

Report to Stanwick Parish Council meeting 17th March 2022

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Allotment Green Strategy

This report is prepared in accordance with action 1.20 of the Four Year Plan

1. Background

1.1 Climate projections for the UK indicate that over the next 20 years, winters will become warmer and wetter, and the summers hotter and drier.

1.2 Allotment sites offer a number of benefits that can contribute to mitigating climate change

- By reducing food miles
- Hedging (around the boundary) captures more carbon than trees
- Offers good habitats for bees and insects and encourages bio-diversity
- Good soil management and appropriate ground cover management can help to reverse soil degradation. Reversing this trend will help to address the loss of organic matter from the soil, reduce soil compaction and erosion, and help to reverse the trend in mineral decline in vegetables
- Food growing spaces contribute to mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change through carbon reduction and sustainable design. Other sustainability benefits can be considerable, such as reduction in air miles, reduction in carbon emissions and improvements to air quality through locally grown food
- Carbon emissions (including reducing energy use, more sustainable transport and less waste) can be reduced by between 2kg and 5kg of carbon equivalent for every kilogram of vegetable produced
- can lead to a reduction in food waste through composting and reduced food packaging, contributing to the national and local zero waste agenda

2. What could be done to enhance climate change mitigation at Stanwick allotments?

2.1 Encourage rain water harvesting

2.2 Encourage the use of 'peat' free products

2.3 Encourage composting

2.4 Encourage re use of materials and recycling where items cannot be reused.

2.5 Encourage organic methods of pest and disease control [warmer winters mean that pests and diseases are less likely to be killed off]

2.6 Encourage effective watering practices

- Reduce the amount of water lost to the atmosphere and ensure that any applied water moves into the root zone.
- Mulching helps to increase the efficiency of water use because it reduces the loss of water from the soil surface by evaporation
- Weeds growing amongst vegetables, or flowers, will compete for light, nutrients, space and water. Some common weeds transpire four times as much water as crop plants
- Watering early in the day where possible [night time watering can lead to mildew and fungi]

2.7 Encourage introduction of organic matter as this holds water in dry weather and can act as a buffer in extreme weather.

3. Action for the Council to consider

3.1 Should the allotment rules be assessed to see if they could incorporate more 'green credentials'?

3.2 The council could examine options for group water collection and storage

3.3 How it will encourage practices that enhance climate mitigation