

# East Harpenden Gardening Club

3 Year Development Plan

2020 – 2022

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# The purpose of this document

- Agree aims and objectives of club
- Agree focus areas and plans for development for next three years
- To use for discussion with HTC and councillors in order to jointly agree 3 year Club Development Plan and agree funding from the capital receipt from the sale of EHGC allotment land

# Summary

- We have a 3 year plan, with the aim of becoming fully utilised with waiting lists and a green flag allotment society by 2022
- Our member survey highlighted three critical issues: 1) safety and security 2) removal of historic rubbish including asbestos from sites 3) safe and easy access to sites
- Sites badly require investment to replace 50 year old derelict perimeter fencing and gates at all sites. We have a severe problem of muntjac devouring plots, persistent trespassing from people, fishermen and dogs on the loose. We have two dilapidated, leaking, and unsafe asbestos based storage garages at Holcroft, and 3 sites with inadequate machine storage sheds. We need safer and more convenient access points at some sites
- It's not just the person who pays for a plot that benefits, their family and friends do too, either by visiting the site or receiving flowers or produce. Benefits include outdoor exercise, improved diet, sense of community, wellbeing, increased biodiversity, productive & safe green space in an increasingly urbanised area, sustainability
- We calculate 14% of the population benefit directly or indirectly from EHGC allotments over the last 10 years
- Our Club will be made accessible to people of all abilities and people with dementia by developing suitable areas and provisions
- We plan to work with local schools, businesses and charities to widen the reach into the broader community (e.g. providing produce to local foodbanks and work experience opportunities)
- A minimum funding of £173,000 (excluding VAT) from the capital receipt from the sale of EHGC allotment land at Westfield to make our allotment sites fit for the 2020s and future generations

# Harpenden has a 150+ year allotment history

- In 1852 John Lawes (Lord of the Manor, Rothamsted) set aside ten acres of land to provide allotments for the agricultural labourers of the parish
- In 1859 Charles Dickens visited the club and wrote about his visit on his carriage journey back to London
- Allotments in Harpenden were all Council run prior to 1956
- Batford & District Allotments Committee was created in October 1956 at the request of Harpenden Urban District Council (HUDC) who wanted local residents to run the Club on a devolved basis instead.
- Name changed to East Harpenden Gardening Club in 1971 when HUDC became Harpenden Town Council, and new agreements created.
- There is also the South Harpenden Allotment and Gardening Society serving the southern area Harpenden community

## **EHGC**

- Devolved management - run by volunteers
- 6 sites (Crabtree Lane, Holcroft Road, Marquis Lane, Porters Hill Park, Riverside, Willoughby Road)
- Currently 187 plots
- Club shop at Holcroft Road - open Sundays 10am-noon

# Allotments have many benefits

## Improve mental wellbeing

Numerous studies have evidenced the mental health benefits of allotments including significant improvements in self esteem and mood via reductions in tension, depression, anger and confusion.

e.g. A case-control study of the health and well-being benefits of allotment gardening , by Carly J. Wood, Jules Pretty, Murray Griffin

## Promote biodiversity

Data from the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG) shows that the average allotment has up to 30% more wildlife diversity than a typical urban park

## Provide outdoor exercise!

*Strenuous...or easy going...the freedom to decide  
With the benefits of vitamin D*

## Local produce

*Grown locally....Greatly reduced carbon footprint.. No packaging. You grow it – you know it's history*

