

Proposal to Deliver a Mobility Allotment with LTC



LTC resolved to investigate the provision of a mobility accessible allotment at a meeting of the Facilities committee on the 19th January 2021.

354 / 20 ACCESSIBLE ALLOTMENT PROVISION – to explore opportunities with the developer for accessible allotment provision as part of the Trevethan Meadows Phase 4 Development. Councillor Ambler proposed, Councillor Brooks seconded, and the Committee APPROVED further discussion between Facilities Manager and the developer around accessible allotment provision at Trevethan Meadows.

This paper is meant as a discussion on how LTC Facilities could take this resolution forward, and deliver a mobility friendly allotment, perhaps for 2023.

This paper has been developed with Cllr Lee-Julian and Cllr D Ambler, with the support of Cllr Smith, and the Facilities manager Jacqui Orange.

Research Sources

A number of sources have been used for research, principally the following websites, which were provided by the Facilities Manager.

- 1) <https://www.farmgarden.org.uk/>
- 2) <https://www.thrive.org.uk/>
- 3) <https://www.swcaa.co.uk/guides/disabilities-and-allotments>

Key Points

Reference 3 makes several key points when considering the provision of accessible allotments, these are principally:

- The location of the plot should ideally be close to the entrance point.
- Try to make the beds like tables, with space underneath to roll a chair under.
- Light compost can reduce weight, while the supports should be strong and cope with the use of water.
- Make sure there is a flat hard surface between and around the beds with enough space to make wheelchair access easier. (4ft wide by 18ft long)
- Railway sleepers make a good bed.
- Long handled tools can provide support to some disabilities and avoid the need for raised beds.
- Water can be heavy, and a water supply should be considered, perhaps from a water butt with a hose?

Within LTC consideration should also be given to:

- The management of the plot with other users.
- How to manage the plot if no-one with mobility requirements is looking for a plot. (Should the raised beds be stored and movable).
- The need to be fair to all customers with the allocation of the plots.
- LTC may feel the need to provide hand washing and supportive facilities?

Access

The photograph below shows the current gateway into the Pengover Allotments. This looks to be wide enough to support mobility access, however the requirements should be verified, and any adjustments may need to be budgeted for.

The pathways will need to be made suitable for the use of mobility chairs. This could require widening and the use of thick gravel or a hard surface, (to the required specification).

It should be noted that new allotments are planned as part of a new housing estate, and this may provide suitable access as part of the design.



Pengover Road Allotment Entrance

Environmental Impact

Ms Ann Gray at Coombe house has kindly provided a tour of the mobility supportive gardening area.

The shed, and potting beds were made with recycled materials, such as wood from crates and other available supplies such as sleepers. The use of these materials could reduce any costs, and support LTC's environmental objectives.

The following images are of the mobility supportive gardening area at Coombe House.



Water collecting methods are used to supply the beds and any damaging materials such as single use plastics are avoided.

The construction of a mobility supportive allotment will require the use of materials, but the ability to grow food locally, should be seen as compensation for the environmental impact.

[Echo Centre Visit, Barras Street, Liskeard.](#)

Cllr Lee-Julian met with clients at the Echo Centre and received some very helpful advice from them. One particular gentleman named Richard has an allotment at Menheniot so he has some great advice for us.

Here follows Cllr Lee-Julian notes:-

Suggested surfaces for the paths, Tarmac, paving slabs or Scaffold boards with non slip grip, scaffold planks are tanalised. Gravel is not ideal for manual or Powerchairs as the wheels would get stuck especially on wet days. Also going back home with mucky wheels is not ideal. So it was the opinion of majority that paving slabs would be the best option as easy to clean and good drainage.

Low maintenance is essential.

Water source close to raised beds, easier for use. Suggestions included water butts and taps.

Richard allotments has grass between the beds, ok for manual chairs but not for electric scooters or Powerchairs.

Seats for resting, movable to where needed.

Community plot - where a group could run the plot, as disabled people get their bad days and several could share the plot make a rota. No pressure on one person to keep it up. It is very therapeutic and good to meet up and socialise while growing crops. Shed/shelter to get out of the rain, big enough to accommodate few wheelchairs. Electric/solar power for lighting especially for winter when it gets dark earlier. The allotments on the A38 have solar lighting. Also power to make a cuppa tea.

Community tools - find suitable tools like rakes and short lightweight hand held tools. 10" plus spade on the end.

Raised beds - not too high or low. Construction Railway sleepers, scaffolding, old water tanks - metal or plastic. Old wooden barrels.

There are several raised bed designs on line, it just assessing what works on the size of plot.

Loads of benefits for social and health just being able to sit. Lots of ideas and examples up and down the country.

Maybe NHS money/funding GP prescription possible funding.

Andrew Arnold - sometimes give plants to people.

Mental health groups, like the men groups to support different areas of the community.

Scaffolding firms might donate shorter lengths of waste planks to make raised beds.

Somewhere for the weeds to store, compost etc maybe use old fat balls tub. Compost bin. Suitable door on the entrance.



An example of a raised planter at echo.

<http://nagtrust.co.uk/>

A possible funding source to use for the allotments.

Budgets

It would be great if LTC could achieve a mobility friendly allotment for the 2023 growing season, but the need for any budget would have to be considered.

A basic plot could be achieved with minimal investment, beyond upgrading paths and the creation of the raised beds.

Depending on the success of the plot, LTC may set a more ambitious requirement to improve the facilities and longevity of the raised beds.

Summary

This paper is designed to take the resolution resolved on the 19th January 2021 forward.

The Facilities committee may wish to resolve to investigate the costs further, and staff time allocated to the investigation of suitable provision of raised beds.

Consideration should be given to the new allotments planned for the Liskeard area, and mobility space created as part of this.

It is suggested that the Facilities committee could contact local groups like The Echo centre, and perhaps care homes to obtain their advice and experience. I have spoken to Coombe-House, who have offered their advice.

The committee could aim to deliver the raised beds for the 2023 growing season.