



## **Sturminster Newton Town Council**

**Report Date:** 19 June 26

**Report Author:** Kate Squire, Town Clerk

### **Introduction**

The Council previously agreed to enter into a lease agreement with the Sturminster Newton Allotment Association (SNAA) and to extend the allotments at Filbridge Rise, applying for developer funding to achieve this.

I have been working with the Chair of SNAA to progress the project, including adapting the National Allotment Society(NAS) template previously circulated and putting together a joint application for the funding.

### **Update**

During my research I have discovered that lease agreements of over seven years require application to the land registry for changes in details. An application isn't a guarantee of approval and there is a small cost involved but the main issue is that it will likely take approx. 7-12 months for the application to be processed.

I checked with Dorset Council and they will not accept an application with a short lease.

I also noted that the applications notes stated that grant payments will be transferred after work is completed and on presentation of invoices paid. This presents a problem for the SNAA as they are not in a financial position to cover the outlay before grant payments are received.

The Council had originally decided on a lease of land to clarify management arrangements with the SNAA. To continue with this arrangement will now mean the project will likely be discontinued.

I am trying to get some advice from our Health & Safety advisor as I believe the risks of working with a third party on a management agreement rather than a lease could be managed with some robust monitoring procedures, at least in the short term to avoid delaying the project.

### **Options**

1. The Council could abandon the project leaving a deficit of allotment provision in the town versus demand, and a large fund of developer funding likely never to be used as there is no suitable land to purchase.
2. The Council could manage the allotments and apply for the funding directly. However this would need additional staff capacity and at present the Council have a good working relationship with the SNAA.
3. The Council could enter into a management agreement with the SNAA using an NAS template and taking advice from the H&S advisor on acceptable management of risk, The Council could apply for the developer funding showing partnership working with the SNAA.