Allotments bring people together  
and help to strengthen communities

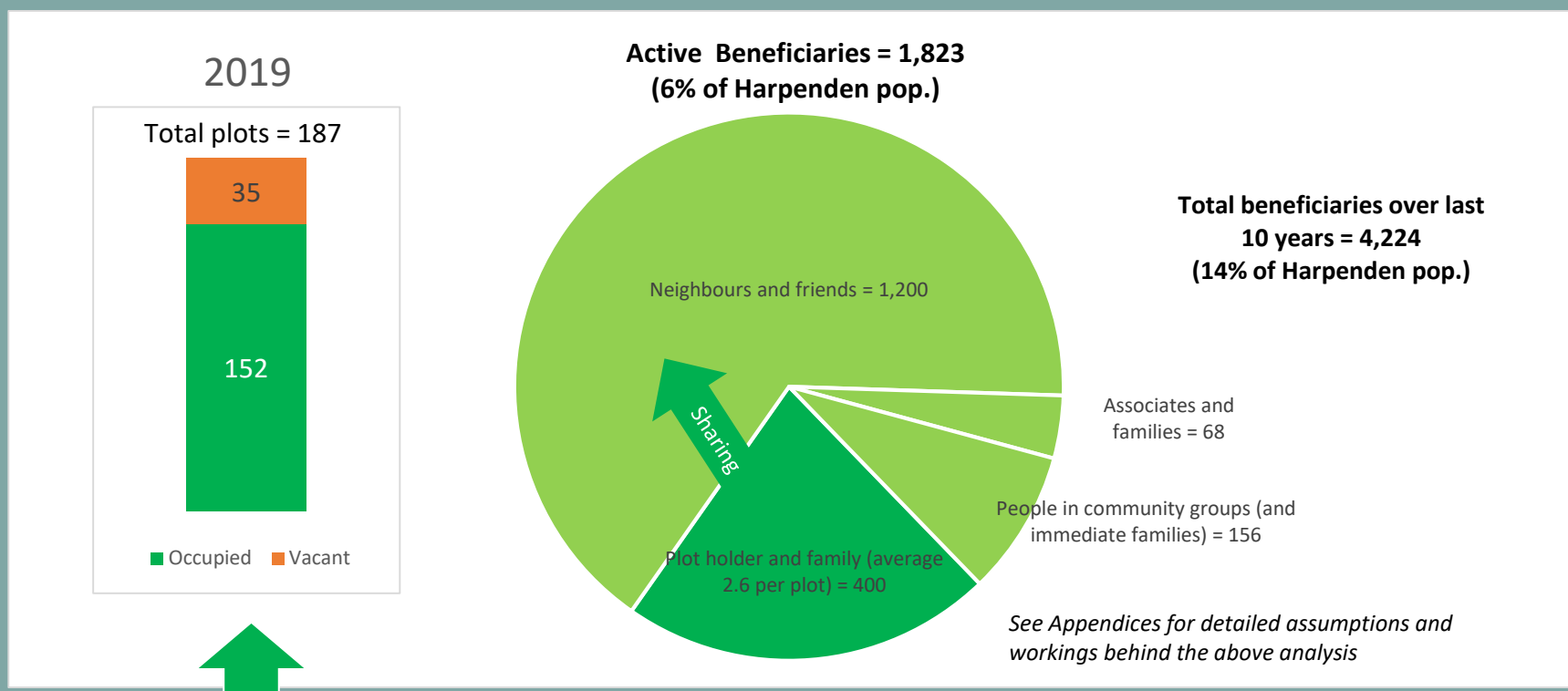
Allotments play a small part in addressing the most pressing Global concern – building a long term sustainable future for all and tackling major environmental issues

# EHGC allotment benefits to members and the wider Harpenden community

Benefit	Members, families and friends benefit	Wider Community benefit
General health - Active, fitness, fresh air, rehabilitation	✓	
Mental health benefits – self esteem, reductions in tension, depression, anger and confusion	✓	
Ownership and responsibility	✓	
Facilities community spirit and sharing	✓	
New life skills	✓	
Improved diet	✓	
Low cost/affordable produce	✓	
Local, seasonable and sustainable produce - reducing need for transport and pollution e.g. carbon dioxide, reduced packaging	✓	✓
Green space in ever increasing urban area – supporting natural habitats	✓	✓
Biodiversity	✓	✓
Educational	✓	✓
Community shop	✓	✓

# EHGC benefits thousands of Harpenden people

*We estimate over 4,200 people have benefited directly from EHGC allotments over the last 10 years – 14% of the Harpenden population of 30,000*



*We aim to have 100% occupancy by 2022 and more associate members and community groups. This will increase active beneficiaries to 2,700 (9% of pop.), including a target of at least 150 extra local people using the shop (more family and friends and non-allotment holders).*

Note: these numbers do not include SHAGS



# We are a socially inclusive club reflecting the demographics of the area, but we can serve more

## CURRENT REACH

## PLANNED REACH

### Groups

We have a successful track record of working with groups



Community engagement



Outdoor learning

We plan to extend our reach to more community groups, schools, nurseries, clubs and local businesses












### Individual Members


We have members of all ages - elderly, middle aged, the young, families, students, multi-cultural







Riverside comprises: English, Scottish, Indian, Czech Republic, French, American, New Zealand, Jamaican.



