

**NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ALLOTMENTS SUB-COMMITTEE WITH THE
NEWTON ABBOT AND DISTRICT CO-OPERATIVE ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION
HELD AT THE NEWTON'S PLACE, 43 WOLBOROUGH STREET, NEWTON ABBOT
AT 7.00 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY 23rd MARCH 2022**

Representing Newton Abbot Town Council

Councillors: C Bunday (Deputy Mayor) M Joyce (Mayor)
C Davieson C Parker
M Hocking (presiding) L Sheffield

**Representing Newton Abbot & District Co-operative Allotments Association
(NADCAA) attended virtually.**

Mr Tim Callard (Chairman)
Mr Steve Garlick (Secretary)

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

A6. CHAIRPERSON

In the absence of the Chairperson of the Allotments Sub Committee it was agreed to appoint Cllr Hocking to preside over the meeting.

A7. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors D Howe, R Jenks and P Bullivant.

A8. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The notes of the meeting held on 27th July 2021 were received and signed as a correct record.

A9. ITEMS RAISED BY THE ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION

a) New Allotment Sites at Hele Park

The meeting considered a briefing note produced by representatives of the NADCAA, previously circulated. The NADCAA representatives expressed ongoing concerns regarding the condition of the site and delays in transfer, in particular:

- little progress in the delivery of these allotments has been made over recent years and we are still waiting for these fields to be made available.

Taylor Wimpey (TW) have advised they are in negotiations for the transfer of their field to Teignbridge District Council (TDC) and then onto the Town Council. They have confirmed that the field will be set out in accordance with their section 106 planning approval with water troughs, grass paths and rabbit fencing. More

recently they have consulted with the Association regarding the access gate at the top of the lower steps and advised them that NADCAA would like a 10-foot galvanised metal gate and fencing rather than a lower wooden gate to ensure long term durability and security.

The only access to this field currently is the 30 steep steps in the bottom corner of the field and there has been discussion regarding the creation of a link between this field and the adjacent allotment field that is being provided by Persimmon but unfortunately Persimmon have not engaged constructively with these ideas. The TW field also has limited topsoil particularly in the centre of the field.

TW have offered an ex-gratia payment of £3,000 to NADCAA to help fund the creation of a link between the Persimmon and TW fields and for the import of compost / topsoil once this ramp has been created. For a vehicle to be able to gain access to the Persimmon field the current entrance to this field would need to be enlarged. A hardened track would also be required along the top of the Persimmon field. Clearly an allotment field that is only accessible via 30 steps is not suitable and could arguably be in breach of the Equality Act. The creation of a ramped link between the TW field and the adjacent Persimmon field would improve access but would require significant improvements to the Persimmon field and could only proceed if the Persimmon field was also taken over by the council and if sufficient funding for these improvements was available.

Persimmon have advised that they are in discussions with TDC regarding the transfer of their field, but these discussions are currently stalled. They have advised that they are not willing to go beyond the requirements of their initial 106 agreement which would mean the field is set out as six very large plots. These need to be re-sized to enable them to be let as half/quarter plots. A revised layout could provide 18 x 90m² half plots.

To be suitable for use this field would require at least three water troughs along the top of the plots and as noted under the previous comments for the Taylor Wimpey field the entrance gate would need to be enlarged and a hardened track provided along the top of the Persimmon field to link with the proposed hardened/tarmacked ramp down to the Taylor Wimpey field.

NADCAA has successfully bid for grant funding to support the commissioning of this field and has £3,000 ring fenced for this project. If these monies are not used on this field it is likely that these grants will have to be returned.

HRH Prince Charles has given the National Allotment Society (NAS) permission allocate the name "Platinum Jubilee Allotment Field" to any allotments opened in 2022.

Members were disappointed at the ongoing delays in transfer of the sites to the Town Council. Members noted that Cllr Bullivant has been working to resolve the issues. Following discussion, accordingly it was;

AGREED - Contact Cllr Bullivant and request an update on progress. If progress was unsatisfactory the Town Council will contact TDC to request

an update with a view to pushing the project forward given the timescale indicated, to be eligible to use the name Platinum Jubilee Allotment Field.

b) Upgrading of sites tracks

The meeting considered a briefing note produced by representatives of the NADCAA, previously circulated. It was noted that previous quotes obtained for tarmacking the tracks had expired. Members were advised that in addition to the long-term improvements some short-term repairs to the tracks were required.

