

SUBJECT: Proposal & Integrated Management Strategy for FTC Land at Perry Court

1. Executive Summary

Following constructive engagement with the Perry Court Residents' Association (PCRA), this proposal sets out an updated, phased approach to managing Faversham Town Council's (FTC) land at Perry Court (comprising the allotments, community orchard, south-western grassland, and acoustic bund).

The strategy resolves immediate resident concerns regarding dog safety (grass seed awns) and wildfire risk, delivers on landscape amenity promises, and establishes a clear framework for long-term community collaboration. Recognising current council budget limitations, ongoing staffing transitions, and in-house delivery, physical capital improvements are staged across a realistic 10-year timeline while immediate operational adjustments are tasked to our in-house grounds team.

2. Integrated Draft Site Plan & Key Proposals

Fig1. Site as approved



Fig 2. Draft changes:



Zone A: Allotments, Security & Operational Use (blue highlight)

- **Bee Post & Nectar Planting:** Install a solitary bee post alongside low-maintenance perennial planting (e.g., Lavender, Catmint) near the allotment entrance. (already purchased via member grants)
- **SJW:** bottom right in the blue section, we are hoping to keep this area for cutting and foliage,
- **Managed Bee Hives (Phase 2):** Introduce managed hives in a secure corner of the site using a certified beekeeper, screening fence, padlocks, and signage.
- **SJW:** I would question the location quite carefully if this is an area regularly used by dog walkers and the public. Managed hives can be a good biodiversity project, but bees and a busy public/dog-walking route are not automatically a good combination.

- The British Beekeepers Association specifically advises avoiding placing hives near public footpaths and recommends positioning hives facing a hedge or fence so that bees are encouraged to fly above head height.
- **Temporary Vehicle Storage:** Acknowledge the temporary parking of council vehicles on-site due to depot constraints, with a commitment to investigate relocation options and to provide an update to Perry Court Residents Association within 12 months.
- **SJW:** who has said it was temporary? Why is this an issue,

Zone B: Community Orchard & Tree Stock (orange highlight)

- **Enclosure & Access (Phase 2):** Seek external grant/S106 funding to erect timber post-and-rail fencing with a wide field gate. Gates will remain unlocked for general public access, closing only for scheduled harvest events or maintenance.
- **Developer Tree Audit (Barratt Redrow):** Partner with PCRA to audit missing and failed tree stock across the wider development and press Barratt Redrow to fulfill their original planning obligations.

Zone C: South-Western Grassland & Scenic Features (magenta highlight)

- **Mown Hilltop Scenic Path:** In-house grounds staff will establish and maintain a short, mown desire-line path across the small hill/mound to improve accessibility and open up views across Faversham at zero capital cost.
- **SJW:** the hill is rarely used, the view isn't particularly significant, the existing route around it is already accessible, more mowing visits, there is no benefits to this, ongoing maintenance cost would increase, if we start to maintain the hill and there was an accident.
- **Wildflower Bank Seeding:** In-house team to scarify and sow the earth bank with a native chalk/calcareous perennial seed mix (e.g., Oxeye Daisy, Knapweed) to enhance visual amenity and support pollinators.
- **Shallow Wildlife Pond (Phase 2):** Construct a shallow wildlife pond featuring a 1:3 gradient safety shelf planted with marginal vegetation (e.g., Water Mint, Marsh Marigold) to allow natural amphibian colonization without requiring safety fencing.
- **SJW:** 🚧 Construction isn't necessarily cheap Excavation, soil disposal, lining if required, planting and site preparation could make this considerably more expensive than the wording suggests.

- 🚧 **Safety liability** "No fencing" needs careful justification. A shallow pond is still an open water feature, and the organisation needs to consider children, visitors, slips/falls and potentially dogs.
- 💧 **Risk of drying out** A shallow pond can disappear during prolonged dry periods, potentially undermining its value as amphibian habitat.
- 🌊 **Water-quality problems** Poor drainage, nutrient runoff or stagnant water could lead to algae, unpleasant smells or excessive vegetation.
- 🌱 **Ongoing maintenance** "Wildlife pond" doesn't mean "no maintenance". Invasive/excessive vegetation, silt accumulation, litter and surrounding vegetation may need management.
- 🦟 **Potential nuisance concerns** Poorly designed stagnant water can create concerns about mosquitoes or other nuisance species, although a healthy wildlife pond can also support predators that keep aquatic populations balanced.
- 🐸 **Colonisation isn't guaranteed** The phrase "allow natural amphibian colonization" shouldn't imply that amphibians will definitely arrive. Habitat creation doesn't guarantee successful colonisation.
- 🏡 **Potential ecological constraints** Depending on the location, excavation could affect existing habitats, drainage, trees or protected species, so the site would need checking before construction.
- **Benches (Phase 2):** Install two timber benches along Public Footpath ZF18, and explore a third bench at the Brogdale Road bus stop subject to KCC Highways boundary confirmation.