We want to open at least one site to the disabled with raised beds and appropriate access and a plot/facilities for those with dementia





Promote through existing members

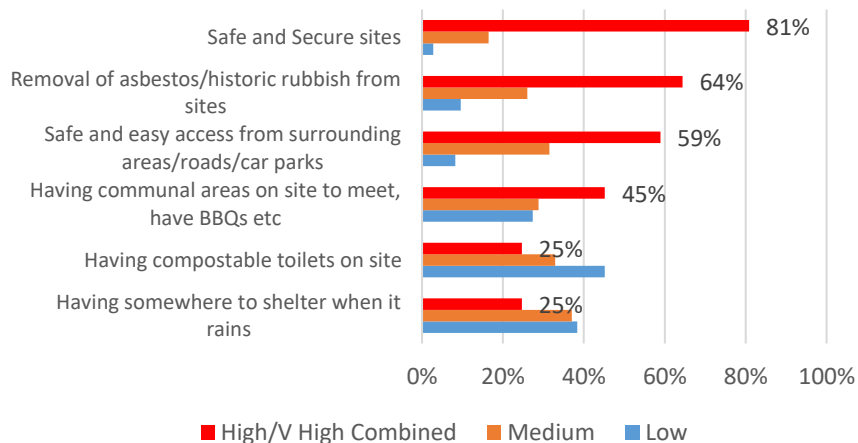
# We have some exciting initiatives planned for existing members and the wider community

Group / Members	Current Activities	Proposals
Wider community	Open days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open shop to whole community. Library and tea and coffee</li> <li>• Yoga classes on communal plots</li> <li>• BBQ's on communal plots for friends and family</li> <li>• Guest speakers/talks</li> </ul>
Education - Schools	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work Experience</li> <li>• On site biology lessons (biodiversity research)</li> <li>• Duke of Edinburgh – offer 3 month placements to run shop etc</li> </ul>
Education – Princes Trust	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work Experience projects:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Clearance and creation of meadow areas at Holcroft. south</li> <li>2. Vegetation cutback from Lea Valley walk at Willoughby Road</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
Education - Outdoor Child	Staff meetings on site Produce shared with families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mud kitchen play area</li> </ul>
Charities - Foodbank	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weekly collection of suitable produce to be offered in summer months</li> </ul>
Charities - Hornbean Wood Hedgehog Sanctuary	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Release hedgehogs into EHGC sites</li> </ul>
Charities – National Open Garden Scheme (NGS)	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open Allotments as a group event for the NGS</li> </ul>
Community group - Plot 31	Community garden open on Tuesdays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extend community garden open days</li> <li>• Plot for their volunteers to grow vegetables to donate to the local foodbank.</li> </ul>
Local businesses – Plowman Craven	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work Experience. Use the sites to learn &amp; practise surveying. Create site maps to scale.</li> </ul>
Dementia friendly	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make Holcroft dementia friendly and HTC utilise an area and new raised beds for the towns dementia friendly scheme</li> </ul>
Full Members	Plots, Shop, Voting, BBQs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer tea and coffee at the shop.</li> <li>• Seed swaps</li> <li>• Film stories / diaries</li> <li>• Guest speakers/talks</li> </ul>
Associate Members	Shop Voting on non plot matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer tea and coffee at the shop</li> <li>• Film stories</li> <li>• Guest speakers/talks</li> </ul>

