



St Francis Fields CIC
Community Produce Garden
Polytunnel – Planning Pre-Application

CIC 24/08

To: Northiam Parish Council

Meeting Date: 13/06/24

Presented by: David Green, Director SFF CIC

Summary: The Council is asked to agree to apply for a pre-application consultation with Rother District Council for a polytunnel at the northern end of the Community Produce Garden in Field 9 of the SFF estate.

Background: A polytunnel would be a desirable feature of the Community Produce Garden and the cost was included in the successful bid to the National Gardens Scheme for capital funding for the project. Rother District Council have advised that under certain circumstances planning consent is required for polytunnels in areas of outstanding natural beauty. A pre-application submission will determine whether a full application is required.

Detail: A polytunnel would both increase the range of fruit and vegetables that could be grown in the Community Produce Garden and significantly extend the growing season. It would also provide the opportunity for gardening under cover during winter months and in bad weather.

The cost of £993 for a 10 x 3m polytunnel was included in the successful bid to the National Gardens Scheme for capital funding for the project. This funding must be spent by the end of April 2025 and submission of a pre-application as soon as possible is desirable to determine whether a full application and consent is required ahead of the grant spending deadline.

Finance: The cost of pre-application advice for the parish council is £100 which is less than the fee to the CIC.

Key dates: Agreement at the June NPC meeting to determine whether a full planning application is required and to allow purchase of the polytunnel within the grant period.

Other considerations: The proposed location for the polytunnel at the north end of Field 9 is only visible to one house adjoining the estate, the owner of which is supportive of the project.