

ABINGDON TOWN COUNCIL

Report to	Environment and Amenities committee
Meeting date	17 September 2024
Report author	Tim Badcock
Agenda item	8

Cemetery & Outdoor Services Manager's report on Wick Farm Nurseries closure and Outdoor Services storage

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To update the committee on the future of our long-term relationship with Wick Farm Nurseries and how this impacts on the already pressing need for more storage space.
- 1.2 To seek delegation to officers to proceed with the below recommendations.

2. Summary

- 2.1 Our nurseryman at Wick Farm Nurseries has now been served notice on the nursery at Wick Hall. The Town Council has outgrown storage in its current two rented storage spaces and with the added need to store tubs, containers, poles and infrastructure that has previously been stored at Wick Farm, we need more urgently than ever to find new, larger storage space. This could include moving from our rented storage yard at Stert Street and our rented unit at Shippon to a larger unit that could accommodate all of our storage / horticultural needs. We now also have a need for space to prepare floral displays.

3. Action required and recommendations

- 3.1 My recommendation is for the committee to approve the erection of a polytunnel at Spring Gardens Cemetery and to delegate to officers the task of finding new secure storage for the works teams various equipment using the newly allocated Open spaces storage budget (108/4103) of £24,000 and if possible Stert Street storage (108/4101), Shippon storage (108/4102) and Christmas lights storage (403/4851).
- 3.2 A saving to the Floral displays budget lines will undoubtedly be made by carrying out the above horticultural tasks in house although this is hard to predict at this moment in time.

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4. **Link to strategic plan and objectives**

4.1 The provision of floral displays promotes the councils four key objectives.

5. **Background**

4.2 Our nurseryman at Wick Farm Nurseries has now been served notice on the nursery at Wick Hall following its recent purchase and subsequent planning applications being submitted. This leaves him with a small piece of land for the short term which isn't suitable for continuing with the growing, planting and bringing on of the towns flower displays. Over the last 30+ years he has also very kindly stored all of the poles, tubs, planters etc and received delivery of compost on behalf of the town council, becoming integral to the way in which we deliver our service.

6. **Key information and options**

6.1 A part solution for planting up and bringing on of floral displays could be to erect a polytunnel on ground behind the cemetery yard. With the assistance of Chris Ford the nurseryman, plants could be ordered in, planted up and cared for by the works team. This would be a short-term solution but ideally we will find a premisses that could solve both this and the storage issues. As discussed at a previous meeting of this committee, the council has already outgrown its current storage space.

7. **Climate change/green implications**

7.1 Town centre flower bed planting and the addition of plants in hanging baskets etc in urban spaces increases the town's biodiversity and carbon capture.

8. **Financial/budget implications**

8.1 Using the Storage budget (108/4103) and reallocation of other budget lines as detailed above we will hopefully be able to fund new storage facilities.

9. **HR implications**

9.1 Taking on the planting and bringing on of the hanging baskets and tubs will impact on works team time. It is hoped that we will be back to full complement soon and, with the assistance of Chris Ford from Wick Farm Nurseries, I am confident that we can continue to deliver floral displays for the town and its visitors to enjoy.

10. **Supporting papers and appendices**

Attached letter from Wick Farm Nurseries.