

Totnes Allotments Association.
Minutes of Committee meeting held on 6 May 2017

1. Present:

Committee Members: M Elliot-Smith (chair) L. Taylor, P. Ferguson, C Kiddle, L Allott, L Woodall, W Hearn

Members: A. Skinner, B Smith, H Swan, B Smith, A Norman, E Stirling.

Councillor: J Hodgson (part of meeting)

Apologies: S Ponton, B Siepmann, E Chandler, P Goddard

2. Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 22 October 2016

The minutes were agreed unanimously, proposed Laurie, seconded Cathy

3. Matters arising

All actions have been completed.

4. Minutes of AGM held on 24 February 2017

The minutes were agreed, proposed Wendy, seconded Lizzie. There were no actions arising.

5. Chairman's update

1. The purchase of Camomile Lawn is now complete the plots let and being cultivated.
2. Mark is going to visit other allotment groups in the area, starting with Brixham
3. Great Court Farm farm housing development. Mark is working with the developer to secure allotments within the scheme. These will be managed by a separate allotments association, affiliated to TAA.

6. Councillors' liaison and feedback

1. The group congratulated Jacqi Hodgson on her election to Devon County Council the preceding day. Jacqi said she had also put herself forward to be the Totnes Town Council rep for the association.

7. Treasurer's reported

1. The unrestricted funds currently stand at £3345. It was agreed to allocate funding to the four sites for on-going management capital repairs as follows:
 1. Kingsbridge Hill, c/f from 2016 £220. £400 allocated for 2017
 2. Copland Field c/f £280. £400 allocated for 2017. The recent replacement of the water pump will come from the ring-fenced Copland water funds.
 3. Castle Meadow, c/f £40. £200 allocated for 2017.
 4. Camomile Lawn, £400 allocated for setting up costs such as padlocks, water fittings etc. A sinking fund is to be established from the rents to enable the fence to be replaced at the end of its life.
2. It was agreed that our income is sufficient for our needs, so there is no need to increase membership fees at the present time.

7. Site Report Castle Meadows

1. The path work was done in March. The total cost was £690, with £550 coming from DCC localities fund.
2. The hedge was cut in February, funded by one off contributions from tenants.

3. The next task needed is replacing the notice board. **Action site group**
4. A site inspection has been carried out and one tenant asked to improve their maintenance.

8. Site Report Copland Field

1. An apple orchard has been established, together with a josta-berry hedge at the entrance to the site.
2. Two inquiries have been received from people wanting to keep bees. It was agreed that they should be invited to meet with Mark and Laurie and a rep from the Copland Field site group to discuss this further, including where hives might be sited. It was agreed that anyone wanting to put hives on the site should have done a bee-keeping course and be a member of a beekeepers' association, which will give them insurance cover. **Action Pippa**
3. The marker pegs between plots have started to rot, so the site group has decided to replace them with painted ones, with the number of the plot on each.
4. One plot holder was sent a letter in March about their neglected plot, but there is no improvement as yet. The far end plot is still not let because it is so wet and shady. The site group has decided to let half of the half plot in the middle that has drainage problems and to put the other half down to comfrey. This should help to solve the weed problem on the plot.
5. DHT have agreed to the erection of a composting loo. It was agreed that this might also be a good idea for Castle Meadow site. It was agreed that the site group should seek funding for the loo. Jacqi Hodgson asked that details be sent through to her. **Action Tim Ponton.**

9. Site report Kingsbridge Hill

1. The surfacing at the entrance needs upgrading. Adrian to look at crushed concrete to do this.
2. The entrance gate needs upgrading so it becomes self closing. **Action Adrian**
3. Rabbits are entering the site along the bottom boundary. **Action: Adrian to organize a work day to upgrade the fencing.** Helen also recommended spraying with Grazers organic spray.
4. After a site inspection, four people have been asked to improve their maintenance and three people are on their second letter. This has resulted in an improvement on all those plots.
5. There was a discussion about people's preferences for being kept in touch with what is going on on site, the use of the Facebook group and an open list of email addresses. Mark agreed to give this further consideration outside the meeting.

10. Camomile Lawn

1. The site is now up and running. Documents will be received from the solicitor once the ownership has been registered with the Land Registry.
2. Annie Norman has offered to be the site contact and she was co-opted to the Committee, proposed by Mark, seconded by Wendy.
3. The site Steering Group will now move to becoming a site management group, without the membership of the officers of the Committee.
4. The water is now on, but it is not a permanent connection. The tenants paid for the hire of a digger to do this. Other set-up costs will come from Association general funds.
5. It was noted that the highway is still not adopted and that Linden Homes have recently put advertising on our boundary fence.

6. The Baumbacks have arranged for a tractor load of free muck and Annie will organize a work party to barrow it onto the plots.
7. The Committee registered its thanks to Mark for all his hard work in getting the site established and sorting out delays.

11. Site Protocols

1. There have been a number of inquiries about issues such as Dogs, Hosepipes, Spraying and Bonfires. It was agreed that there should be consistent policies on these issues across all the sites. They are mentioned in the tenancy agreements, but are not very specific. The underlying principle is that tenants should act as good neighbours and not cause a nuisance.
2. It was agreed to do a series of good practice notes, which can be sent to everyone and also displayed on notice boards. The essence of these will be as follows:
Action Pippa
3. **Dogs** All dogs must be on a lead at all times and tethered when the owner is working.
4. **Spraying** People should try not to use pesticides or herbicides. The Town Council has recently resolved not to allow the use of glyphosate on its land, which includes Castle Meadow. If a tenant finds they can't avoid having to use pesticides, they need to make sure they discuss this with their neighbouring plot-holder first. Elisabeth recommended the use of bran to stop slugs.
5. **Fires** People should compost or remove as much stuff off site to the Council green waste as possible. Any fires must not cause a nuisance to other plot holders or neighbours. Only dry waste should be burnt.
6. **Hosepipes** There should be no unattended use of hosepipes and no sprinklers. People should try where possible to have water butts which they fill with rainwater topped up from the site supply. Watering cans can then be used to water from these. Where people are waiting to use the tap, you shouldn't hog it for longer than say 10 minutes.

Any Other Business

1. Wendy reported that the online banking arrangements for paying rent etc have worked really well.
2. Pippa reported that she had submitted a response on behalf of the Association to the public consultation on the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan. The plan recommends allocation of land for allotments which does not relate to either the national standards or those that the Totnes Neighbourhood Plan has agreed. Jacqi asked for a copy of this. **Action: Pippa**

12. Date and time of next meeting.

The next meeting will take place at 9.30 on Saturday 8th July at the Friends' Meeting House.