

WOODHOUSE MOOR MANAGEMENT PLAN 2004

7.2.14 Allotments

Characteristics

Allotments have been present on Woodhouse Moor for several years and were expanded upon during the two great wars to provide additional food for the people of Leeds. At present there are two allotment sites, one with 47 plots and the other with 45 plots. Both allotment sites occur on the west side of the Park and are separated by a path with wide grass verges on either side. In general the allotments are well used with few being left vacant at any particular period of time. Although there appears to be a trend in Leeds of declining allotments use, the popularity of the Woodhouse Moor Allotments remains high and much of this can be attributed to student interest offsetting reducing local community usage. There are a few endemic problems on the allotments that include theft of produce, use of sheds for drug dealing, dumping of allotment and local residential refuse on disused plots and illegal access through the hedge to retrieve footballs. Additional difficulties encountered include plots allowed to grow wild for environmental reasons but leading to the spread of weed seeds in adjacent plots and plot holders vacating their sites and leaving dilapidated sheds and nylon carpets. Furthermore, the Park's staff dumping shrubbery cuttings up against the allotment boundary near the basketball courts exacerbates the problem. At present there is no Woodhouse Moor Allotment Committee to facilitate usage and development of the site and act as a consultative body to the Parks and Countryside Service.

Impact

The use of the Woodhouse Moor Allotments will remain high for the foreseeable future, especially as students look to grow their own food so as to have control over the quality and/or supplement their meager incomes.

Strengths

- The opportunity to grow foods free from pesticides.
- Ability to produce food cheaply.
- The food can be picked and eaten on the same day with minimal decay of the essential nutrients that arise with storage.
- Allotment maintenance provides ideal physical exercise to maintain health.

Weaknesses

- Theft and damage of crops is an endemic problem.
- The existing hedge and fencing around the allotments fails to provide adequate security.
- Trees on the periphery of the allotment site are shading adjacent plots.

- The lack of a communal composting site has led to the dumping of allotment waste on unused plots that is further exacerbated by residential refuse brought in.
- Access for parks vehicles to maintain the allotments is limited owing to the closeness of the plots.
- Absence of an Allotments Committee to oversee allotment activity.

Potentials

- Improve the security of the allotment boundary by either growing a thick horny hedge or installing a security palisade fence.
- Provide a communal composting facility
- Instigate the formation of a Woodhouse Moor Allotments Committee to manage the site on behalf of the council.

Issues

A valuable and well-used resource that requires composting facilities, better security and the formation of an allotments committee to manage the site.