

Appendix 1: Bevendean Community Garden: report of survey results

1 Purpose of the survey

1.1 The council is considering a request from a community group wishing to grow fruit and vegetables on a piece of land owned by Housing. The land immediately backs onto the gardens of properties in Heath Hill Avenue, and this questionnaire was designed to capture thoughts on the proposals from those residents as well as others living in the area.

1.2 The survey results will be considered along with feedback from other sources (eg the statutory notice placed in the Argus about the proposal) when making a decision as to whether to grant a lease for the use of this land.

2 Methodology

The questionnaire was designed by staff, then consulted and tested with three residents from Heath Hill Avenue during a meeting on Thursday 15 April. Door-to-door completion to questionnaires was carried out with residents on Heath Hill Avenue, as it was important to gather feedback from those most directly impacted by the proposal, and the remaining questionnaires were completed at the following meetings:-

Council organised consultation meeting on the proposal - 22 April

Bevendean Tenants Association - 23 April

Bevendean Local Action Team (LAT) - 26 April

3 Responses

In total 39 questionnaires have been used for the analysis of this survey. The breakdown is 13 respondents from Heath Hill Avenue, six from the Bevendean LAT, and 19 from the other meetings. Although five more questionnaires were completed, they have not been considered in this analysis as they did not contain address or postcode details as required on the questionnaire.

4 Survey findings

All percentages reported below have been rounded up or down to the nearest whole number.

5 Involvement in the Bevendean Community Garden project

Only one of the 13 Heath Hill Avenue residents expressed an interest in being involved in the project, however when looking at all the respondents, 44% (17 of the 39) expressed an interest. Two respondents, although not interested at present wanted some more information in case they are interested at a later time.

6 Support for the project

6.1 Early in the questionnaire respondents were asked how likely they were to support the project based on what they know now. Only one of the Heath Hill Avenue respondents felt they were likely to, but taking all the responses together 54% (21 of the 39) were likely to support it.

6.2 At the end of the questionnaire, once people had been given the opportunity to see and comment upon proposed conditions of the lease, they were asked again whether or not they were likely to support the project. Only 33 people responded to this question of which 64% (21) said they were likely to support it and 30% (10) said they were unlikely to. The remaining two did not know.

7 How the land is used

7.1 Respondents were asked to select from the list below all the things they felt it was reasonable to allow when considering use of the land for growing. The percentage responses are given initially just for the Heath Hill Avenue respondents and then for all respondents.

Table 1 – reasonable use of the land

	Reasonable to allow	Heath Hill Avenue responses	All responses
1	To grow organic food	54%	77%
2	Food grown to be distributed within the group, donated to volunteers, and/or donated to the local school	54%	69%
3	Any food surplus can be sold in a local market, via a vegetable box scheme or to local businesses – with any proceeds going back into the project	38%	62%
4	To be run as a non profit organisation	62%	72%
5	Community initiative – residents working together	46%	72%
6	Provide education in food growing to local residents	46%	74%
7	Link with Bevendean Primary school	46%	74%
8	Link with other community groups	46%	69%

7.2 As Table 1 above shows, people living in Heath Hill Avenue were less likely than the total of all respondents to think that the proposed way in which the land could be used was reasonable. However overall the feedback does not present many strong responses apart from what should be done with any surplus food grown.

7.3 One comment was made in this section – that the project should only be linked with groups in the Bevendean area.

8 Length of the lease

8.1 The questionnaire asked whether a three-year lease was reasonable. Of the Heath Hill Avenue residents, 31% (4) agreed that it was, compared to 64% for all respondents.

8.2 While eight respondents in total did not agree with this, only one made an alternative suggestion, proposing that it should be for two years. Another respondent, agreeing with the three-year period felt however that it should be reviewed annually.

9 Access to the land

Asked about how access should be gained to the land, 36 people responded. The majority, 86%, felt that it should be by pedestrian access only, and 8% felt it should be pedestrian and car. There were a couple of comments added about vehicular access for deliveries, or only for necessary vehicles.

10 Notice to terminate the lease

If granted, respondents were asked if it is reasonable for the council to give six months notice to the growers if it wanted to end the lease. The majority of respondents, 83%, agreed this was reasonable, and the remaining 17% did not. A couple of people commented on allowing time for vegetables to be harvested.

11 Conditions of the lease

11.1 The survey sought to obtain views of proposed conditions or terms of the lease - allowing respondents to comment upon each, or add their own suggestions.

11.2 The table below shows the results for the Heath Hill Avenue residents, and then all respondents agreeing with each of the proposed conditions, along with a summary of the comments made.

11.3 It should be noted here for the Heath Hill Avenue responses that one respondent who was not at all supportive of the proposal simply wrote 'Don't want it' for all these possible conditions. This accounts for approximately 8% of the Heath Hill Avenue percentage, but there is no way of knowing whether the person would or would not have agreed with the possible lease conditions presented below.

Table 2 – Possible conditions of the lease

	Possible conditions	Heath Hill Avenue responses (13)	All Responses (36)
1	Install security fencing on woodland boundary.	77% (10)	92% (33)
Five comments were made suggesting that the fence should cover the whole perimeter of the site. Another felt that the security fencing should suit growers and residents alike, with a further one commenting that natural fencing would be a better long-term option.			
2	Boundary to be kept secure and safe with locked gates.	77% (10)	97% (35)
The only comment made here was that there should only be a few keyholders.			

