The Council has previously indicated that it does not wish to subsidise the allotments service from its precept. Following its four year strategy, this aim appears to have been achieved and therefore no further rent increase is recommended at this stage.

4. Allotment Rules

- 4.1 The costs of clearing allotments after a tenant leaves are currently covered within the maintenance charge of allotment rents, i.e. at the cost to all tenants reducing the funding available for allotment improvements and essential services. The Allotment Manager met with representatives of the Allotment Associations to discuss the increasing number of plots needing clearing after a tenant has vacated and it has been proposed that all new tenants are required to pay a £50 refundable deposit when they commence their tenancy.
- 4.2 As Allotment Rules are periodically reviewed, attached to this report is Version 11 which includes an additional item brought forward by the Allotments Manager. Rule 8.4 - All new tenants will be required to pay a £50 deposit which will be returned at the end of the tenancy if the allotment is returned cleared ready for a new tenant to occupy.

5. Recommendation

- 5.1 To maintain the status quo with the rent remaining at £0.556p per m² but to add a refundable deposit for new tenants.