

Allotment Pricing Structure

Background

Iver Parish Council have two allotment areas; Iver based in the grounds of the Rec and Iver Heath allotments based on Slough Road which is owned by Bucks Council and we pay £700 per year. We have just agreed to get the allotment holders to pay for water, this is divided up as a share to each allotment holder dependent on size of the plot.

We have 34 plots at Iver Allotments and 40 at Iver Heath Allotments and 14-16 extra ones that are not used or given out to the residents yet. Allotments should break even and not cost the Parish money to run, this should be considered also when increasing the rental costs. In previous years the allotment rent collected has exceeded the rent paid to Bucks Council, even with many plots not tenanted and overgrown / in accessible at IH Allotments.

In the year ended April 2021 the rent received for Iver Allotments should be £1050 (£1755 actually received) and for Iver Heath Allotments it was £1215. The other recurring expense is water, the costs being: Iver = £271.82 and Iver Heath = £238.48. These income and water expense figures are similar in prior years.

Unusually in year end 2021 some other were incurred. In Iver this was £6.66 and in Iver Heath the cost was £3515.80, which I believe related to clearance of trees and overgrowth potentially impeding the water course which runs through the allotments and out into the residential areas.

Based on the attachment settling out size and cost for each plot I have calculated expected income. The Allotments should get an income of, Iver Heath £2,225 and Iver £1,515 making total of £3,740.

Additionally, Parish is recovering the water cost which on last year's rate was £510.30, this item has been previously included in the general plot rental agreement.

We should also factor in the some grounds staff time and fuel to look after the allotments to be taken into account.

It should also be noted that England has two recognized an accepted size for allotment plots. Full size being 10 poles (250sqm) and half plot being 5 poles (125 sqm). The calculation that been formulated sets a plot of 80 sqm as the standard TIPC size. This point has never been specifically addressed or agreed by Council.

Thinks to be considered

- Most Allotments have fencing around the whole area to stop animals and unwanted guests. Allotment holders are required by Parish to take out insurance against third parties injuring themselves whilst in on the plot, these third parties can be invited guests or otherwise.
- Water is usually included in the Plot price
- An area set aside for manure or wood chip to be dropped off and parking are common areas

- Some sites are let to Allotment Association and some sites are managed by Allotment Association. TIPC sites do not involve the Allotment Associations at present, although we have one association formed at IH and Iver is in the progress of forming an association.

What do Ivers Allotments Offer

Iver Allotment has fence all around the site but only five-foot-high in places and four foot in other places this will and does not stop deer from entering the site also this allows unwanted guests from entering the site. Iver Heath Allotment site has a gate and that is it!

Water on both sites have just started to charge per size of plot with minimum £6.45 and maximum of £19.20, and this rate is different on each site. We also suspect that a leak exists at IH Allotments and this will of course impact what has been billed. The suspected leak has been reported to the Office.

Iver allotment has no area for manure where Iver Heath allotment has an area but is not partitioned off.

Iver Heath allotment has an allotment association which has had up to 22 members. Note, this is per plot holder not per plot and were actively in discussions with TIPC regarding self-management, once some threshold and historic issues were addressed. Iver allotments are in the process of setting up an allotment association.

Iver Allotments have a possible 23% not worked plots. Iver Heath has a possible 40% not worked and this does not allow for another 14/16 that can be let out.

Pricing of the plots

Two years ago a survey was undertaken to work out if we were underpricing the allotments close to our locations [see attached] and in the Aylesbury area [see attached].

To note:

All of these locations have fencing all around the sites

- Pricing is for two sizes 5 pole and 10 pole plots [10 pole is 250sqm] as per the national agreed approach
- As you can see most plot sizes are under the National size of 10 pole

The Parishes new charges will take effect on the 1st October, and they are:
up-to 80sqm is £30

81 to 120sqm is £45
120 to 160sqm is £60
161 to 220sqm is £75

Note that previously all plots were charged £30 per year including water. That an allotment holder was issued the available plot when they applied or at best offered a choice of those available. No choice was given re size.

Parish pricing sizes are as follows see attached

Long term plan

Many Parish Councils have sublet to The National Allotment Association, this would allow the association to take full charge of management of the sites this would cut Parish outgoing to neutral making all financial responsibility onto the association this would also include insurance for the Plot holders if an accident was to happen taking the responsibility away from The Parish.

To achieve this we need to at least make the sites secure to safe guard the plot holders. Iver allotment has two entrances one is made as an entrance and the other one a hole in the boundary this allows children and non-plot holders to gain access.

Iver Heath has a gate onto the Slough Road with no fencing anywhere else around the site this makes the site very unsafe from people entering from any area onto the site also many of the plot holders have installed 6 foot fencing around there plots to stop rabbits but more importantly to stop deer from destroying the produce on the plots, these fences look unsightly and does not look welcoming to new plot holders.

Options

1. Hand allotments over to the relevant allotment associations and give them a grant to get the fence installed.
2. Parish keeps control of the Allotments and supplies the fence with the increase in plot revenue and after it has been done reduce the price back to average area plot prices
3. Keep the rate the same and make plot holders take out public liability insurance, that is ask for evidence of the insurance.
4. Align the sizing of the plots to the nationally agreed sizing (10 and 5 poles).

In all situations joint working relations between the Parish and the plot holders needs to be improved.

What do we know

The new pricing system will make some allotment holders have an increase of 200% on plot fee. All allotment holders in Iver Heath Allotments will experience an increase of at least 50% of fee. Plus, we are charging for the water which in some cases will be an extra 20% on the 200% price increase.

Most other allotments in the near area charge for a full plot [250sqm] £50-£60 we charge £75 if this is one area. For half plots, which are under 125sqm, we charge £45. But many of our plots

are smaller so people needed to take on 2 smaller plots the end impact is that we are charging £90 for a size more like a national standard full plot which is nearly double the rate being charged in the local area.

Buckinghamshire Council is very keen to promote Allotments and grow your own produce and growing food for the health and mental health benefits, this will make it harder for residents to be able to take on an Allotment. National government has also released a food strategy to encourage growing your own and domestic agriculture. We appear to be presenting a financial barrier to both of these strategies