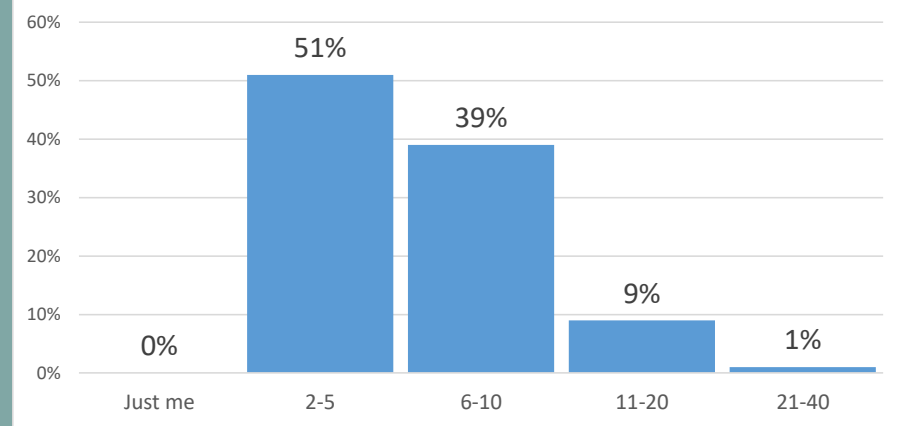
# We surveyed our members

- The top 3 issues identified were:
  1. Site security and safety (58% very high priority + 23% high = 81% high+)
  2. Removal of asbestos and historic rubbish from sites
  3. Convenient and safe access to sites.
- When asked how many people benefit from their allotment, about half said “2-5” and the other half responded in the range of 6 to 40”. No one said “Just me”.

Priority rating of issues by survey respondents  
(sums to 100% for each issue)










% of survey respondents indicating the number of people benefiting from their plot



Results from SurveyMonkey 2020  
See additional member quotes in Appendices

# Current issues and RAG status

Issue	RAG Status	Comments
Site security <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theft (produce, tools)</li> <li>• Vandalism (signs broken on site)</li> <li>• Muntjac demolishing produce</li> <li>• Trespassing and loose dogs</li> <li>• Illegal fishing - hooks, cans, bags, rubbish left on site</li> </ul>		3 year plan offers solution proposals
50 year old fencing and gates – broken, sections missing and not high enough. “The infrastructure looks rundown and is insecure”		3 year plan offers solution proposals
Dangerous old asbestos garage buildings at Holcroft		3 year plan offers solution proposals
Accessibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holcroft access pathway is dangerous</li> <li>• Clubhouse – no access for disabled or less able</li> <li>• Riverside from busy road and steep slope across stream for elderly/disabled</li> </ul>		3 year plan offers solution proposals
Long term management of hedges and overhanging trees		Good progress by HTC in 2019. More to do in 2020
Historic rubbish build-up on sites		Good progress by volunteers with help from HTC in 2018 & 2019. More to do in 2020
Vacant plots and out of use plots		Good progress by volunteers with help from HTC in 2018 & 2019. More to do in 2020
Abandoned plots		Now managed via the neglected plots procedure

# EHGC 3 year objectives – The what and the why

1. Safety and Security	Sort the basics. To provide safe and secure allotment environments – a foundation for 2, 4, 5 and 9.
2. Enhance facilities	To offer pleasant and enjoyable allotment spaces and experience offering value in return for our membership fee – clean, tidy, rubbish free. Make it a 2020 experience with a refreshed infrastructure.
3. Organic and Sustainable	To facilitate the growth of natural, healthy organic produce. To provide fit for purpose and “green” facilities and machinery where feasible. Protect our allotments for current and future generations
4. Community engagement	To create and maintain a community spirit, sharing and exchanging ideas, providing learning and education to the wider community (and groups) with a wider appeal
5. Open to all	To be accessible to the WHOLE community regardless of age, race, gender or ability. Family oriented
6. Support nature	To support, encourage and protect our natural environment, biodiversity and wildlife
7. Management and Operations	To run the club as efficiently and effectively as volunteers can – empower members with devolved management and rules to encourage responsible behaviours and manageable levels of maintenance. Use 21 <sup>st</sup> century technology to promote benefits to wider community
8. Work in partnership to succeed	To engage with our stakeholders (HTC, Councillors, Community groups, local businesses, members etc) to achieve common objectives, share achievements, secure appropriate funding etc.
9. 100% occupancy and valued spaces	To become a green flag allotment society. Promote the Club and the benefits it offers and to attract and retain members to achieve 100% plot occupancy and waiting lists with satisfied stakeholders.

