

**CHIGWELL PARISH COUNCIL
COMMUNITY SERVICES AND ASSETS COMMITTEE
OFFICER REPORT- ALLOTMENTS**

Date: 30 July 2026

Purpose

This report provides Members with an update on allotment occupancy, waiting list demand, plot management activity and tenancy compliance across the Council's allotment sites.

Members should note that the figures contained within this report may be subject to change prior to the Committee meeting as vacant plots continue to be offered and tenancy arrangements progress.

The allotment service, alongside other Council-managed income streams, remains in a positive position and continues to be well utilised by residents. Officers have recently received representations from Members seeking support for individual plot holders. Whilst officers always seek to provide advice and guidance where appropriate, Members are reminded that allotment tenancy agreements clearly set out the responsibilities of plot holders.

As part of the tenancy process, officers meet with new tenants, explain the expectations associated with maintaining an allotment plot and provide guidance on the standards required. The Council is not resourced to cultivate, maintain or manage plots on behalf of tenants. Responsibility for the upkeep, cultivation and ongoing management of plots rests with individual plot holders.

To ensure fairness to those on the waiting list and maximise the productive use of allotment land, officers undertake monitoring throughout the growing season, particularly between April and September. Where plots appear unworked or insufficiently cultivated, tenants are contacted and given an opportunity to rectify concerns. Continued non-compliance may ultimately result in tenancy termination in accordance with the allotment tenancy agreement.

Allotment Occupancy

Gravel Lane Allotments

The Gravel Lane site continues to operate at full capacity, with all available plots currently occupied.

- Total plots: 30
- Plots rented: 30
- Vacant plots: 0
- Waiting list: 4 applicants (including 3 applicants willing to accept a plot at either site)
- Potential unworked plots under review: 9

Administrative officers wrote to the tenants of the identified plots on 23 June 2026, reminding them of their responsibilities under the tenancy agreement and advising that all plots will be formally assessed in September.

Where plots are found to be untended, excessively overgrown or insufficiently cultivated, tenancy enforcement action may be considered in accordance with the Council's allotment procedures and tenancy conditions.

Limes Avenue Allotments

Demand for plots at the Limes Avenue site remains consistently high, with vacant plots becoming available only occasionally.

- Total plots: 24
- Plots rented: 22
- Vacant plots: 2
- Waiting list: 16 applicants (including 3 applicants willing to accept a plot at either site)
- Potential unworked plots under review: 4

The two currently vacant plots (LF13 and LF30) have been offered to applicants on the waiting list and officers are awaiting responses.

As with Gravel Lane, tenants of plots identified as potentially unworked were issued reminder correspondence on 8 July 2026 advising that inspections will take place in September and reminding them of their cultivation responsibilities.

Waiting List Position

There are currently 17 individuals on the Council's allotment waiting list.

Applicant preferences are as follows:

- 13 applicants have expressed a preference for Limes Avenue.
- 1 applicant has expressed a preference for Gravel Lane.
- 3 applicants have advised that they would be willing to accept a plot at either site.

These figures continue to demonstrate significantly stronger demand for plots at Limes Avenue than at Gravel Lane.

Plot Allocation Process

To ensure transparency, consistency and fairness, officers have established a formal process for allocating vacant allotment plots.

When a plot becomes available, applicants are provided with:

- An online map clearly identifying the vacant plot.
- A minimum of four recent photographs.
- A written condition report describing the current state of the plot.

Applicants are given seven calendar days to consider the offer and respond. Where possible, this period will always include a weekend, enabling applicants to view the plot in their own time and outside normal working hours.

Where no response is received within the specified period, officers make further contact by both telephone and email before progressing to the next applicant on the waiting list.

Applicants who decline a plot, or who do not respond to an offer, are not automatically moved to the bottom of the waiting list. Instead, they retain their existing position, and officers continue to work through the waiting list in chronological order. This approach balances fairness to applicants with the need to minimise plot vacancy periods.

The only exception to this process arises where a newly vacant plot becomes available that has not previously been offered to those higher on the waiting list. In such circumstances, the allocation process recommences from the top of the waiting list to ensure equal opportunity for all applicants.

Plot Compliance and Site Management

Officers continue to monitor cultivation standards across both allotment sites to ensure that plots remain productive and are maintained in accordance with tenancy conditions.

Where plots appear unworked, significantly overgrown or inadequately maintained, officers initially seek to engage informally with tenants before considering any formal action. The September inspection programme will provide officers with an opportunity to undertake a detailed review of plot conditions and determine whether further action is required.

This approach seeks to strike an appropriate balance between supporting existing tenants and ensuring that valuable allotment land is actively cultivated for the benefit of residents. It also helps create opportunities for those currently awaiting plots where tenancies are no longer being actively utilised.

Conclusion

Both allotment sites continue to be well utilised, with Gravel Lane operating at full capacity and demand remaining strong at Limes Avenue.

The waiting list remains healthy and demonstrates a continued appetite for allotment provision within the Parish. Officers continue to actively manage plot occupancy, waiting lists, tenancy compliance and site inspections to ensure that available allotment land is used effectively and fairly.

The forthcoming September inspections will provide a clearer indication of whether additional plots may become available through tenancy compliance activity and will support the ongoing management of the Council's allotment assets.

Recommendation

That the Community Services and Assets Committee:

1. Notes the contents of this report.
2. Notes the current occupancy and waiting list position across both allotment sites.
3. Notes the ongoing review of potentially unworked plots and the planned September inspection programme.
4. Notes the responsibilities of allotment tenants for the cultivation and maintenance of their plots.
5. Notes the allotment allocation process being applied by officers to ensure fairness, transparency and effective management of vacant plots.

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