

Feedback to Allotment Consultation

We love our allotment; it provides us with fresh organic vegetables and fruit throughout the year. The maintenance provides us with year round exercise and we even have a 6 minute walk to get our produce! Gardening is a stress buster!

The allotments:-

- 1 Encourages families to do things together
- 2 Shows children food does not always come from a Supermarket – they can learn how to grow things themselves (not taught at schools today)
- 3 Healthier produce
- 4 For some people it can be a place to go who have a common interest – important if they are lonely (e.g. widow) etc

Our allotment is very important to us because the children at the Barn are learning about how to grow their own food; they dig, plant, weed, harvest and then eat their produce

The allotment is important to my family. I moved to Shrivenham in December and it was stressful but since we got ours we have our family time down there, my 4 year old daughter loves it down there and works hard to grow things to take to school to show her friends and teachers, Rona and her two brothers Wyatt and George love watching things grow.

Also me and my brother hardly spoke before I got this allotment but recently his marriage came to an end and the allotment helped him with the stress and give him something to do with his two boys they love coming to help us out and has given me and my brother the bond back we should have between us

I think that allotments are important because they give villagers the opportunity to grow a vast assortment of fruit and vegetables that are so important to the bees and wild life. It gives children hands on experience in caring and nurturing and growing their own food. It also reinforces the need to look after our own environment, especially as outside spaces and gardens are getting smaller. Allotments have had been an important part of towns and villages for years and should be protected and cherished for many years to come.

The allotments are very important to my wife and I. Our own garden is too shaded with trees and is not large enough and we are both keen gardeners who are trying to decrease our 'food miles'. The allotment is not only good for growing, but as recent arrivals in the village it has helped introduce us to a like minded group of people who are great at providing advice and support to our efforts. I'm sure that over time these people will become good friends. Lastly, gardening is good exercise for us both and will hopefully contribute to keeping us out of the doctor's surgery as we get older!

As a retired person with time on my hands my allotment has proved very important to me. It has provided me with an interesting and challenging hobby, helping to keep me fit and active. It brings me into contact with fellow allotment holders, sharing our knowledge, successes and failures, exchanging produce, and helping each other with the physical tasks of maintaining a healthy plot. The allotments therefore have a valuable social function beyond just their value to the individual.

Children from the local primary school have paid visits to the site to see and hear about what's being grown and younger children often stop to look at the chickens kept by some allotment holders, so there is also an educational value in maintaining and protecting the site.

My allotment is important to me for various reasons – culinary, health and social. I live in a small cottage with a small, shaded north facing garden which is not suitable for growing vegetables. The allotment gives me the opportunity to grow a range of vegetables, herbs and fruit. These supplement my weekly shop and provide me with good quality, healthy, organic produce for the table, including varieties that cannot be bought in the shops and varieties that are tastier than shop bought equivalents. I also have a small cutting patch to grow flowers for the house. I find gardening very good exercise and important for my well-being, especially on sunny days. Working on the allotment is also very social, as allotmenters talk to each other and exchange pleasantries and gardening advice. I also like to think that we contribute something to the local wildlife – apart from the pigeons and other birds (who eat some of the produce) – such as the beneficial insects, frogs and small mammals.

Being allotment holders made a huge difference in our lifestyle. We are a family of six (plus a beagle). We only have a small garden not really suitable for growing any vegetables so having an allotment allowed us to grow our own favourite fruits and vegetables. We have strawberries, raspberries, gooseberries, onion, garlic, potatoes, and courgettes. We saved a lot of money over the years (and the use of plastic). It gives our children responsibilities, they value their hard work, waste less, eat healthier and not to mention they are spending more time outdoor. Even when we just walk through the allotment gardens we enjoy looking at the beautiful patches, learning about various plants, visiting the chickens. It is a big part of our life and one of our favourite green places to spend time in Shrivenham.