# We will take a three phased approach to bring our allotments into the 2020s

1. Sort the basics of safety, security and access

2. Improve overall experience and extend further the benefits to the wider community

3. Manage allotment sites, assets and members in a cost and time effective manner with stakeholder interests at the heart



## Outcomes:

- All sites fully utilised with waiting lists
- Allotments recognised for their value by the many
- Exceptional feedback from all stakeholders

# EHGC 3 year plan summary – The how

## Basics

### 1. Safety & Security

New perimeter fencing and gates. Remove asbestos. Replace Holcroft garages. New access point at Riverside. New machinery sheds.

£134,346 funding required

## Overall Experience

### 2. Enhance facilities

Surfaces suitable for disabled, dementia friendly. Finish clearing historic rubbish etc. Communal areas

£10,600 funding required

### 3. Organic & Sustainable

Continue drive to be fully organic Club, e.g. stock in the shop, explore solar powered lighting

Existing Club funds/volunteer time

### 4. Community engagement

Brown road signs to identify allotments, new website and content, build relationships with local schools, clubs, playgroups, charities etc.; host social and learning events, broaden the appeal of the shop

£2,000 funding needed for signs, but mostly volunteer time

### 5. Open to all

Improved and new access to some sites, new footpath between Holcroft North and South, a raised bed plot for the less able with disabled access. Ramp access to Clubhouse. Dementia friendly.

£25,920 funding required – for specific improvements

### 6. Support nature

Bird boxes, bug hotels, hedge hog release sites, creation of meadow area at Holcroft South, use green roofs on new storage garages

Funding TBC, but mainly volunteer time

## Management

### 7. Management and Operations

Use of modern technology to improve efficiency and engagement. Easy to oversee hedge cutting schedule

Underway – volunteer time and HTC

### 8. Work in partnership to succeed

HTC to endorse our 3 year plan and promote wider benefits of allotments. Build links with local businesses, schools & clubs etc.

Underway – volunteer time and HTC

## Outcome

### 9. 100% occupancy and valued assets

Aim to become a Green Flag allotment society by 2022. Track performance of 3 year plan - member stats and feedback

