

NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ALLOTMENTS SUB-COMMITTEE WITH THE NEWTON ABBOT AND DISTRICT CO-OPERATIVE ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION HELD AT NEWTON'S PLACE, 43 WOLBOROUGH STREET, NEWTON ABBOT AT 7.00 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY 20th MARCH 2024.

Representing Newton Abbot Town Council

Councillors: M Ryan (presiding)
C Davieson
A Hall (Deputy Mayor)
C Parker

In attendance: Samantha Scott – Deputy Town Clerk and RFO
Linda McGuirk – Principal Administrator

Representing Newton Abbot & District Co-operative Allotments Association (NADCAA):
Mr Tim Callard (Chairperson of NADCAA)
Mr Steve Garlick (Secretary to NADCAA)

A1. CHAIRPERSON

It was **agreed** to appoint Councillor M Ryan to preside over the meeting.

A2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors D Corney-Walker, M Joyce and Phil Rowe – Town Clerk.

A3. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The notes of the meeting held on 26th April 2023 were received and signed as a correct record.

A4. ITEMS RAISED BY THE ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION

a) NADCAA General Update

The meeting considered a report produced by representatives of NADCAA, previously circulated. NADCAA representatives highlighted the following items from within the report:

The Kings Coronation

The Association organised a Coronation Picnic on the 8th May 2023 in the Orchard area on Decoy Field which was well attended by members and their guests.

Portaloo on Coach Road & Bradley

Following the successful trial in 2022 on the Coach Road field, a portaloo was provided at Coach Road and on Bradley Field during the summer weeks in 2023. Members with plots on these fields welcomed this initiative and have asked for the hire duration to be extended slightly.

APPENDIX C

The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that funds have been allocated within the 2024/25 budget for the provision of a portaloos on Coach Road and Bradley Field.

Facebook Group for members

NADCAA Facebook page and private members group page continues to be well supported with members sharing their achievements and ideas. Following this success an Instagram page will be created.

Waiting List

As at the 16th March the total number of applicants on the waiting list for an allotment plot was 102 with 43 of these being for a plot on the new allotments that are pending at Hele Park. Excluding Hele Park, the waiting list is 59. At this time last year, the total waiting list was 92. New lettings have been temporarily suspended for the past month while the new tenancy agreements in the Council's name have been issued and 2024 rents collected. This suspension of lettings follows a busy period of new lettings in January and February when 22 plots were let. Sixteen plots of different sizes are now available for letting as set out in the table below:

Blakes	X2 half plots – available from the 26/3/24
Bradley	X1 half plot & x1 quarter plot
Coach Road	X1 half plot
Cookes	X3 half plots
Decoy	X3 quarter plots, x4 half plots and x1 three quarter plot

Plot Rents

Plot rents for 2024 were increased in line with inflation to £36 per half plot.

Legal Action

The legal action against NADCAA and the Council by a former plot holder is still ongoing and there have been no developments since the formal defence was submitted by the solicitors acting for NADCAA and the Council at the start of November last year.

The New Arrangements with the Council

The officers of NADCAA expressed their gratitude for the support given by the Council and in particular its officers, to facilitate the smooth transfer of plot tenancies from NADCAA to the Council. The new agreements have been issued and invoices raised for 2024 plot rents. NADCAA volunteers will continue to provide much of the day-to-day admin. of the allotments, whilst the Council will be responsible for the enforcement of tenancy rules. A new Service Agreement has been agreed between NADCAA and the Council with final sign pending.

The representatives asked if the new service level agreement can be signed and run alongside the existing agreement?

b) Future use of the Countryside Rangers area at Coach Road Allotments.

APPENDIX C

The meeting considered a report produced by representatives of NADCAA, previously circulated, on the future use of the Countryside Rangers area at Coach Road allotments. This idea is being informally suggested to TDC by a local social enterprise group called Transformational Land Communities and is still in its early stages. NADCAA invited NATC to support the use of the land currently occupied by the Countryside Rangers for allotments, and to liaise with TDC in connection with this as appropriate.

In principle, members supported the use of the Countryside Rangers area at Coach Road as land for new allotments.

A5. ITEMS RAISED BY NEWTON ABBOT TOWN COUNCIL

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that the transition to the Council issuing the tenancy agreements and invoicing had gone smoothly. There had been some technical issues with the introduction of Adobe Sign, but the majority of tenants have returned their agreements in a timely manner. The Deputy Town Clerk thanked the allotment representatives for their support.

Members were reminded that the Council is now responsible for managing breaches in tenancies.

A6. OTHER MATTERS FROM OTHER ALLOTMENT SITES

Representatives of NADCAA provided the following updates:

(a) Blake's Field

Repair required to the gate. Quotes are being obtained.

(b) Coach Road

Discussions have been initiated with the Councils Officers regarding the provision of a vehicle gate at the entrance to the field car park. Currently access to the entire site, which includes the Idverde depot and the Countryside Rangers area, is controlled by a lockable gate at the top of the drive which is open during the working day.

In principle, Members supported the installation of gates subject to quotes being obtained for consideration.

(c) Cooke's Field

The main issue with this field continues to be the access track through the gate at the end of Courtenay Road, and the route to the allotment field down the farm field. The very wet weather this year has made access particularly difficult, and discussions are ongoing with the Councils Officers.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that the Town Clerk is trying to contact the landowner to ask permission for the Council to place hardcore on the track.

(d) Bradley

APPENDIX C

The Association has an extraction licence to use spring water on the allotments, during 2023 field members set up a linked system to enable the use of this water to be more readily accessible to more plot holders. This year it is hoped that this project can be further extended to include a solar powered pump and to have a solar powered charging station for portable tool batteries on the field. Applying to South West Water for funding to support the project.

(e) Decoy

The extension of the tarmac tracks on the top field track was completed last year and is a significant improvement. NADCAA expressed their gratitude to the Council for funding this work.

(f) Hele Park, New Allotment Fields

The Council has confirmed that the legal discussions for the transfer of the Taylor Wimpy field have been completed with relevant documents submitted to the Land Registry. Full opening of this field will not be possible until the adjacent Persimmon field has also been transferred and a ramp created between the two fields, it is hoped that the majority of the TW field can be let to members this growing season. It was noted that some applicants for a plot on these fields have been on the waiting list for over 6 years.

It was noted that a planning application has been submitted to TDC to create a new vehicle access from Howton Road to the Persimmon field, which will allow bulk materials to be brought onto this field and the Taylor Wimpy field using the intended new ramp referred to above.

Members suggested the first year is offered rent free, with new tenants just paying the administration fee. Members asked for confirmation of when was the planning application was submitted?

The representatives of NADCAA suggested that residents on the Hele Park allotment waiting list are invited to a meeting at Newton’s Place to provide them with an update on the current situation.

Members were informed there is meeting scheduled on the 26th March with representatives of NATC, NADCAA and Persimmon.

A7. Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting is scheduled on Wednesday 5th March 2025.

Meeting closed at 19:55

Chairman.....Date.....