

	Andover Town Council	Item No.
<p>It is recommended that Members instruct officers to work collaboratively with the Site Warden and relevant parties (including Sparsholt College and potential volunteers) to develop a detailed, costed proposal. This should include clarity on funding, tenancy arrangements, responsibilities, risks, and long-term management. A full report should then be brought back to Committee for consideration.</p>		
Produced for: Allotments Committee	By: Allotment Officer	Date of Report: 14 th January 2026
<p>Background:</p> <p>Following the issue of a second non-cultivation letter in August 2025 for two plots at Old Winton Road, the tenant advised that they intend to surrender both plots once they have had the opportunity to collect the autumn fruit and undertake initial clearance. The plots currently require significant work to return them to a condition suitable for re-letting.</p> <p>The tenant has paid the invoice for the 2025–2026 period and was permitted additional time by the Town Clerk to clear and prepare the plots before formally handing them back. The plots are paid up to October 2026, after which a decision is needed regarding their future use.</p> <p>The plots consist largely of mature fruit trees of heritage varieties, arranged as an orchard, alongside a polytunnel. No other cultivation has taken place for some time, and there is a substantial accumulation of waste that must be removed.</p>		
<p>Site Warden’s proposal:</p> <p>The Site Warden has put forward an initial concept, prompted by the heritage fruit trees already established on the plots. A local tenant employed at Sparsholt College may be able to facilitate support through the college’s apprenticeship programme—potentially assisting with clearance, tree identification, pruning, and restoration work. This could create an opportunity to establish a community orchard for the benefit of all Old Winton Road allotment holders.</p> <p>There is also interest in exploring whether a beehive could be introduced in the future, subject to suitability and relevant accreditation. The tenant from Sparsholt is an accredited member of Andover Beekeepers.</p> <p>As per the wardens suggestion the plot could be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Community Orchard – with professional pruning and care from Sparsholt apprentices • An apairy – to produce honey, and help the ecology of Old Winton Road allotments. • A learning facility for a school. 		
<p>Considerations</p> <p>While the idea has potential community benefit, there are <i>significant</i> questions still to be resolved, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who would fund the clearance, ongoing maintenance, and any equipment or welfare facilities required? • Who would hold the tenancy of the plots once surrendered—an individual, the Council, or the allotment association? • Who would be responsible and accountable for managing the orchard, coordinating volunteers, and ensuring ongoing safety compliance? • What are the full costs and resource implications for the Council? • What health and safety assessments, insurance requirements, and supervision arrangements would be necessary for Sparsholt College involvement? • To note that the tenancy is paid up to October, but once the current tenant vacates the plot, thought needs to go to who will maintain the plot whilst information is sought and a plan put in place. 		

- **If the plot is going to be returned to a working allotment plot the trees will need to be removed and this would come at a cost.**

At this stage, the proposal remains conceptual and lacks the detail needed for an informed decision

Recommendation

It is recommended that Members instruct officers to work collaboratively with the Site Warden and relevant parties (including Sparsholt College and potential volunteers) to develop a detailed, costed proposal. This should include clarity on funding, tenancy arrangements, responsibilities, risks, and long-term management. A full report should then be brought back to Committee for consideration.