Volunteer time and HTC

# 3 year plan - high level detail

Objective	Ref	Activity	Priority	Status	Estimated Cost (excl. VAT)	Proposed Funding Source	Resource	Timescale
1. Safety and security	1.1	Replace perimeter fencing and gates at all sites - except Holcroft main entrance gate	H	Requires funding	£114,328	Capital receipts	Contractors	2020
	1.2	Provision for mini digger clearance for fencing	H	Requires funding	£2,500	Capital receipts	Contractors	2020
	1.2	Replace both Holcroft garages	H	Requires funding	£12,471	Capital receipts	Contractors	2020
	1.3	Dispose both Holcroft garages + remove asbestos roofs	H	Requires funding	£1,600	Capital receipts	Contractors	2020
	1.4	Provision for Holcroft garage base repairs	H	Requires funding	£500	Capital receipts	Contractors	2020
	1.5	Riverside main gate height raised	H	Requires funding	£580	Capital receipts	Contractors	2020
2. Enhance facilities	1.6	Replace machinery sheds at Riverside, Crabtree and Willoughby	H	Requires funding	£2,367	Capital receipts	Contractors	2020
	2.1	Resurface car park at Marquis Lane (enable wheelchair access)	H	Requires funding	£2,480	Capital receipts	Contractors	2020
	2.2	Resurface car park at Holcroft North - wheelchair and dementia friendly	H	Requires funding	£8,120	Capital receipts	Contractors	2020
	2.3	Continue clearing historic rubbish at all sites	H	Ongoing	tbc	Club funds/ R&M grant	Volunteer + Contractors	2020-2022
3. Organic & Sustainable	2.4	Continue to develop communal areas at each site for social events and activities	M	Underway	n/a	n/a	Volunteer time	2020
	3.1	Commit to becoming organic club	H	Underway	n/a	n/a	Volunteer time	2020
	3.2	Move to stocking and supplying organic based products in Shop	H	Underway	n/a	n/a	Volunteer time	2021
	3.3	Move to keep materials brought on to site natural, ie burnable or compostable. Aim for plastic free.	M	Not started	n/a	n/a	Volunteer time	2020-2022
	3.4	Explore business case for solar power (security lights, shop)	L	Not started	tbc	Club funds	Volunteer time	2021
4. Community Engagement	3.5	Explore feasibility of provision of farmyard manure to sites	L	Not started	n/a	Club funds	Volunteer time	2021
	4.1	Directional Brown road signs on public highway to direct to/publicise allotments	H	Requires funding	£2,000	Capital receipts	Contractors	2020
	4.2	New website - with blog and film stories	H	Launched Jan 2020	£100	Club funds	Volunteer time	2020
	4.3	Build relationships with local schools, clubs, charities and businesses to provide opportunities e.g. Work experience and Duke Of Edinburgh awards, Princes Trust etc.	M	Underway	n/a	n/a	Volunteer time	2020
	4.4	Build relations with Plowright Craven to offer survey experience on sites	M	Not started	n/a	n/a	Volunteer time	2020
	4.5	Rent Community plots for Yoga and boot camp classes.	M	Not started	n/a	n/a	Volunteer time	2020
	4.6	Offer tea/coffee/cakes etc. at Club shop to members	M	Not started	n/a	n/a	Volunteer time	2020
	4.7	Explore feasibility of opening shop to wider community beyond members - same Sunday hours	M	Not started	n/a	n/a	Volunteer time	2020
5. Open to all	4.8	Re engage with NGS Yellow Open day charity, to explore opening sites in 2021	M	Underway.	n/a	n/a	Volunteer time	2021
	5.1	Riverside Access via new bridge + 2 gates either end	H	Requires funding	£7,940	Capital receipts	Contractors	2020
	5.2	Riverside entrance driveway extended	H	Requires funding	£1,320	Capital receipts	Contractors	2020
	5.3	Lay a new footpath between Holcroft North and South	H	Requires funding	£1,820	Capital receipts	Contractors	2020
	5.4	Disabled Access to Holcroft South raised bed plot	H	Requires funding	£1,720	Capital receipts	Contractors	2020
	5.5	Raised Beds plot for the less able and disabled at Holcroft south	H	Requires funding	£5,220	Capital receipts	Contractors	2020
	5.6	Disabled ramp access to Holcroft Clubhouse	H	Requires funding	£7,900	Capital receipts	Contractors	2020
	5.7	School liaison – education, biology, work experience	M	Not started	n/a	n/a	Volunteer time	2020
6. Support Nature	5.8	Create a dementia friendly site/plot - facilities, seating, signage at Holcroft	M	Not started	Estimate £2k tbc	Capital receipts	HTC Officer+ Volunteer time	2020-2021
	6.1	nature.	M	Underway	tbc	Club funds	Volunteer time	2020
	6.2	Create Bug hotels, bee b&b's, bird boxes	M	Not started	tbc	Club funds	Volunteer time	2021
	6.3	Use of green roofs on new store garages at Holcroft for nature and biodiversity.	M	Underway re item 1.2	n/a	n/a	as 1.2	2020
7. Management and Operations	6.4	Creation of meadow area at Holcroft South	L	Explore idea with Princes Trust	tbc	Club funds/R&M grant	Princes Trust + Volunteer time	2021
	7.1	Agreement of hedge cutting schedule and specification that is executed without the need for escalation by either HTC or EHGC	H	Underway	n/a	n/a	HTC + Volunteer time	2020
	7.2	Explore use of free software/apps to engage with members and run club e.g. shop rota, stock levels	M	Not started	n/a	n/a	Volunteer time	2020-2022
	7.3	Undertake annual member surveys via SurveyMonkey to engage and involve members to evolve the club	M	Underway	n/a	n/a	Volunteer time	2020-2022
8. Work in partnership	7.4	Evaluate volunteer roles e.g. site reps and support needed to undertake successfully	M	Not started	n/a	n/a	Volunteer time	2020-2022
	8.1	Agree 3 year Development Plan with HTC	H	Initial plan completed	n/a	n/a	HTC + Volunteer time	2020
	8.2	Annually review the plan with HTC	H	Not started	n/a	n/a	HTC + Volunteer time	2020-2022
9. 100% occupancy and valued assets	8.3	Communicate with stakeholders - news updates and plan progress on regular basis	M	Underway	n/a	n/a	Volunteer time	2020-2022
	9.1	Aim to become a green flag allotment society by 2022	M	Not started	tbc	n/a	HTC + Volunteer time	2022
	9.2	Track performance of 3 year plan - member stats and feedback	M	Not started	n/a	n/a	Volunteer time	2020-2022
					<b>Minimum est. cost</b>	<b>£172,866 excl. VAT</b>		



