

**NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ALLOTMENTS SUB-COMMITTEE WITH THE NEWTON ABBOT AND DISTRICT CO-OPERATIVE ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION HELD AT NEWTON'S PLACE, WOLBOROUGH STREET, NEWTON ABBOT AT 7.00 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY 22<sup>nd</sup> APRIL 2026**

Representing Newton Abbot Town Council:

Councillors: Mike Ryan (presiding)  
Colin Davieson  
Mike Joyce  
Colin Parker (Mayor)

In attendance: Sam Scott – Deputy Town Clerk & RFO  
Thomas Collard – Green Spaces Officer  
Linda McGuirk – Principal Administrator

Representing Newton Abbot & District Co-operative Allotments Association (NADCAA):

Tim Callard (Chairperson of NADCAA)  
Steve Garlic (Secretary of NADCAA)

**A1. CHAIRPERSON**

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

**A2. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Alex Hall.

**A3. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The notes of the meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2025 were received and signed as a correct record.

**A4. GREEN SPACES OFFICER REPORT**

The Green Spaces Officer reported on:

- The partnership between NADCAA and the Council continues to be working well thanks to the support of Tim, Steve, the committee, and Field Reps.
- Three full inspections were conducted last year, with two additional field wide inspections in late autumn and winter. Further ad-lib and follow-up inspections were conducted throughout the year. Generally, tenants are responsive to cultivation enforcement letters and either tidy their plot, reduce the number of plots, or voluntarily resign fully. Very few tenancies have been terminated by using the full eviction process. The introduction of a "Welfare" notice has been successful, allowing tenants to take a break from cultivating their plots and not feel the pressure of inspections.
- The council is developing accessible plots on Vicary's and then Decoy Fields. This will allow less able tenants to transition to a smaller and more accessible space, rather than

facing the eviction process. It can be compared to an Associate Membership which currently costs £10 a year, but with space to cultivate.

- Vicary's Field is undergoing transition to full council management. Tenancy Agreements were sent to current and potential tenants in March. Some responses are yet to be received. Current tenants have the option of becoming NADCAA members, or not. The field needs to be cleared of refuse so that plots can be cleared for letting.
- Camomile Field is developing as a new allotment site and now has a community shed. There has been some pushbacks from the local community about the site, but when attempting to establish communication channels there has been little to no response. That said, a notice was sent out to all tenants reminding them of appropriate allotment conduct in the summer of 2025. The council are awaiting transfer of the Larkspur land from Persimmon (Legal documents with our requested amendments are with them).
- A small number of formal complaints have been made by tenants and the local community across several sites. Only one required proceeding to a first formal warning due to the severity of the incidents.
- Following several break-ins, NADCAA and the council have been working together to improve security on Decoy field. NADCAA has changed the keys to the field, and there are ongoing discussions to install CCTV. The council has reinforced the allotment boundary with branches from tree work and whips planted by the FMO Team.
- A tree safety survey was conducted in late 2025 of all allotment field boundaries. Following this, several fields have required both safety and "quality of life" tree work which has been completed by a local contractor.
- A local charity run allotment made contact in 2025 asking if NADCAA could offer some of their available plots to members on the NADCAA waiting list. This is ongoing with charity.
- Allotment inspections restarted in April.

The Green Spaces Officer expressed his thanks to NADCAA for their help and support since starting in his role in February 2025, particularly to Tim and Steve and his colleagues at the council.

## A5. ITEMS RAISED BY THE ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION

### a) Field Updates

**Blake's** – No matters to report

**Coach Road** – There have been no developments regarding the provision of a field gate at the entrance to the Coach Road car park although this remains an aspiration to improve security on this site.

**ACTION:** Facilities Maintenance Team Leader to prepare costings for the installation of a gate.

**Cooke's** – 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. During wet weather access can be particularly difficult. Unfortunately, the plans to improve the track from Courtenay Road with hardcore did not proceed. Discussions are ongoing with the Councils Officers.

Members on Cookes Field are working together to create a new wildlife/community space in a previously unused area at the bottom of the field. The space has been cleared, and the plans are to have a pond, various wildlife habitats and a community shelter with picnic seating. It is hoped to secure some grant funding to assist with these plans.

**ACTION:** Ongoing TC to continue investigations into improving the condition of the access track.

**Bradley** – The water distribution from the field spring is working well and no mains water has been used on the field over the past 12 months.