	Possible conditions	Heath Hill Avenue responses (13)	All Responses (36)
3	Council to be provided with copies of keys for all access locks, and allowed access onto the site in case of any emergency or need for inspection.	85% (11)	92% (33)
<p>Two respondents' comments here related to access being gained from a key member/person of the committee; and another felt that the Community Police Support Officer should also have a key.</p>			
4	No more than 40 people to be accommodated within the land at any one time.	46% (6)	56% (20)
<p>There was less agreement with this condition than for the others, with 10 respondents proposing alternatives ranging from a maximum of 15 to a maximum of 30 people on the site.</p> <p>However, two people felt that the suggestion of a maximum of 4 people was too limiting for open days and for example during Brighton Festival.</p>			
5	Any training sessions, events or other circumstances with more than 30 people needs written council permission.	62% (8)	58% (21)
<p>Five comments were made on this point. Two suggested the figure is set too high and proposed 15 children plus the required number of adults for supervision and a maximum of 20 people respectively.</p> <p>Two people also felt it might be impractical and limiting for community involvement.</p>			
6	All school age children to be kept under supervision by adults at all times with an appropriate adult to child ratio according to ages of children and nature of activities.	85% (11)	97% (35)
<p>This condition received the highest support, and one respondent felt that children should be limited to one class at a time.</p>			
7	No events allowed after dusk.	85% (11)	75% (27)
<p>There were mixed comments on this condition - no events at all (2), depends on the event (2), events allowed only until 6pm in the summer (2), events only being allowed if organised well in advance and with prior written consent from neighbours and the council. One neighbouring respondent suggested that it might be okay to have one event per month in the summer months up to 9pm, but with no electricity.</p>			
8	No activity allowed after dusk.	77% (10)	69% (25)
<p>A comment here related to the type of activity.</p>			

	Possible conditions	Heath Hill Avenue responses (13)	All Responses (36)
9	Shed - max size of 40 sqm. No other structures (eg polytunnels or glasshouses) allowed without written council permission.	77% (10)	60% (23)
<p>One respondent felt that it should be for the community of growers to decide, while a further two pointed out that polytunnels, glasshouses or some form of protective cover might be needed for younger crops.</p>			
10	All dogs to be kept on leads at all times and barking or nuisance dogs not to be brought on site.	69% (9)	78% (28)
<p>This condition and the one below had the same numbers of people agreeing with them, and attracted a total of 12 comments. The strength of feeling was that neither dogs nor any animal should be on the site.</p> <p>Only one respondent commented that it should be for the community of growers to decide.</p>			
8.11	No animals to be kept on site without written permission from the council.	69% (9)	78% (28)
<p>As mentioned above the overwhelming response was that animals of any kind should not be on the site.</p>			
12	No illegal or immoral activities to be undertaken on the site.	77% (10)	89% (32)
13	No bonfires between 31 March and 1 November.	77% (10)	67% (24)
<p>This condition raised some questions around 5 November, other times of the year for the useful disposal of waste, whether the area was smoke free and therefore bonfires weren't allowed, and whether bonfires were allowed after 6pm.</p> <p>One neighbouring respondent thought it might be okay with prior consent from neighbours, and another one requested that any barbeques are sited at the furthest point of the site away from neighbours' gardens.</p>			
14	No waste material to be brought on site for composting.	69% (9)	61% (22)
<p>Twelve comments were made here, essentially advocating composting with suggestions that composting should be encouraged, and that volunteers living in the flats nearby should be able to bring their vegetable peelings.</p> <p>Only two comments were specifically made about not bringing waste onto the site.</p>			

	Possible conditions	Heath Hill Avenue responses (13)	All Responses (36)
15	Tree felling allowed only with the written approval of council's ecologist.	77% (10)	89% (32)
There was general consensus that no trees should be felled.			

12 Other conditions respondents would like to see

Given the opportunity to make further suggestions around conditions of the lease, the issues that came up were neighbours' privacy; land use to be restricted only to growing food – no parties, music or noise; respect for neighbours' property and fences; and the need for public liability insurance.

13 Action to be taken if the lease is granted and then any terms breached

Respondents were generally pleased that there would be a named person to contact regarding any breach of the terms of the lease, if granted - and cautioned that a speedy response would be needed right from the beginning.

14 Any further comment

Some concern was expressed about the suitability of the area for the project and neighbours now feeling exposed, although it was felt, in principle, to be a good idea.

15 Conclusions drawn from the questionnaire findings

It is clear that this project is not popular amongst residents of Heath Hill Avenue, where key concerns from the comments made are around privacy, security and noise disturbance. However the project is supported by a number of other Bevendean residents.

There is broad agreement with a three-year lease being the right period; access to the site essentially being pedestrian; and for most of the suggested lease conditions. There is less consensus on a few of the suggested lease conditions, namely around the maximum number of people to be allowed on the site, the issue of bonfires, and the matter of composting - where the question directly related to bringing materials onto the land for composting.

If a lease were to be granted, the responses to the survey usefully offer a number of issues that would need to be considered in the terms of the lease.

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