

SUMMARY OF ALLOTMENT PROVISION IN CHELTENHAM IN 2009

Allotments in Cheltenham are provided and managed by Cheltenham Borough Council (C.B.C), Parish Councils (P.C.) and other organisations.

Demand for allotments has risen dramatically in the last few years for a variety of reasons. These include concerns about the use of pesticides and chemicals, the environment, food miles, food quality, food knowledge among children, the rising cost of fruit and vegetables and lifestyle choices.

In the last 18 months alone, the number of people on a waiting list for a CBC allotment has more than doubled and this is despite an increase in the number of plots and an increase in plot turnover, as site wardens and officers have been working hard to identify and act on uncultivated allotments.

It is estimated that over 850 people in Cheltenham are on a waiting list for an allotment. The number for CBC managed sites is about 600 and the table below gives details relating to both CBC sites and other sites, where known.

Site Name	Ownership	Number of Plots	Waiting List
Alma Road	CBC	68	166
Asquith Road	CBC	157	169
Hatherley Road	CBC	25	106
Hayden Road (2 sites)	CBC	139	64
Midwinter	CBC	154	110
Reddings Road	CBC	32	67
Severn Road	CBC	9	40
Terry Ashdown	CBC	43	47
Warden Hill	CBC	33	101
All Saints Church	Church	n/a	n/a
Blacksmiths Lane	Prestbury P.C.	150	76
Charlton Kings (5 sites)	Charlton Kings P.C.	190	97
Church Road	Gloucester County Council	16	n/a
Hall Road	Private	80	53
Swindon Village	Swindon Village P.C.	32	5

Some people are on more than one waiting list. 60% of CBC applicants are on 2 CBC lists. So, the waiting list numbers above total more than the actual number of people waiting. With some non-CBC lists being closed in 2008, actual demand may be higher than signified here.

PLOT TURNOVER AND AVERAGE WAIT TIME FOR AN ALLOTMENT

Plot turnover is approximately 20% annually on CBC managed sites. People being offered plots now have been waiting from between 9 months and two years, depending on the site applied for. Those applying now (with 600 people already on lists for a total number of 660 CBC plots) will be waiting for an average of 4.5 years, although there will be considerable variation from this figure depending on the site. For some, the wait might be 6 years or more.

RECENT HISTORY OF TENANT NUMBERS ON CBC ALLOTMENT SITES

Measures to increase plot numbers that have already implemented include dividing large plots (following a 'size to suit' policy), creating new plots in areas of rough ground and bringing derelict areas back into cultivation. The table below demonstrates the increase in tenant numbers on CBC sites in the last few years. These options are now mostly exhausted.

Jun-01	Jun-02	Jun-03	Jun-04	Jun-05	Jun-06	Jun-07	Jun-08
475	488	492	495	519	548	555	625

The number of tenancies rose by 44 or 9% in the 4 years 2001 to 2005.
The number of tenancies rose by 106 or 20% in the 3 years 2005 to 2008.

HISTORY OF WAITING LIST NUMBERS FOR CBC ALLOTMENT SITES

In order to fully appreciate the increase in demand for allotments in recent years, the following table shows 8 years applications history for CBC sites.

SITE	Jun-01	Jun-02	Jun-03	Jun-04	Jun-05	Jun-06	Dec-06	Jun-07	Dec-07	Jun-08	Dec-08
Alma Road	0	1	3	8	10	38	52	66	74	101	151
Asquith Road	4	4	12	38	36	67	103	119	123	146	179
Hatherley Road	1	4	3	12	18	32	44	40	45	63	91
Hayden Road	0	0	1	8	10	22	37	10	26	26	70
Midwinter	0	0	6	19	22	44	76	44	70	67	114
Reddings	0	4	1	12	12	27	36	31	32	37	64
Severn Road	1	0	0	7	9	12	20	28	35	41	52
Terry Ashdown	0	3	0	0	3	14	20	25	23	37	48
Warden Hill	0	2	1	15	6	23	30	41	49	71	95
Totals	6	18	27	119	126	279	418	404	477	589	866

Please note that, on average, 60% of applicants are on two waiting lists and the 'Total' number listed at the bottom of the table is therefore not the total number of people waiting for a CBC allotment. The actual number of people waiting in any year is likely to be about two thirds of the total.

CONCLUSIONS

Measures to increase the number of allotment plots available in Cheltenham have been successful and have resulted in a 20% increase in the number of tenancies in the three years 2005 to 2008.

Furthermore, measures to ensure that abandoned and uncultivated allotments are identified promptly and handed on to new tenants have been successful, resulting in a very high percentage of plots being in active cultivation at any given time.

However, the options to regenerate rough or derelict ground have largely been exhausted and there are limited options for further plot splits.

Despite effective measures to increase plot numbers, demand for allotments continues to increase. Residents now have to wait many years for a plot and there seems to be good evidence that the current supply of plots within and throughout the Borough is insufficient.