

The Upper Beeding Allotment Gardens

Upper Beeding Rector, The Rev. Meyrick, had foresight when in 1892 he first provided Upper Beeding with an endowment of just over two acres of land that he had rented from Pond Farm with the express wish that it should be used for the cultivation of crops by his parishioners for domestic use. Allotments have always been an important part of the amenities provided by Local Authorities and they have been protected by statute since the Smallholding and Allotment Act of 1908 repealed earlier Allotment Acts.

The original Allotment Gardens are shown on old maps of the Village to have been situated in an area that stretched from behind the Church school to roughly where the Monks Walk gate is today. The Parish Council took over the responsibility for the management of the Gardens in 1913 and have had an ongoing legal obligation to continue to provide residents with this amenity ever since.

The complete field of about 5 acres which contained the allotments was sold to West Sussex County Council in 1942 who continued to rent the allotment site to the Parish Council. In 1944 a field of about 6 acres to the east of this land which was owned by Hyde Farm was also sold to the County Council. In 1950 the total area that is now occupied by the Allotments and Memorial Playing Field was purchased by the Parish Council who made land to the east (formerly Hyde Farm) available for allotments to replace that portion that is now occupied by the new Primary School. The area of statutory allotment land in the Village at present still amounts to just over two acres and for legal reasons this cannot be reduced. Some residents may remember other allotments in the corner of the Memorial playing field, close to where the sports hall and tennis courts are today which were provided for temporary allotment use at a time when the demand for plots exceeded the supply of statutory land.

In 2003 when there were several vacant plots and no new tenants available to fill them permission was granted for temporary change of use for part of the Allotment Gardens to become recreational land with restrictions as to how it could be used. During 2007 demand for tenancies had increased to the extent that the Parish Council has been obliged to return that land to allotment use.

The standard size of an allotment is 250 square metres (10 rods by traditional measurement) however to accommodate the demand it is more usual for a half allotment plot to be offered to those on the waiting list in the first instant. New tenants are obliged to enter into a contract of tenancy Agreement which is renewed annually. This covers how the allotment is to be used as well as how the tenancy can be terminated by either party. The rent per square metre is shown on this document and can be changed from time to time following full agreement of the landlord and tenant and a suitable period of notice. There is also a list of rules and regulations which can be changed from time to time as conditions change.

An Allotment Holders Association has been formed as part of Beeding and Bramber Horticultural Society to provide help and encouragement to existing and new members, to cater for their needs and to act as a liaison between tenants and The Council. The Horticultural Society can obtain seeds and plants at a discount and they hold a Spring and a Summer Show each year when produce and flowers can be displayed.

Applications for a plot should be made to the Clerk to the Parish Council.

Contacts

Parish Council 01903 810316

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