We have kept an allotment for a number of years now and find it to be of great benefit to us. It gets us out into the fresh air, we get physical exercise (no gym required) and meet up with other like minded people. The other benefit is that you can grow your own fruit & veg without adding lots of chemicals, the difference in taste being immense.

The allotments in Shrivenham have been an important addition to the village since the land was bequeathed by Lord Barrington for the sole purpose of allotments for the people of the village. The use of the land for anything else would be a travesty.

The allotments provide a sustainable food source and give residents a focus on which to get exercise, fresh air and company. The allotments meet, physical, psychological, and spiritual needs for a diverse group. They are the hub of a community where people can exchange ideas and feel valued for their knowledge, they are fun and make one feel part of a group all aiming to grow things and celebrate when things grow and thrive. It's often a place of calm and relaxation away from a busy life, it's a haven

Allotments provide a community space for more sustainable living. The interactions with others keen to learn and develop their skills in growing their own food provide great satisfaction and a learning opportunity for all that participate. It also contributed towards healthy exercise and well bring that only green spaces bring.

The allotments are extremely important to me, even if I didn't have one.

They provide green space for all to enjoy, far better to have a sizable chunk of open space, that's also productive, than more housing.

The use of allotment provides many people with limited garden space to produce their own tasty fruit/veg (well sometimes). Not convinced it saves any money, but it is also the fun and satisfaction of eating the end results of a lot of hard work.

It provides a very good amount of non-impact exercise, especially for us older people. It makes you get out to look after it all.

It creates a social environment allowing people to meet and chat, swap advice and produce.

Allotments are important to me because:

- 1. I like to grow my own veg., fruit & flowers.*
- 2. I like the regular exercise.*
- 3. I like the environment in a pleasant site where one can meet like-minded souls.*
- 4. it's a green environment where wildlife can thrive e.g. bees, insects, butterflies & birds (pigeons excepted).*
- 5. Allotments are part of UK culture. People have been cultivating small plots of land for millennia (it seems to be part of human nature) & should be encouraged.*

We only moved into Shrivenham in December 2017 and immediately decided to take an allotment, having had an allotment where we previously lived for 23 years. It is a very valuable resource, particularly as the garden we have isn't big enough to grow our fruit and vegetables. It is also a great way for us to socialise and make new friends as people new to the village.

It's a wonderful green space, where many insects and birds thrive, something all villages and communities need. We do hope the allotments continue to thrive for many many years to come.

The allotments are an integral open space very well positioned within the village which is put to extremely good use by a lot of people. The soil is ideal for growing produce. Most if not all of the plots are used each year and strict guidance with regard to upkeep and tidiness is generally well respected by those who rent the plots. The track through the allotments is used frequently by those using the 66 bus and dog walkers as well as residents taking exercise. My husband and I have had half an allotment for at least 13 years - we have grown a lot of fruit & vegetables, made friends with other growers and like so many other people greatly value the space. It is possible to hire a part of an allotment to suit those who do not want a lot of space which is an excellent idea to encourage the less ambitious or novice gardeners.

I suggest that with gardens getting ever smaller and people getting ever more conscious of the value of fresh produce Shrivvenham allotments will be in great demand as the village doubles in size.

My allotment is important to me because:

Being retired, it is a good form of exercise, meeting new people, young and older. Sharing ideas, seeds and veggies etc.

Most produce is organic, not sprayed with horrible chemicals etc. Allotments are also good for wildlife. Bees, butterflies, insects etc for pollination, birds scratching around and you also get the odd toad and hedgehog. All of which are in decline.

So, yes, they are good for health and wellbeing AND wildlife

The allotments are an important place, not only for the individual plot holders, but for the village as a whole. It is a place to meet new people, get exercise, produce food for your family and "get away from technology" !! I have met some great friends there, who are always ready with help, advice and comfort in times of sorrow.

It is also an important home for wildlife and insects.

