



Bridgwater Town Council

REPORT

Report to:	Amenities Committee
Agenda Item:	
Date of Meeting:	12 th September 2024
Date of this Report:	2 nd September 2024
Author:	Scott Mason
Lead Officer:	Scott Mason - Director of Amenities

Update from Director of Amenities

Recommendations

Option 1: To agree to only allow contained fires at allotment sites with water supply. OR

Option 2: To agree to ban all open and contained fires from all allotment sites.

To agree to remove the toilet at Sidcot Allotments.

1. Introduction

1.1 The management of the allotments recently transferred to the Amenities directorate from Finance. A few issues have come to light involving fires within allotment sites and a decision is required from the committee whether a toilet facility currently being provided at Sidcot allotment should remain in place or be removed.

1.2 Two Speed Indicator Devices (SID) devices have been installed at approved sites within Bridgwater.

1.3 A consultation event took place at Mansfield Park on Wednesday 21st August regarding future capital works.

2. Detail

2.1 Further to recent site visits, it's evident allotment holders are having fires within the allotment boundaries. This has led to scorched ground and unmanaged risks on Council land as some sites don't have a water supply. The committee are therefore presented with two options:

Option 1: To agree to only allow contained fires at allotment sites with water supply.

OR

Option 2: To agree to ban all open and contained fires from all allotment sites.

2.2 A toilet is currently provided at Sidcot Allotments. It's unknown who agreed to this or who built it. The only other allotment with a toilet is located at Bristol Road where the allotment holders decided to group together and supply a Portaloo which they are responsible for the ownership and upkeep of.

The structure which houses the toilet at Sidcot allotment is of amateur construction and deemed not fit for purpose. The Council's independent health and safety advisors have recommended *'the most prudent approach would be to remove the toilet in its entirety.'*

This is due to the following reasons:

- Some allotment holders use the sink for washing vegetables. The facility is not cleaned and sanitised regularly meaning there's an opportunity for cross-contamination
- There is no reactive process if someone were to leave the facilities in an unpleasant condition. This has happened in the past
- The door threshold is damaged and could be a trip hazard. This is escalated by the fact there is no light increasing the likelihood of an injury
- There is no flushing regime. Legionella is likely to be present in the pipes which is a safety risk to users
- The steel sheets which act as walls are corroding and have sharp edges in places
- The current facility is not secure i.e. it does not give users the ability to use the toilet in private

The Council currently provides sundry items for the facility resulting in an assumed degree of responsibility for the structure, as well as it being on Council land. If it were to remain in place, it would need to be structurally assessed, routinely cleaned and have statutory checks carried out.

On the basis that it's a safety risk and not in keeping with arrangements on all other allotment sites, it's recommended to agree to remove the toilet at Sidcot Allotments.

Allotment holders at this site could consider a Portaloo as per arrangements at Bristol Road allotment.

2.3 Two speed indicator devices (SIDs) are now the responsibility of the Open Spaces Team for fortnightly installation. To date they have been located at Westonzoyland Road and Wills Road followed by Woodbury Road and Eastern Avenue. An approved list of installation sites were provided by Somerset Council. Natasha Williams (Director of Amenities PA) is responsible for the co-ordination /rotating the installation sites on a fortnightly basis. The Director is also working with Somerset Council to gain approval for a further 20 locations across Bridgwater to cover the approach roads and other key sites as suggested by Councillors. These consist of Kendale Road, Parkway, Bath Road, Bristol Road, Homberg Way, Durleigh Road, Parrett Way, Broadway, Chatham Avenue and High Street.

2.4 A consultation event took place at Mansfield Park on Wednesday 21st August to gather the views of site users on future capital works. Approximately 40 people attended and a total of 61 survey responses were completed following a press campaign. The purpose of the event was to understand the location of the multi-use games area (MUGA), what sports it should offer and what further play equipment is desired. The

results give a clear indication of what should be included in a future tender exercise which is expected to take place over the winter in readiness for an official works order to be placed at the start of the 25/26 financial year. The public would like to see football and basketball offered within the MUGA. A zip-wire scored highest as a future play area addition followed by parkour-style equipment for juniors and teenagers to develop climbing and balancing skills.

2.5 A bus shelter located on Durlough Road was damaged beyond repair by a vehicle on the 6th August 2024. This was reported to the Police and a crime reference number was obtained. Our insurers have agreed to pay for a replacement shelter, and they are working with the Police to see if their costs can be reclaimed against the driver of the vehicle. The replacement shelter will be in keeping with the one recently installed on Bristol Road, which includes Bridgwater Town Council branding.

3. Legal Considerations

None (See section 4 for risks associated with Sidcot Allotments’ toilet).

4. Financial and Risk Considerations

The Council needs to consider the issued identified in section 2.2 of the report. Failure to act could result in risk to public health and legal action being taken against the Council.

5. Equalities Considerations

The invitation to tender for Mansfield Park will ensure inclusivity is included within the specification.

6. Climate Change and Sustainability Considerations

The tender scoring for Mansfield Park will assess each bidder’s environmental impact including what recycled materials they are proposing and their social value offering.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

To note the contents of this report and decide on the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1:

Option 1: To agree to only allow contained fires at allotment sites with water supply.
OR

Option 2: To agree to ban all open and contained fires from all allotment sites.

Recommendation 2:

To agree to remove the toilet at Sidcot Allotments.

Report Sign-off

Title	Name	Date
CEO/Town Clerk	David Mears	06.09.2024

Director of Community Services		
Director of Finance and Corporate Services		
Leader of Council		

End of report.