# A sample of achievements in 2019

- ✓ Plot clearances
- ✓ Boundary clearances
- ✓ First communal areas completed at Riverside and Holcroft
- ✓ Social media engagement to members and wider audience
- ✓ Plot 31 community project
- ✓ Two Sustainable St Albans Open Events at Holcroft by Plot 31
- ✓ A stall at the Farmers Market again
- ✓ Banned pesticides and commitment to become an organic club
- ✓ Quarterly Newsletter
- ✓ Electronic payments introduced at the shop
- ✓ Digital Marketeer appointed to committee
- ✓ Local leaflet drops
- ✓ Film stories made
- ✓ More mini plots created and rented

# Additional initiatives we will be evaluating

## Links to:

- Mum's guide to Harpenden
- Netmums
- Harpenden business network
- Local radio
- Play groups

## Competitions

- Bake off/Cook off (councillor judges)
- Best structure for growing veg

## Via our new website

- Recipes - food and drinks from allotment produce
- Teaching people how to cook (linking you tube videos)
- Weather report
- Gardening guides
- Shop stock

## Social engagement

- Afternoon tea in the allotment shop
- Flower displays in town

## Classes/Lessons/Workshops

Yoga  
Den building  
Cold frame building  
Flower arranging  
Seed swaps  
Guest speakers/talks

## Games

- Wheelbarrow run
- Easter egg hunt

## Community vantage points

- Wildflower Meadows and fruit orchard at Holcroft South around borders to increase biodiversity and to engage with local community
- Planted borders near entrance points

# Funding requirement

*Our calculations indicate that funding of £173,000 (excluding VAT) is required from the sale of EHGC allotment land to bring the allotments into the 2020s as safe, secure sites, accessible to more residents.*

*Some additional funding may be required to make Holcroft dementia friendly and to obtain green flag status.*

*This investment will provide the basis for achieving our three year plan and put in place a long overdue allotment infrastructure which will serve the local community for the next 25+ years*

*We have the vision, passion and energy, but we need funding to refresh our antiquated infrastructure*

Allotments are not a thing of the past...  
They are an asset for the future

# Appendices

- A - Allotment reach calculation
- B - Allotment benefits case studies
- C - SurveyMonkey quotes
- D - Additional allotment advantages

# Appendix A - EHGC reach calculation

	2019	2022	Comments
<b>Plots</b>			
Total plots	187	187	
Occupied plots	152	187	2019 includes 4 out of use
<b>Allotment Beneficiaries</b>			
Plot holder and family (average 2.6 per plot) =	400	486	Assumed average household size
Neighbours and friends =	1,200	1,459	Assumed neighbour/friend household visits or are given produce
Associates and families =	68	130	Assumed average household value for use of shop and social events
People in community groups (and immediate families) =	156	468	Assumes average community group size
Ex plotheholders and their reach =	2,400	2,922	Assumes attrition per year is replaced with new people
Opening the shop to more people =	0	150	Assumes shop opened to general public for library etc
<b>Total beneficiaries from current members</b>	<b>1,823</b>	<b>2,693</b>	6% (2019) and 9% (2022) of Harpenden's population
<b>Total beneficiaries over last 10 years</b>	<b>4,224</b>	<b>5,615</b>	14% (2019) and 19% (2022) of Harpenden's population

NOTE - Roundings have been applied to sum numbers

Some of our assumptions -	2019	2022
Associate Members	26	50
Community group plots/activities	2	6
Average household size	2.6	2.6
Neighbours/Friend households visiting site or produce shared	3	3
Community Group size (e.g classroom)	30	30
Attrition and replacement per year %	15%	15%
Plotheholder attrition per year	23	28
Historial period impact (years)	10	10
Ex plot holders over historical period	228	281
2011 census for Harpenden	30,000	

Note: these numbers do not include SHAGS

# Appendix B - Allotment benefits case studies

## Mental Wellbeing

“The findings first indicate that one session of allotment gardening can result in significant improvements in self esteem and mood via reductions in tension, depression, anger and confusion. These findings are supported by previous research demonstrating the health and well-being benefits of participating in green exercise activities.<sup>4,9,10</sup> With an increasing number of people residing in urban areas, a decline in the number of homes with gardens,<sup>29</sup> and the increased risk for mental ill health associated with urban living;<sup>11,12</sup> these findings are particularly important and suggest that allotment gardening might play an important role in promoting mental well-being in people residing in urban areas.”