Please keep them as a place for the village to walk through (but not for exercising dogs please!) - it is also educational for the children (do any of them realise that potatoes don't come from bushes but under the ground!?)

There are health benefits of getting outdoors, keeping active, and eating fresh produce.

It is a good way to make friends with people with similar interests.

Any excess produce is placed on the top of the water tanks for anyone to freely take and make use of.

Houses in the village seem to be getting larger so gardens are smaller with no room for fruit and vegetables, especially the new developments where as many houses as possible are built to make the most money for the developers!

We are amazed at the number of people who take pleasure walking around the allotments, especially on nice summer evenings.

Although I write from the perspective of an allotment-holder, I believe that the allotment gardens are highly valued as 'green space' by the wider community.

Please find below a few of my thoughts; I hope that they are helpful.

SOCIAL SPACE

The allotments provide an important social space that benefits the whole community. For certain groups, e.g. stay-at-home parents (like me) and some retirees, they may offer a very vital source of human contact. I have made several acquaintances at the allotment, and I am always struck by how sociable a place it is: the allotment holders interact as friends and neighbours. For non-plot-holders, the allotment gardens are also a place to bump into acquaintances, to let children roam in relative safety, to walk dogs, etc. And they also offer a safe and pleasant pedestrian-only shortcut between two main roads.

COMMUNITY COHESION

The allotments help encourage a strong sense of community as people come together over a shared interest. As well as informal networks of information sharing, there are regular allotment-related talks at the Memorial Hall. There is the circulation of the produce itself, as plot-holders will often donate or swap their produce. Donations of surplus fruit and vegetables benefit non-plot-holders: we give ours to a number of our Shrivenham neighbours, and I understand that some allotment holders donate their surplus to local and other charities. I think that these exchanges and interactions over a shared interest are really important to the community. Settlement is encouraged: tending an allotment is often a long-term commitment, requiring an investment in, and attachment to, the land.

EDUCATION

The allotments provide an opportunity for community members, old and young, to learn about the cultivation of plants and the provenance of their food. My pre-school-age children have enjoyed growing and harvesting the fruits and vegetables on our allotment, and in the process I am sure (I hope!) that they have learnt something about where our food comes from and its nutritional value. The Barn Kindergarten in Shrivenham has an allotment plot, too, which helps promote from an early age an interest in how food is produced. In this respect, I believe the allotments have an important educational role to play in the local community.

GARDEN SPACE

The allotments offer cultivable space at an affordable rate for community members. This is especially valuable if one's own garden is non-existent or otherwise unsuitable for cultivation. Many of the modern development houses occupy small plots, which means space to grow vegetables is limited for these Shrivenham residents. The opportunity to rent an allotment, at an affordable rate, is a very important benefit for those members of the community.

HEALTH

Tending an allotment requires regular and often intensive exercise, which has been shown to improve physical and mental well-being, reduce morbidity, and delay the onset of frailty. The allotments yield fruit, vegetables and eggs, which have a high nutritional value and contribute to a healthy diet. I believe the allotments have a significant role in encouraging and supporting a healthy lifestyle, which benefits the allotment holders, their families and any other beneficiaries of the produce, as well as reducing consumption of medical and other services.

ENVIRONMENT

The allotments provide a source of high-quality food that is local, seasonal, and often organic or near-organic in origin for consumption by the local community. Methods of cultivation are mostly non-mechanised, the use of chemicals seems relatively limited, and the food is consumed close to its source. I would say that the allotments have a very low carbon footprint, representing an environmentally-friendly approach to food production that benefits the environment and community alike.

NATURE

The allotment gardens provide space for a diversity of natural species to flourish – plants, insects, birds and animals. While a few of these may be unwelcome by the allotment holders, their existence is a positive thing for the environment, and therefore for the wider community. In the context of heavy housing and road development in the neighbourhood, it seems to me especially important that existing green spaces are retained wherever possible to provide a sanctuary for wildlife.