

## Allotment Research and Evidence



The Butcher Park Hill Allotments are owned by Tavistock Town Council and run by an Allotment Association. Due to interest expressed in the initial survey and at consultation events, research about the quantity and need for allotments was undertaken by the Steering Group.

Initial information obtained from the allotment association indicates that Tavistock's allotments are oversubscribed, with a waiting list. Generally, there is support from those with allotments for additional allotments in the parish, though located in another location in order to provide homeowners from other areas of the parish with a closer link to their allotments.

A decision was taken to explore the provision of allotments in surrounding parishes as well, to understand whether additional allotment land in another area of the parish would be useful not just for Tavistock residents, but for residents from nearby parishes.

**Recommendation:**

Support allocation and policies that would encourage the donation of land for allotment use in locations in addition to the current Butcher Park Allotments. In particular, there appears to be demand from the Whitchurch area of the parish.

The evidence gathered is summarised below.

**Current allotment provision**

**Tavistock Parish**

An area of land of 1.21 hectares at Butcher Park Hill is owned by the Town Council and run day to day by an allotment association. The information below was provided by the chairman of the allotment association to the chairman of the Steering Group in September 2023.

**1. The number of plots and the sizes**

Total area 2.25 acres divided into 75 plots of varying sizes. Average size 148 sq. yds. (or half a standard plot). Smallest tenancy = 60 sq. yds. Largest tenancy (2 plots) = 342 sq. yds.

**2. The number of people using the allotments and the number on the waiting list.**

63 separately let tenancies, each having at least one named tenant, and often with two.

26 on waiting list currently. (Down from over 30 last year). There is a high degree of interest in recent years, but turnover has increased as, we believe, expectations of results exceed the reality of the experience (it's harder and more demanding work than many expect!)

**3. The amount of expected turnover each year**

Turnover of allotment holders = about 4 or 5 a year, currently. Turnover in finances = Income from tenancies c.£987. (Average payment per tenancy £13 p.a.)

**4. A statement indicating whether the association would support additional allotment land in Tavistock.**

It is not within the remit of our constitution for the committee to speak on behalf of the membership on any such socio-political development policies. However, as individuals, the committee entirely agreed that additional allotment land for the people of Tavistock would be desirable.

**5. A statement regarding any opinions that the association have about locations within the parish that might be appropriate/suitable/preferred (I think you mentioned that you wouldn't be able to easily manage more plots even if land adjacent came available and that it would suit some people not to have to travel from the other side of the parish).**

It is generally agreed that proximity to the plot holder's home is a very significant consideration for most Allotmenters. Thus, we would rather see new sites established around the town rather than an expansion of our own. A problem that has increasingly arisen at our own site is that of neighbours being disturbed by the inevitable bonfires that individual plot holders operate. As housing in our immediate vicinity has steadily increased, we now have houses on three sides, and this has inevitably led to greater numbers of complaints from neighbours about the occasional emissions of smoke. We would suggest that this should be considered as a relevant factor in the siting of allotments (and in the approval of housing developments!)

### **Mary Tavy**

Mary Tavy has a non-statutory allotment site of approximately 1 acre on the grounds of the Mary Tavy Recreation Ground. It's a private (non-council) site run by the Mary Tavy Community Allotment Gardeners Association and was established in 2019 after the parish council considered but did not support a statutory allotment site.

The site provides 5 standard (10 pole) allotments and 11 half-sized (5 pole) allotments. All of the allotments are occupied and there is a waiting list (although not substantial). There is water to the site. The parish council paid for the fencing to enclose and protect the site.

### **Lamerton**

The Lamerton Allotment project began in 2009 and what was once a field which had only ever been used for grazing has become a thriving community facility. The allotment is in the Avenue and there are 24 plots consisting of full and half plots.

Although the allotment has mains water, the growers have decided not to use it. Several huge storage tanks were donated to the project and guttering from a stone shed supplies these tanks with rainwater. A grant was obtained from Devon County to facilitate this. Money was also used to connect the water collection system to dipping troughs located around the site.

There are a couple of plots with plot holders just outside the fringe of the parish who have a site, but we have a waiting list of 3-5 at any one time. The majority of enquiries about having a plot from individuals outside the village come from the edge of Tavistock or Milton Abbot.

### **Plasterdown**

A few years ago, Plasterdown Parish council had started to look at the idea of allotments as a result of an enquiry from a member of the public. It turned out that demand would come from the area of Whitchurch that is in the Parish of Tavistock and whilst a site was looked at besides the Parish Hall, the owners of the land were not keen as a result of objections when the area was looked at for a car park at an earlier time. Nothing more has come forward to date.

**Gulworthy.** Gulworthy PC do not manage any allotments.

## Benefits of Allotment Gardening

<https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/sustainable-food/news/diary-project-shows-wellbeing-benefits-allotment-gardening>

<https://www.nsalg.org.uk/allotment-info/benefits-of-allotment-gardening/>

