

Presented by the Windermere In Bloom Advisory Group on behalf of the Windermere Town Council



RHS **BRITAIN IN BLOOM**
Finalist 2012

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ORREST DRIVE ALLOTMENTS

BACKGROUND:

In 2009, the South Lakes Development Trust did two things to kick start this project:

- ♦ they asked who would like an allotment and put together a waiting list of over 80 local people;
- ♦ they identified 50+ potential sites of unused land which could be turned into allotments, if negotiated with land owners.

Securing land was the most difficult challenge as all the potential plots lay within the Lake District National Park, where development land carries a significant premium. However, when the Town Council took on leadership of the project in 2011, one site had been identified – the field behind the Orrest Drive flats.

This is part of a Council estate in one of the least affluent areas of Windermere and garden space is extremely limited. The Town Council secured the lease of the land in January 2012. From then on, the Advisory Group took over development of the allotments site.



The site before development

THE PROJECT:

Until this year, there were no allotment sites in Windermere and the community clearly had the will and desire to cultivate. This project is turning unused, derelict and ugly outdoor space behind the Orrest Drive flats into 14 plots for vegetable and flower growing by the local community. The facilities on site are:

- ♦ A fenced and gated growing area;
- ♦ 14 plots divided using wooden stakes;
- ♦ A slate gravel path running through the site for access;
- ♦ 4 wooden composters;
- ♦ A storage shed, with water harvesting system attached;
- ♦ A tree seat;
- ♦ A scrub area for planting of fruit bushes

All 14 plots have been taken up by the local community and digging started during the week commencing 18 June 2012. An informal opening event takes place on 18th July.

ORREST DRIVE ALLOTMENTS

THE ADVISORY GROUP:

There are 9 members in total and the group is chaired by a local resident. Membership is largely comprised of local people who are on the allotments waiting list and town councillors. It meets nearly every month. The group are hands on and creative with the project. They have obtained a 2nd hand shed, from a local builder and have secured water butts free of charge from the utilities company.

Name	Representation
Debbie Binch (Chair)	Local resident, Windermere Reflections
Gareth Beacock	Local resident
Carlo Serino	Local resident
Joan Stocker	Town Councillor
Lisa Greasley	Town Councillor and Windermere in Bloom
Penny Henderson	Town Councillor
Alan Marsh	Town Councillor
Sandra Metcalfe	Allotment Holder
Lesley Snowdon	Allotment Holder



Plots being marked out prior to the start of digging

ORREST DRIVE ALLOTMENTS

ALLOTMENTS ADVISORY GROUP

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Date Approved: 2011 (*subject to annual review*)

1. Overall Function

To provide a means by which Windermere Town Council will provide allotments to the Parish.

To make recommendations to Windermere Town Council as appropriate. To engage the help of outside contractors and members of the public to achieve 1.1 and 1.2.

2. Relationship to the Windermere Town Council

The Allotments Advisory Group is a group within the Town Council, drawn from Town Councillors and members of the public. In order to provide the Parish with allotments, the Town Council have formed the Advisory Group to assist in the running of these.

3. Meetings

Meetings shall be held at least quarterly.

The Agenda for such meetings should be drawn up by the Clerk in consultation with the Chairman of the Advisory Group in consultation with other members and circulated to members of the group.

Windermere Town Council shall receive the minutes of each meeting.

4. Membership and Quorum

The Advisory Group shall be elected annually and consist of 5 members of the Town Council plus up to 5 members from the local community.

The Clerk to the Town Council shall also attend meetings but is not eligible to vote.

A quorum shall be a minimum of 2 Councillors and 2 persons from the local community.

5. Chairperson

The Chairperson shall be elected annually by the Advisory Group.

6. Specific Functions and Powers

To inspect the site at least four times per annum with the Town Steward.

Advising the Town Council on other matters relating to the allotments.

To update the Town Council on all such matters and recommend proposals for future projects.

7. Finance

The Council will establish a budget for the group to work within.

Where practicable, 3 quotations should be obtained by the Advisory Group for work undertaken.

Through their minutes, the Advisory Group to provide to the Town Council an update of expenditure on a regular basis.

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FUNDING & SUPPORT:

The Advisory Group put together a costed plan of what would be required on site and total costs amounted to nearly £8,000. The first few months of 2012 were focused on funding and the following successes were achieved:

- ◆ The Awards for All scheme of the National Lottery pledged £3,800;
- ◆ Windermere Town Council pledged funding for fencing and pathways and have provided insurance cover via their policy;
- ◆ The Ambleside & Windermere Lions pledged £500 towards fencing;
- ◆ United Utilities gave £500 towards composting and have provided 10 water butts and connectors free of charge;
- ◆ TACT, the local food group, have raised £100 towards the site sign;
- ◆ A local builder provided a very sturdy shed at a cut down price.

The group will continue to receive support from the Town Council, but will need to manage the allotments on a cost neutral basis. Charges for each allotment have been set at £1 per M2. Each plot is approximately 50m2 and this should resource the ongoing needs of the site, but the group do not rule out fundraising in the future.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPTION:

The project is focused on cultivation into a communal setting - an allotments site in a built up area. The Advisory Group is drawn from the community and plot preference is given to those people who live closest to the site, especially in the flats. At the moment, demand for plots is just about neutral to supply, but demand may increase over time and the group are keen to look at ways to provide community resource on site. The current plan is to plant fruit bushes in some scrubland on the site and encourage local residents to grow, pick and bake.



