

# St Helen's Avenue allotments

## ***Community leased allotments for growing produce & flowers***

An area of land between St Helen's Avenue and A4074 flanked by the Cuckoo Pen, Benson Brook and open fields. Access from St Helen's Avenue by grassed public footpath. The primary aim of the allotments is for growing of produce by allotment holders who lease the plots annually. The public footpath provides opportunities for walkers to access the Brook and circular walks. The community allotment offers opportunities for social interaction/knowledge and sharing of produce. The flowers, hedges and trees provide nectar sources for insects and habitat & foraging for birds, small mammals etc.

### **What You Will Find Here**

- A large area of grassland divided into allotment plots of varying size, generally separated by grass paths and demarcated by fences to deter rabbits & deer
- A gated and grassed public footpath runs from St Helens Avenue leading to the footpath along the Benson Brook. The path is popular with dog walkers. (Dogs must be kept on a lead).
- Allotment plots include glass houses, fruit cages and garden sheds in various states of repair/disrepair. Some are derelict. Some plots have fruit trees.
- A mix of fencing surrounds the site and is often overgrown with scrub and ivy.
- There are a small number of uncultivated/rarely cultivated plots, despite waiting list
- The community allotment provides a focal space and offers opportunities to learn, share produce and socialise
- Water troughs provide a water source for allotment holders.

### **Next Steps**

- The grass footpaths are mown in summer to keep them open for access
- Annual trimming of vegetation on boundaries is needed to prevent encroachment
- An allotment association should be set up to encourage adherence to lease conditions including better use/ release/sharing of underutilised plots. Would encourage produce & seed sharing/ wildlife friendly cultivation/ better management as well as strengthen the allotment community.

### **Technical Summary**

Habitat: rough grassland, scrub and trees between cultivated plots

Recreation value: high

### **Management Summary**

Leased as allotments and surrounded by open fields, Cuckoo Pen and Benson Brook.

The allotments are managed by allotment holders but the footpath network and community allotment provide a benefit for the wider community, for walkers, for social interaction, swapping produce etc.

The variety of flowers, fruit trees etc provide benefits for wildlife and pollinators as well as habitat for birds, small mammals and other animals.

Dogs must be kept on a lead.

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