**Decoy** – The new water harvesting station has been constructed by our volunteers. We are very grateful to the Council for funding the materials for this work.

**Camomile and Larkspur Fields** – The Taylor Wimpy Field which is now called Camomile has now been fully let and a field shed has been provided. We are working with the Newton Abbot Community Shed to provide a “bug hotel” notice board on this field.

The shed and the notice are being funded from a grant received from Taylor Wimpey when they handed over the field.

Cultivating this field is very challenging due to the difficult access which is currently only accessed by 30 steep steps and also because of the lack of top soil.

Unfortunately, there has been no progress during the year regarding the adjacent field which is to be called Larkspur Field which is now completely overgrown.

## b) General update

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

### Waiting List

As at the 15<sup>th</sup> April the total number of applicants on the waiting list for an allotment plot was 58 with 16 of these being for a plot on the new allotments at Hele Park. Excluding Hele Park, the waiting list is 42. At this time last year, the waiting list excluding Hele Park was 45.

### Lettings 2023 - 2025

	2023	2024	2025
New Applications	106	215	181
Plots Let	43	91	78
Resignations	46	69	67
Terminations	7	12	11

### Plot Rents

Plot rents for 2024 were increased in line with inflation to £38 per half plot.

**ACTION:** Further discussion is required to agree the process for the transition to NATC to take responsibility for annual tenancy payments.

### **Legal Action**

The legal action against NADCAA and the Council by a former plot holder is still ongoing and NADCAA are liaising closely with the Town Clerk in connection with this

### **Working arrangements with the Council**

The officers of NADCAA would like to place on record our gratitude for the continued support given by the Council and in particular its officers, for allotment provision in Newton Abbot.

There is a close working relationship between NADCAA and Council Officers and we have a very positive working relationship with Thomas Collard the Green Spaces Officer.

### **Colony Allotment Management System**

We had been planning to migrate from Colony to the updated system Orkestrate but we became aware of problems reported by other users and issues regarding ongoing support. The decision was therefore made to defer the migration until we were satisfied that adequate support would be available during the migration.

### **Legal Structure for NADCAA Ltd**

In view of the ongoing legal issue that is still unresolved, after taking legal advice any decision on changing the legal structure of NADCAA has been deferred.

### **Field Security**

In October 2025 and again at the start of 2026, a significant number of sheds were broken into on Decoy field with numerous thefts of tools and equipment. There was a suspicion that access had been gained to the field overnight by someone in possession of a key to the field gate lock. In consultation with members on Decoy a decision was made to fit new lock cores and for the first time to issue members with numbered keys to maintain better control of the lock keys. A £20 deposit for each key was also introduced to incentivise the return of keys by members who resign from their plots. This was a substantial investment by the association from its reserves but was felt be necessary to retain control of gate keys.

Overall, the key switching process ran very smoothly although there are still ongoing issues with members not locking the gate when entering or leaving the field.

The following additional steps have been taken and are planned to improve field security:

- Deterrent planting was carried out in the gaps on the Kingskerswell Road boundary by NATC
- Some members have installed solar powered nature cameras on their plots that are linked to their mobile phones.
- NADCAA are planning to install a more professional solar powered system covering part of the top track and the shop area. We are currently waiting for a quotation for this.

**Volunteers**

Our NADCAA committee continues to be well supported with most of the key committee positions being filled. When we advertised for a new field rep on Decoy we had several applicants and so were able to divide Decoy Field into four sections each with its own field rep so that the workload is equivalent to the reps on the other fields.

**Wildlife Surveys**

Once again surveys of the ponds on Decoy are being surveyed by a qualified ecologist. We are very fortunate to have links with an ecologist who is registered to carry out newt surveys who is happy to undertake the surveys on a voluntary basis. This year’s surveys are currently ongoing. Gong forward, we are hoping that surveys can be undertaken of the ponds on other fields.

**Vicarys Field**

NADCAA is happy to work with the Council regarding the gradual assimilation of the plots on Vicarys Field with new plot holders becoming members of the allotment association.

**Provision of Accessible Plots**

We welcome the plans to create some accessible planting beds initially on Decoy field and then on Vicarys Field.

**Check the Shed – Pesticide Initiative**

Earlier this year NADCAA was very pleased to work with Green Futures and support the Check The Shed Pesticide Initiative in Newton Abbot. A pesticide collection bin was sited on each field during March with bags issued by our volunteer field reps.

**A6 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting is scheduled on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2027, or as required.

Meeting closed at 19:46

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