Composters

There are several design features on the site which encourage the plot-holders to work together as a community. They are:

- ◆ Composting – there are 4 composters, two cold and two hot. These need to be managed carefully by the group as a whole;
- ◆ Storage Shed – this is for communal use and working arrangements need to be agreed;
- ◆ Water harvesting – this is provided via 10 water butts off the shed and will need careful management by the group as a whole.

ORREST DRIVE ALLOTMENTS

ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY:

- ♦ The site has stunning views from the top end. A cotoneaster tree has been left in place and a tree seat made so that time out can be a pleasurable experience and the view enjoyed by all. In future, there are plans to develop bird boxes around this area, to encourage wild-life.
- ♦ The site is located next to a banking which fills with litter from the nearby recycling centre. If allowed to get out of hand, it will spoil the look of the site and plot-holders are talking about starting some communal litter-picks.
- ♦ It is hoped that, over time, good compost will be developed on the site and recycled into the land, improving the fertility and usefulness of the soil.
- ♦ Travel by car to the site is disallowed in the plot-holder agreement and no parking is provided. Tools and equipment can be stored on site in the shed.

GARDENING ACHIEVEMENT:

The plot-holders are at the very early stages of turning this waste ground into a growing oasis, but digging has begun.

- ♦ The soil is poor and needs lots of nutrition. The early priorities are digging over and stone removal;
- ♦ Compost will be provided by the local council, for a small fee. The compost has been recycled from green waste collected around the area;
- ♦ A variety of fruit bushes have been donated by a local resident and they will be planted to provide some autumnal colour and harvest.



New composting area



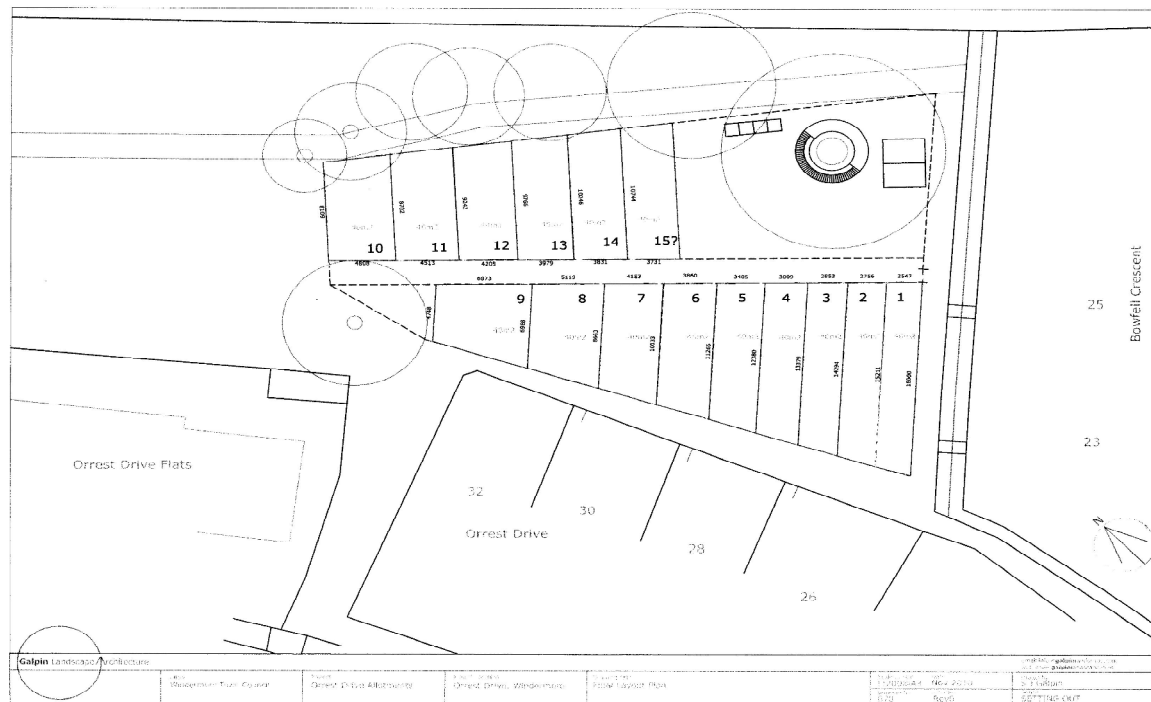
Laying the ground work

ORREST DRIVE ALLOTMENTS

THE FUTURE:

This site is important to all Windermere's citizens. There are another 50+ plots of unused land which could be brought back into community use. If this project is successful, the movement towards communal horticulture and all the benefits it brings will grow and grow.

Architects Plans of the site

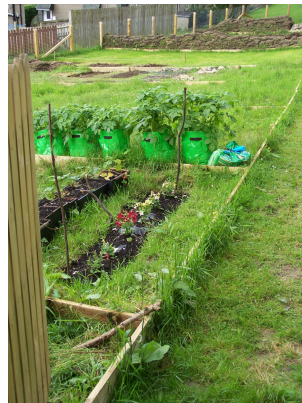


ORREST DRIVE ALLOTMENTS

IMAGES



Site as it was in May 2012



Progress made since May 2012