



<b>Committee</b>	Assets & Services Committee
<b>Month</b>	September 2023
<b>Report Title</b>	Allotments
<b>Report Author</b>	Terry Frostick- Operations Manager
<b>Attachments</b>	None



### Summary

Saffron Walden Town Council own the allotments at Little Walden Road (LWR) and rent Crocus Fields (CF). There are 33 half plots and 20 full plots at LWR and 25 half plots and 14 full plots at Crocus Fields.

The running expenses for the allotments increase each year. Although the LWR plots are owned by the Town Council, the site at Crocus Fields is rented from Audley End Estates at a rent of £1,171.06 per annum. The rent has remained at this level for the last 2 years although it will raise in the future.

Water rates paid for both sites during 2022 was £1,036. 67,540 gallons of water was used at LWR and 62,000 gallons at CF. 2022 was an especially dry year but high usage has continued into this year although it has been wet with 27,280 gallons used at LWR and 27,060 at CF. Water to date has cost £245.20.

Staffing costs are kept to a minimum but are increasing each year and capital monies for major works to the sites such as water tanks, roadways and general site maintenance is limited, and a fund needs to set aside going forward.

Rents charged currently for LWR and CF are £42.55 for a half-plot and £63.20 for a full plot. There is a large disparity, and it is suggested rents could rise to £50 per annum for a half-plot and for a full plot the increase is staged over 2 years in year 24/25 £85 then in year 25/26 increase a full plot to £100 with a 5% increase in 26/27 and 5% thereafter each year. This equates to less than £1 per week for a half plot and less than £2 per week for a full plot.

### Recommendation

To consider and action using one of the following options:

1. Raise rents from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024
  - a. to the suggested £50 per annum for a half-plot
  - b. and for a full plot the increase is staged over 2 years
    - i. in year 24/25 £85
    - ii. then in year 25/26 increase a full plot to £100 with a 5% increase in 26/27 and 5% thereafter each year.

This would bring this Council in line with rents charged elsewhere in the district and will keep rents in line with increasing costs.

2. Rents are collected from 1<sup>st</sup> April each year and have been rising at 5% per annum. Continue with this formula until the rents collected cover the outgoing expenses over many years.