

Comments on "Green Policy for Open Spaces" (Amenities Committee)

We have consulted all members of our Committee and their views are as follows:

1. The Allotments Association has no objections to the Council restricting the use of pesticides, biocides,

weedkillers and ground covering materials, but we strongly dislike any use of the word "banning" and suggest

it should all be advisory, or as a recommendation.

Slug pellets and biological sprays to control slugs and snails should be restricted to those allowed for

retail use in the U.K.

The safety of chemicals sold to the public is very tightly controlled by the Government and pesticide products

have to go through an expensive testing regime before they are licensed. If pesticides/fungicides and

herbicide products are permitted to be sold in retail packs the allotment holders should not be prevented from

purchasing and using them. Most of the chemicals giving rise to pollution incidents are only licensed to

farmers and horticultural contractors and are not in retail packs.

2. As far as the boundaries of the allotments are concerned we would encourage the SPC to maintain

regular boundary hedge maintenance.

We are not aware the SPC imposes any restrictions on allotment holders providing bird nesting boxes,

bug hotels or bat boxes on sheds. We support the idea of the SPC installing bird nest boxes, bat boxes and

bug hotels affixed to SPC trees and hedgerows forming the boundaries to the allotment sites.

3. The Allotment Association is keen to encourage enforcement by the SPC against those

allotment holders who fail to maintain their plots and we are concerned that some of the proposals

in the Report would undermine the SPC's enforcement e.g. the question of creating wildlife areas in

the plots. This could easily be mis-construed and therefore we do not agree to the Regulations being

altered in this regard.

It is our view that there is abundant wildlife in not only both allotment sites, but in the surrounding

countryside and the Downs National Park, so therefore it is unnecessary to encourage more wildlife areas

within allotments, for which the prime purpose is the cultivation of plots for vegetables and fruit for

domestic consumption.

If allotment holders want to help increase the insects and bees we need for pollination, then increased

planting of flowers should be encouraged.

Outside the two sites, there may well be areas where the Council could reduce the amount of mowing and

allow flowers to mature e.g. roadsides etc. The majority of the Committee do not approve the provision of

ponds in allotment sites.

4. There is a huge range of ground cover membranes available, and allotment holders should continue to

use them to prevent weed growth on their plots. Maybe plot holders and the Council who wish to

buy further new membranes should be encouraged to consider the non-plastic and biodegradable

varieties, both of which last for years.

5. Many of our plot holders try to garden organically, with the resulting lessening use of pesticides and

chemical fertilisers. However there appears to be a lack of knowledge or resistance to maintaining

compost heaps that do not attract rats etc., by the use of cooked food which should never be put

in a compost heap. Abandoned rubbish also creates harbourage for them.

6. The Association has never objected to its members collecting rainwater, but the small sheds simply

do not provide enough for plot holders to become in any way self sufficient.

Best wishes, Mike Warren (Chair) Sally Sanderson (Secretary) - Steyning Allotments Association