Zone D: Public Safety & Fire Mitigation (Immediate In-House Adjustment) (yellow highlight)

- **Dog Safety Buffers:** In-house staff will maintain 2–3 metre wide regularly mown amenity grass margins along Public Footpath ZF18 and informal paths to prevent grass seed awns from impacting pets.
- **SJW:** this has been done from the start when cutting at perry court the pathway ZF18 is cut both side, all pathways and trails are cut to the width of the mower.
- **Boundary Firebreaks:** In-house staff will maintain mown strips along allotment perimeters and Brogdale Road to act as natural firebreaks during dry summer spells, ensuring all cuttings are removed immediately.

- **SJW:** this has also been done from the begin, path ways, trails, both side of the path

3. Draft 10-Year Maintenance & Improvement Strategy (2026–2036)

This strategy separates routine ground maintenance delivered by the in-house team from larger capital projects. Capital additions are treated as shovel-ready projects triggered as officer capacity and third-party funding allow.

YEARS 1–3: PHASE 1	YEARS 4–6: PHASE 2	YEARS 7–10: PHASE 3
Low-Cost & Safety	Capital & Capacity Phase	Long-Term Stewardship
In-house mown safety buffers	Pond digging / Benches	Mature tree care
Hilltop scenic path	Orchard fencing	Infrastructure audit
Bee post deployment	Beekeeper agreement	Cyclical replacement
Bench by lay-by for hopper bus stop.	Instillation of boundary fencing to prevent incursions	
	In-house bank sow	
Ongoing community engagement	Ongoing community engagement	Ongoing community engagement

Phase 1: Immediate Safety & Low-Cost Enhancements (Years 1–3)

- **Internal Work Tasking:** Task the in-house grounds team to adjust cutting patterns to deliver the 2–3m mown path buffers, the hilltop scenic path, and perimeter firebreaks.
- **Immediate Capital Works:** Install the Bee Post and sow the wildflower bank using in-house staff assisted by volunteers.
- **Vehicle Relocation:** Identify sites to relocate council vehicles (vans, hopper bus etc) and provide update to PCRA within 12 months.
- **Developer Advocacy:** Initiate joint FTC–PCRA correspondence with Barratt Redrow regarding outstanding landscaping obligations.

Phase 2: Phased Capital Delivery (Years 4–6)

- **Public Amenities:** Install timber benches along side of Footpath ZF18 and within amenity spaces on site, construct the shallow wildlife pond as grant funding or sponsorship is secured.
- **Orchard Enclosure:** Erect post-and-rail timber fencing around the orchard.

SJW: had a cost for chestnut fencing, funds was an issue.

- **Site Security Options:** evaluate non-obtrusive perimeter options (e.g., timber post-and-rail or natural bunding) and **consult PCRA prior to progression.**
- **Beekeeping:** Work with licensed beekeeper to produce agreement for allotment hives.

Phase 3: Consolidated Stewardship (Years 7–10)

- **Habitat Management:** In-house maintenance of native boundary hedges via late-winter 1/3rd rotational cuts.
- **Tree & Pond Care:** In-house structural pruning of heritage fruit trees and ongoing monitoring of pond biodiversity.
- **Asset Maintenance:** Bi-annual audits of benches, gates, and allotment water infrastructure.

4. Draft Engagement Strategy: Perry Court Residents' Association

A. Strategic Objective

To transition from reactive issue management to a proactive, collaborative partnership with PCRA, fostering resident involvement in site management while maintaining clear, respectful communication standards.

B. Core Principles

1. **Transparency on Capacity:** Be upfront about council budget and staffing constraints, setting realistic timelines for capital projects.
2. **Pre-Consultation Commitment:** Consult PCRA on any proposed structural or security changes before decisions are finalized or implemented.
3. **Collaborative Action:** Leverage community energy for volunteer days, developer advocacy, and joint event planning.

C. Action Plan & Engagement Milestones

Target Timeline	Activity	Objective / Key Deliverables
Autumn 2026	Formal Proposal Response	Present this approved strategy to PCRA as the agreed roadmap forward.

Target Timeline	Activity	Objective / Key Deliverables
Winter 2026/27	Joint Walkthrough	Committee representatives and officers walk the site with PCRA reps to mark out the hilltop path and future bench locations.
Spring 2027	Community Seeding Day	Host a volunteer day with local families to sow the wildflower earth bank and install bug boxes.
Summer 2027	2027 Community Event	Co-host an estate event (e.g., orchard picnic or wildlife walk) to build community relationships.
Ongoing	Developer Pressure	Submit joint FTC/PCRA representations to Barratt Redrow regarding failed tree stock.

5. Committee Recommendation

It is recommended that the Environment Committee:

1. **Approve** the integrated Site Plan and 10-Year Strategy for FTC land at Perry Court.
2. **Instruct** the in-house grounds team to implement the adjusted cutting schedule, including the mown safety buffers, hilltop scenic path, and perimeter firebreaks.

SJW: this is already in place the Hilltop will have an impact, look at cost.

3. **Approve** the release of the £500 allocated budget for the installation of the Bee Post and associated planting.

SJW: this has been delivered, wating on install.

4. **Endorse** the Engagement Strategy for ongoing collaboration with the Perry Court Residents' Association.

