

Chilthorne Domer Garden Plots Survey – Summary Report (with full text retained)

1. Introduction

This report summarises the written comments submitted as part of the Chilthorne Domer Garden Plots Survey (Nov/Dec 2025).

Under each question summary, all the submitted comments have been anonymised to remove personal identifiers, while retaining references to Skool Beanz . The full anonymised text is preserved within the thematic sections below.

2. Summary of Responses by Question

Q1 – Value of the Garden Plots and Community Use

Summary of themes:

- **Strong appreciation for the environmental, visual, and wellbeing benefits of the plots.**
- **Deep concern about potential development of the land.**
- **High praise for the transformation achieved through Skool Beanz.**
- **Recognition that the wider community benefits even if only a few people work the plots.**
- **Desire to preserve the land as a long-term community asset.**

Full anonymised text:

The plots add to the character of the village, provide views, and offer opportunities for fresh produce, wildlife watching, and wellbeing.

Strong concern that the land should not be sold for development or used for car parking. Seen as a valuable village asset and wildlife haven. The school children benefit greatly from gardening activities.

Residents overlooking the area value the wellbeing benefits and fear the land becoming a building site, which could affect property values.

Even those not living nearby enjoy walking past and seeing the current Skool Beanz use of the land.

The land has been transformed from semi-neglected to a productive community space, helping children learn about growing and caring for plants.

A nearby resident notes that the Skool Beanz project has significantly improved the land and that the activities benefit both children and adults. The area is now attractive and well-used.

The term “community use” is considered vague. Only a few people use the land regularly, but the wider community can walk through, enjoy displays, and attend Skool Banz events. A safe classroom structure could increase opportunities.

Allotments are seen as an asset, especially for those without gardens.

Q2 – Noise, Parking, and Local Impact

Summary of themes:

- **Parking pressures occur occasionally, especially during deliveries.**
- **Most respondents report minimal noise or disruption.**
- **Strong opposition to vehicle access down to the allotments.**
- **Recognition that Skool Banz prevents the site becoming neglected.**
- **General view that the site is preferable to housing development.**

Full anonymised text:

Occasional issues with cars or deliveries blocking the car park.

Noise and disruption are generally minimal. There is concern about increased footfall affecting parking. Residents do not want vehicle access down to the allotments due to safety.

Limited parking for residents; deliveries sometimes occupy spaces for several days.

Most of the village is not directly affected by access issues, and the facility is seen as environmentally beneficial.

Parking is usually well controlled; noise is described as positive and not intrusive.

Without School Banz involvement, the site would be unattractive except for a few plots. Support expressed for development ideas presented at a recent meeting.

Better than housing development.

Q3, Q4 & Q5 – Management and Governance

Summary of themes:

- **Strong view that the Parish Council should retain overall control.**
- **Day-to-day management should be delegated to a committed individual or group.**
- **Mixed views on forming an Allotment Association; many feel it is unnecessary.**

- **Recognition that Skool Beanz already provides structure and leadership.**
- **Support for smaller, more manageable plots.**

Full anonymised text:

The Parish Council should oversee legal and safety responsibilities. The School Beanz project is highly valued.

Uncertainty about the best management structure; a combination of options may be needed. The project leader may need support to oversee all plots.

If an Allotment Association is formed, a contract and public liability insurance would be required.

Overall control should lie with the Parish Council, but day-to-day management should be handled by someone with a vested interest.

A single nominated person reporting to the Parish Council may be the most viable option. More explanation is needed about the lease option.

The site is small, so an association may be unnecessary bureaucracy. Residents should be encouraged to take on plots if they maintain them properly. Skool Beanz could report directly to the Parish Council.

Smaller, more manageable plots are supported. Skool Beanz is seen as a strong candidate for leasing the land if willing.

Q6 – Improvements and Future Use

Summary of themes:

- **Support for smaller plots and accessible raised beds.**
- **Strong preference for temporary, removable structures.**
- **Desire for clear maintenance standards and annual review.**
- **Recognition that Skool Beanz has significantly improved the site.**
- **Emphasis on keeping the land available for villagers.**

Full anonymised text:

Maintain pathways for easy access. Consider smaller plots. A suggestion was made for a road to allow residents to have access to EV charging.

No permanent buildings with hardstanding; only removable structures.

Keep plots traditional and tidy. Break larger plots into smaller ones to encourage beginners. Provide accessible raised beds.

Annual contracts should allow the Council to terminate if maintenance is inadequate.

Important that villagers can always access allotments. Smaller plots may help, though interest has historically been low.

The Skool Beanz initiative has elevated the site far beyond typical allotments.

Regular reviews by the Parish Council are recommended.

Q7 – Rules, Restrictions, and Facilities

Summary of themes:

- **Strong preference for temporary structures only.**
- **Mixed views on bonfires; many oppose them.**
- **Desire for water supply (mains or rain harvesting).**
- **Concerns about parking, deliveries, and visual impact.**
- **Support for organic methods and environmental sensitivity.**
- **Need for clear rules on maintenance and plot management.**

Full anonymised text:

Structures should not be too large; avoid blocking light or views. No bonfires due to proximity to houses. Vacant plots should be kept tidy. Wildflowers are welcomed.

A water supply is essential. Users should not park in the nearby residential parking area. A suggestion was made for a small precept increase to fund village maintenance outside and alongside the bus shelter .

Too many structures would be unwelcome; everything should remain in keeping with the growing purpose.

A suggestion was made for a single-track road for resident parking and electric charging. If the land is leased to a single person running a business, business rates and insurance would be required. Restrictions on structure height, delivery times, and tidiness were suggested.

Rules should depend on how the land is used. Bonfires, herbicides, and pesticides should be banned. Small trees acceptable; large ones not. Vacant plots should be kept ready for new growers. Deliveries should involve consultation with nearby residents.

Structures should be temporary. The Skool Beanz initiative needs adequate facilities for children, including indoor space and toilets. Water supply is essential. Bonfires not appropriate. The project uses organic methods.

Plots should be cultivated, not left fallow. Structures should be environmentally sympathetic. Mains water and electricity would be beneficial. Health and safety must be followed.

Temporary structures only. Bonfires allowed tastefully. No herbicides or pesticides. Height restrictions for trees and shrubs. Poorly managed plots should lose their lease. No limit on visitor numbers. Vacant plots should be maintained by the group. Water supply needed. Deliveries could be improved. Communal composting supported. Waste should be removed promptly.

3. Overall Conclusions

- Across all questions, several clear themes emerge:
- Strong support for retaining the land as community garden plots.
- Residents value the environmental, educational, and wellbeing benefits.
- Skool Beanz is widely recognised as the driving force behind the site's success.
- Many comments highlight the transformation achieved and the importance of continuing this work.
- The Parish Council is expected to retain ownership and oversight.
- But day-to-day management should be delegated to a committed individual or group.
- Infrastructure should remain light-touch and temporary.
- Residents want to avoid over-development of the site.
- Parking and access require careful management.
- Particularly regarding deliveries and avoiding impact on nearby residents.
- Clear rules and regular reviews are important.
- Maintenance, safety, and environmental standards should be upheld.