

The following information, prepared for the Committee, is designed to assist in making a decision whether to proceed with seeking funds to construct a compostable toilet on the allotment site at Eynsham.

1. Basic proposal– and the “ rules and regs”
2. Information we would need to gather from allotment holders.
3. How much would it cost -Source of funds– donation already pledged.
4. What type of Composting toilet is the best for us: case study/ background paper.

1. Basic Proposal: The allotment site is some distance from the centre of the village and housing. Many allotment holders are of retiring age and over, some have some disability issues. Many allotment holders enjoy spending considerable time on site but have no access there to “a convenience” which would make further journeys to and from home inevitable. We want to investigate whether we can plan, construct, install and manage a composting toilet which requires no water or power supply.

Rules and Regs: Currently building regulations in England and Wales (2022) ‘**permit compost toilets provided that there is a way to empty the contents without having to carry the uncomposted material through a living area (including a kitchen).**’

We may need planning permission– this is something to investigate. We would need to consult local council, and the environmental agency to ensure they are fully aware of the plans.

2. Information we would need to gather from allotment holders.

We could circulate to allotment holders a simple survey from either via google forms or on paper, asking them to fill in and return, indicating their support for the proposal, preferred location, and any disability or access needs etc. This would assist in finding out what we actually need/ want and provide valuable evidence in any grant application we want to make. The sort of question we might want to ask are: how often do you visit your allotment and for how long?. Would you stay longer if we had a convenient ‘convenience’? Would you use the loo?, where would you like it located? Do you have mobility issues? What is your age range? Etc etc.

3. How much would it cost -Source of funds– donation already pledged.

Cost will depend on which toilet and supplier/ installer we select. It also depends on whether we buy a toilet and build around it or buy the whole thing complete. There are many composting toilets on the market–some for domestic use- but we need to bear in mind our remote location, potential for vandalism, type of building, ease of use and emptying, access issues. We probably need the most robust and easiest to manage that we can afford. We are potentially looking at £5000-10,000 spend. We have an indication of a donation towards this of up to £5000 depending on achieving funding from Local Council funds, grants, Big Lottery fund etc etc. We could also begin our own fundraising activity to support the project.

4. What type of Composting toilet is the best for us: case study/ background paper.

Composting toilets feature separating out liquid from solid waste.

Initial research would indicate that NatSol have the most experience in allotment/ remote location sites. Particularly their FAC product. See more information on their website: www.natsol.co.uk. We certainly require one that is straightforward to empty, not too often and features a soak away for urine as well as solid waste which is well composted by the time it needs emptying. We shouldn't anticipate heavy usage even if usage is frequent. Any other examples of makes and types of Composting toilets from members experience would be welcome so we can make the best comparisons. Remember– without research– 'we have nothing to go on.' !!

Below is a case study from Thompson and Morgan's newsletter: to give us some inspiration and encouragement!

More information Google: Social Farms and Gardens fact sheet on Allotment management of affordable toilets.

Belstead Allotments - How we got a composting toilet for our site

Mrs Christine Simpson from Belstead Allotments in Ipswich explains why she wanted the facility and how she went about it.

We take a look at a local allotment to find out what they've been getting up to recently. One of our customers, Mrs Christine Simpson, who is Chairman of Belstead Allotments is keen to tell us about the new composting toilet that they have recently had installed on their site. Read on to find out more:

Five years ago, Christine took early retirement and became Chairman of her Allotment site. Since then, together with her Field Warden Mel Wilkinson, the two of them have made a few changes at the site. Christine says, "We've got 179 plots and now, compared to a few years ago, we're full, with a long waiting list as the demand for space to grow your own has increased. We've got a real mix of people, some keep chickens, others don't have much garden at home, so use their plot, not only for vegetables and flowers, but to bring their children down to enjoy the outdoor life. It's a real family affair for a lot of plot holders. We're down a fairly long rural lane and whilst the site is secure with locked gates, it's not immediately close to any facilities, so we've put a few in. We've brought in an old shipping container to act as a secure lock-up for gardening supplies; we've converted an old shed into a meeting place with heaters and stoves for a warm cup of tea and provided some picnic benches for social get-togethers at weekends, but there were no toilets."

"The first thing I did was look into the possibility of a composting toilet as the site does not have mains drainage. After looking around on the internet, I found out the cost of what I wanted (£10,000) and then I wrote applying for grant funding to Ipswich Borough Council. I stated that we didn't have mains drainage, and that the model I'd seen was totally eco -friendly. No water would be necessary and the contents would naturally rot down and be ready to put back on the plot in the form of usual

“It wasn't welcomed by everyone to begin with, but now everyone can see the benefit, and the ladies and children are particularly pleased!”

compost within about 2 years. I also mentioned that the toilet would be easily accessed by all - including children and the less-abled. The council agreed to help, but could only give us £7,000 towards the cost. They also wanted to see that we were doing what we could to raise money and help fund it. I then wrote to the individual councillors of the locality, for what is called Locality Budget Funding. Two councillors offered to help and were able to give the remaining £3,000 required."

Once Chris and Mel had the money, they went to NATSOL, a Wales based company, who then gave them the details of what had to be done in preparation. A large pit or 'vault' had to be dug. This was 2m x 2.5m square and almost a metre deep. They also had to put in a pipe for a soak away for liquids which simply went straight into the soil. The council provided a grab lorry to lift firstly, the large tank to sit in the vault - this was then cemented into place. Then the toilet compartment and floor were lifted to rest on top of the main waste vault. The floor has 4 man-hole type doors which can be lifted as necessary to access the main waste vault (the actual loo seat sits over one). It's cleverly designed so that liquid soaks away into the soil whilst other deposits go down into the vault, each time covered with a scoop of sawdust. They can only use unbleached toilet paper or old newspaper, but that's the only concession they have to make. There's little maintenance (none so far) and the company even supplies gel to use for handwashing as no water is involved.

The toilet was officially opened by one of the supporting councillors in June 2010. Chris says she can't recommend it enough. "It's green, it's organic and there isn't a single nasty niff! It's proven to be a God-send, enabling people to spend much more time down here without worrying about getting caught short. We can't wait until the toilets' 2nd anniversary as after 2 years, the contents of the vault should be just like normal compost and ready to use on the plots. I think people will want to see it first though, before they ask for a barrow load!"

How to go about getting funding for a composting toilet for your site.

1. Do your research and put a case together. Are there other sites with more facilities than yours? Do you have school children visits? Do you have disabled gardeners or sensory gardens? The more the council can see the need, the more they're likely to listen.
2. Look online or talk to other sites who already have them for guidance on what model suits your situation best and get at least 3 quotes if possible.
3. Be ready to show the council that you're also starting to raise money yourselves and illustrate how.
4. Look into the amount of preparation work you may have to do yourselves.

Check out the [Big Lottery Fund website](#). There's guidance about how to go about applying for funding and examples of previous projects that have been awarded help.