

East Hoathly with Halland Garden Plots

Presentation for Neighbourhood Plan

Slide 1 Title Page

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak at this event.

History of the Garden Plots

Slide 2 Church Marks Lane Allotments

East Hoathly had allotments many years ago at Church Marks Lane.

In the 1950's the land was taken and used for housing. No alternative land was provided for allotments.

Over the intervening years the Parish Council has sought to provide land for allotments with little success.

As demand from Parishioners increased the search intensified, particularly in the early 2000's. This proved far from easy but eventually in 2013, 4 acres of land on Harrisons Field was acquired by the Parish Council in a land swap.

The Early Years

Slide 3 Early Plots and Water Supply

In 2014 the field was ploughed and harrowed and divided into plots. Unfortunately that first year there was no water supply (South East Water Issue) so considering it was a very dry summer, this made life very difficult. Water had to be brought to the site by individual plot holders. Some people did find this all too hard and time consuming so dropped out.

Getting to Grips with the Site

Nevertheless a strong core of the early pioneers continued. We obtained a good water supply and strategies were developed to deal with the soil and the conditions to make gardening more manageable.

Slide 4 Raised beds

Describe beds on slide, new plot, existing plot and higher beds on community plots.)

Appearance of the site, making progress

Slide 5 Different plots and beautiful flowers and veg.

We are now at the start of our fifth season. There are several excellent plots and some very good and experienced gardeners. This is attracting more people to take up plots and we can help with benefit of experience of the site. The aim is also to make the site as attractive as possible. There are many flowers but vegetables can be beautiful too.

Why are garden plots important?

1) Health professionals now recognise the beneficial effects of gardening both for physical and mental health.

Physical, Better than any work out in a gym, this is functional exercise in the open air with a purpose and produce at the end. Beats a treadmill any day.

Mental Health meeting likeminded people and engaging in a common activity helps prevent social isolation. It also gives a sense of achievement.

2) Food and Diet

Slide 6 Food

Provide good food, with known provenance and it tastes better.

Not only food for the plot holders. The Community garden (more later) and sometimes other plot holders provides food for clients and food banks. Neighbours are also very appreciative of surplus veg

3) Engaging with the wider community

Slide 7 Engagement with the wider Community

Some of the plots have been adopted for a Community Garden and this has been recognised by public health authorities as a resource of therapeutic value to residents of East Hoathly and the wider community. More details in the written submission. The pleasure and progress people make from visiting the Community garden is amazing. Thanks to James and Tom.

The garden plotters as a whole are supporting the Horticultural Society, and I must mention the Pumpkin Photo. The pleasure this win gave to Louis from the Community Garden was amazing.

Garden plotters also contribute flowers and produce for the Harvest festival in the church. Slide also shows flowers provided for a street party.

A Green Space for the Community

Slide 8 A Green Space For the Community

I cannot emphasise enough what a beautiful site this is.

We have endeavoured to make the site as attractive as possible with a mixture of flowers and veg. Last year we also had a wild flower meadow and hope to develop this. People are really beginning to enjoy walking through the site (Public footpaths go through the site) and we have received many compliments.

The Community Garden is also planting an orchard which will further enhance the site.

The sunsets are amazing. No better place to relax and forget the cares of the world.

The Future

Slide 9 The Future

We have a wish list and hope to do some fund raising and apply for grants.

Provision of secure shelter and storage.

Provision of Toilets on the Site.

Deer and Rabbit Proof Fencing

Immunity from development in perpetuity

Recognition as an asset of Community Value.

And in return I think of us as early settlers, we are now established and have much to offer back to the community,

1)Working with the Drs Surgery, promoting physical and mental health of Parishioners. through gardening'

2)Producing food and recipes for others to encourage cooking from scratch and healthy diets.

3) Working with the school, helping to educate children in the processing of growing their own food .

3)Working with other societies in the Parish besides the Horticultural society. We could explore providing food for the pop in lunch for instance.

4) Assisting Halland and East Hoathly interaction. The site is strategically placed between the 2 villages and with better footpaths could be a useful meeting point.

5)The site is beautiful and we need to explore more ways of making it a Social meeting place for others to enjoy, already we are promoting a Saturday morning drop in for plot holders which could be extended to visitors. We are part of the Open Garden Scheme

The Garden Plots need to be embedded in the Fabric of the Parish.

Slide 10 Finally.

I am a firm believer in the benefits of gardening as you may have gathered.

Above all it fosters resilience to cope with life's ups and downs, things go wrong and sometimes you have to start again or sometimes just soldier on.

Point to veg surviving the winter and new shoots.

If you would be happy all your life plant a garden

Thank you