



1. PREAMBLE

1.1 Fundamentally the management of site maintenance and all that goes with it lies with the Council, although allotment associations can be very active, in undertaking maintenance work on behalf of the Council that especially assists in developing a community spirit.

1.2 There are areas where substantial improvement could be made and with good practice and a determination to succeed, beneficial changes could be achieved. Essential standards of maintenance should be set under current arrangements followed by a planned improvement programme based on priority issues/sites. Planned capital expenditure should first reflect essential improvement and then more aspirational issues.

1.3 Thus, maintenance categories can be defined as:

- that which is routine
- that which is essential to provide a safe environment for tenants
- that which if undertaken will reduce longer term costs.

2. ROUTINE MAINTENANCE

2.1 To prevent deterioration of a site and to maintain a safe and healthy environment for tenants there is a series of actions that need to be undertaken, some will be proactive and others reactive.

2.2 The following table outlines activities:

Grass cutting	proactive	the main thoroughfares and grassed car parking areas need to be cut on a regular basis during the main growing season
	reactive	outside the main growing season, growth on the main thoroughfares and car parking areas needs to be controlled as and when necessary
Hedges	proactive	where these do not abut a tenanted plot, growth needs to be controlled in the spring and autumn (outside of the bird nesting season)
	reactive	where there is a safety risk, relevant action needs to be taken
Trees	proactive	inspection every six months in spring and autumn
	reactive	removal of unsafe/fallen trees and branches
Water	proactive	the supply needs to be turned on at the end of March and off at the beginning of November
	reactive	any taps found to be leaking need to be repaired
Fences	proactive	inspected annually to maintain site security
	reactive	damage needs to be repaired to maintain site security
Locks	proactive	code changes annually
	reactive	maintenance / replacement as and when necessary
Gates	proactive	six monthly inspections



	reactive	resolution of any problems that develop
Thoroughfare	proactive	annual inspection and plan any maintenance
	reactive	Arrange repairs as soon as possible
Plots condition	proactive	Inspect and discuss with tenant before a problem arises
	reactive	Inspect and take action as soon as possible (encourage to tend, or evict)
Plot surrender	proactive	Prompt office/warden if tenant is thinking of leaving. Line up new tenant.
	reactive	weeds need to be controlled and adjacent pathways maintained
Health and Safety	proactive	Prepare Risk Assessments for each site - Bi-annual inspections.
	reactive	Action repairs / maintenance as soon as notified or secure area.

3. HEALTH AND SAFETY

3.1 Whilst each tenant has a responsibility for their own health and safety, they do have a duty of care to others. Likewise, the Town Council has a duty of care towards its tenants, persons who may enter an allotment site and properties adjacent to the site. Whilst many issues may be identified during Routine Maintenance activities, particular attention needs to be given to trees, where there is a danger of branches falling within or without the site and the potential of damage to persons and, or, property.

4. STRATEGIC PLANNING

4.1 Repairs and maintenance as a result of routine maintenance activities and health and safety issues make demands on an all too often inadequate budget. Capital investment might usefully bring about more robust fencing, gates, access arrangements and fittings; this would undoubtedly reduce ongoing revenue costs in favour of developmental improvement. To achieve this, potential improvements need to be identified and properly costed so that realistic planning and budgetary provision can be made. Planned capital expenditure should first reflect essential improvement and then more aspirational issues.

4.2 The areas that could be considered for capital investment are:

- Fences
- Gates
- Security
- Water supply

5. FENCES

5.1 The ongoing costs of fence and boundary maintenance need to be identified and ongoing forecast costs compared with the capital cost of reinstatement work.



5.2 There are a variety of fencing types used on allotment sites, including palisade, closeboard, chain-link and herras fencing (erected in a permanent manner). There may also be hedge boundaries and the rear boundaries of neighbouring properties (which are not the Town Council's responsibility). The most durable long-term choice of fencing, if budget allowed, would be palisade fencing with a splayed top. The alternative with a lower cost, but a shorter life, would be either chain-link or herras fencing. Whichever type of fencing is used, it will not deter the determined intruder to an allotment site.

5.3 Each site needs to be surveyed as required, to identify the work required and its priority.

6. GATES

6.1 As with Fences, the ongoing cost of the maintenance needs to be identified along with the suitability of the installed gates to maintain a reasonable degree of security for the site.

6.2 Each site needs to be surveyed to identify the work required and its priority.

7. SECURITY

7.1 Site security is paramount to many tenants but beyond the good maintenance/improvement of fences and gates, other security tends to be only as good as the outlay as it comes in at a much higher cost.

7.2 A possible option is to use Video Surveillance which can be used if there is an identified problem. Video surveillance can be key to recording the presence of intruders but more than one camera may be needed to give adequate coverage. Cameras designed for use outdoors are notable for their ability to withstand various weather conditions; they feature a more durable casing and come at a much higher cost than indoor models. They would also require continuous recording. Cameras can cost between £50 and £300. Installation costs and provision of power would be additional significant costs. Consideration also needs to be given to positioning, administration, access and storage of data obtained.

7.3 Securing the gates to allotments depends on the reliability of the gate locks and with frequent use the current locks have to be replaced often. It is also easy for the combination of the lock to be changed by anyone who has knowledge of the code to open the lock. The ongoing costs of lock maintenance and replacement need to be compared with either the installation of a high-quality lock, or the annual replacement of the current type of lock.

8. WATER SUPPLY

8.1 Key to irrigation of plots is a reliable water supply that currently is from the public main supply. The age and type of pipework within each site is unknown – some of it may be metal whilst others may be plastic. The occurrence of water leaks is infrequent and the wholesale replacement of pipework would need to be cost analysed.

POLICIES OR PROCESSES TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THIS DOCUMENT

Maintenance Strategy Records.

To be clarified.

FURTHER ASSISTANCE

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Alternatively, you may write to us at Andover Town Council, 38 Chantry Way, Chantry House, Andover, Hampshire, SP10 1LS.

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