Following discussion, accordingly it was;

AGREED

- NADCAA to obtain quotes in relation to the long-term improvement of tracks across all sites.
- NADCAA will produce and submit a report to the Town Council for consideration, outlining the plans for the long-term track improvements.
- That the Town Council would fund 50% of the cost of the *gravel required for the short-term track repairs (approx. £125).

*It was suggested that NADCAA ask the developers if they could provide any hard core.

c) Water Harvesting proposal

The meeting considered a report produced by representatives of the NADCAA, previously circulated.

NADCAA have identified a space on Decoy field for a pilot project that could allow for a 6,000-litre water station to be provided. The proposal is to link six 1,000 litre Intermediate Bulk Containers (IBC) under a roofed frame with the rainwater fed into the IBC. The water station would be provided at the back of the small car park at the top of the field adjacent to the upper track. There would be no loss of car parking space or any allotment space.

The cost of the project is estimated at circa £2,000. NADCAA advised they are applying for a grant to meet half of the cost of the project and asked if the Town Council would match fund the project.

Members expressed their support for the project, accordingly it was;

AGREED

- The Town Council will match fund the project up to £1,000

d) Additional car parking on Decoy Field

The meeting considered a report produced by representatives of the NADCAA, previously circulated.

Representatives explained at this stage the idea to create additional car parking utilising half a plot is in its infancy but if the council is happy in principle with this proposal, then NADCAA would prepare more detailed plans and seek external grant funding for the project.

Following discussion, accordingly it was;

AGREED

- The Town Council supports the project in principle, at this stage, subject to the current tenant's occupancy being secure.
- NADCAA carry out further investigations and report back to the Town Council for consideration.

e) NADCAA Update

The meeting considered a briefing note produced by representatives of the NADCAA, previously circulated. Areas of the briefing note were highlighted, in particular:

- Platinum Jubilee Celebrations

The Association is planning a Jubilee Art Picnic on Friday 3rd of June to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee on Decoy field. Working with the Newton Abbot Art Group, Coordin8 (a local charity that supports adults with learning difficulties) and Decoy Primary School to arrange a day of art workshops and displays and an on-site picnic for members, their families and local residents.

A grant application was submitted to the Arts Council England to provide resources and equipment for the day, unfortunately this had been declined but has been forwarded to the Community Foundation Fund for consideration. The NADCAA representatives advised that if the funding bid is not successful the event will proceed on a smaller scale. The Town Council was asked to consider whether it would fund the purchase of a 25 litre Calor gas water urn, which could be used to support other community allotment events.

Following discussion members suggested that NADCAA submits a request to the Town Council if the funding is not successful.

- New Tenancy Agreement

NADCAA representatives informed members of changes to the tenancy agreement to address issues that had arisen with some members not cultivating their plots adequately. The tenancy agreement has been revised and updated. The main changes introduce a clearer probationary process for new tenants and clarify that annual renewal of tenancies is conditional on a member complying with all rules during the previous year. The Association consulted with the National Allotment Society legal advisor before introducing these changes. The changes were agreed at the AGM by the members.

- Harmful chemicals

Additional restrictions on the use of harmful chemicals were also approved by the membership at last years' AGM.

- Policies

To further advance the goal of improving the governance of the Association new Safeguarding and Equality and Diversity policies were adopted at the end of last year.

- Facebook

The Association has established a successful Facebook page along with an internal Facebook group for members, both the group and the Facebook page appear to be working well.

Members of the Council expressed their appreciation to the Association for their continued great work.

A10. **TREE SURVEY**

It was agreed to defer the item until a report outlining the costs had been produced for consideration.

A11. **OTHER MATTERS FROM OTHER ALLOTMENT SITES**

Representatives of NADCAA provided the following updates:

(a) Blake's Field

- New side gate installed by Green Futures alongside Hawthorn Thrips.
- Rear fence has been moved back to the development behind.

(b) Coach Road

- Discussions are being held with Idverde regarding the possibility of renting the redundant commercial greenhouses. This could provide a rental income. Discussions were in the early stages.
- It was noted TDC has outlined the Idverde site as a Brownfield housing site.
- Potential for water conservation from the Idverde greenhouses.

(c) Cooke's Field

- A conifer tree is being removed by the farmer and replaced with a suitable species.
- Continual problem with access paths.

(d) Bradley

- Green Futures have resolved the flooding issues.
- Green Futures have received a grant to participate in the Devon Bug Recovery Project.

Members expressed their support for the bug monitoring project.

(e) Decoy - nothing further to report.

A12. Date of next meeting

To be agreed as necessary

Meeting closed at 8:05pm

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