A case–control study of the health and well-being benefits of allotment gardening

Carly J. Wood<sup>1</sup>, Jules Pretty<sup>2</sup>, Murray Griffin<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Life Sciences, University of Westminster, London W1W6UW, UK

<sup>2</sup> School of Biological Sciences and Essex Sustainability Institute, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester, Essex CO43SQ, UK

<sup>3</sup> Centre for Sports and Exercise Science, School of Biological Sciences, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester, Essex CO43SQ, UK

- It is predicted that in next 5 years social prescribers working with the NHS will give out 900k appointments a year that will include gardening
- Gardening can be a medicine. It can relax, it can rejuvenate and help with social interaction
- All these benefits are not only good for the body, but the mind and spirit too.
- Medical profession now sees that they can prescribe gardening to heal.
- GARDENING HEALS!

There is a bacteria in the soil now known to changes chemicals in the brain to produce serotonin. Bacterium Mycobacterium vaccae has been proven to have antidepressant properties. Mud is good for you..!

BBC news, Dr Chris Lowry

## Biodiversity

Data from the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG) shows that the average allotment has up to 30% more wildlife diversity than a typical urban park

BBC Gardener's World

## Appendix C – SurveyMonkey quotes

“Fencing is essential, allotment holders are having produce destroyed by muntjac at Crabtree. This makes allotment use economically not viable, especially when you include further costs of personally protecting crops. We also have dogs running into the site from the Lea Valley path which makes it unsafe for young children to enjoy the allotments”

“Fencing and gates 1.8m high are essential to avoid trespass and ensure sites safe. Sites need to be free of historical rubbish and boundaries well kept and clear. Access paths and parking areas should be well maintained and less abled friendly, accessible to all”

“A secure shed for communal equipment. Riverside shed non flammable has been repaired I don't know how many times since before I had allotments over 30 yrs.”

“Improved fencing around the sites, particularly the one with the shop, is a very big priority... especially as the community plots wants to be developed - and maintained with confidence that it will be looked after/not trespassed on”

“Access is probably our biggest issue, our plot is a long way from the entrance gate. A closer access point (e.g. a gate from the back of the Memorial Hall car park) would really help. Better (i.e. wider/level) paths would be a significant improvement but some of our gardeners have reduced mobility and the transportation bulky material (e.g. compost, wooden fruit supports) from the current gate is physically demanding work.”

“Keeping out trespassers”

“To stop all our hard work getting eaten”

“Protection from deer”

“Good safe fences and gates”

“Good clearing of waste and trimming of surrounding trees.”

“Communal area where you can stop and have a coffee break whilst working on your plot and somewhere where plot holders could hold a communal bbq”

“General maintenance of the perimeter fencing to bring it back up to good standard.”

“Regular trimming of trees shadowing plots”



## Appendix D – Additional allotment advantages

- “Being outside in green space is really good for us - it's something we need as a natural therapy on a regular basis”
- “What is it about a garden or an outside space that is so healing?”
- “Working in the garden enlivens the senses again”
- “Living material can quite literally bring someone back to life again”
- “Holistic gardening - plants and people benefit each other”
- 'The peace that it brings to me'.
- 'I get lost in it'
- 'Brought me back to life'
- “Being close to plants makes you feel grounded and connected - time to stop thinking about any physical pain”
- Gardening IS GOOD FOR YOU!

- Use of gardening to treat depression and social anxiety. Demonstrates that everything changes and there is hope for the future
- 'Prescription gardening' 'Green medicine'

- The theory of spending time in green spaces and prescribing gardening instead of pills is gaining momentum
- Community gardens now exist to help those suffering from mental health issues and to help people manage chronic pain. Patients are now referred by doctors when traditional approaches are not working.
- People are prescribed community gardens to address the feelings of social isolation
- Gives a sense of belonging