

Cripley Meadow Allotment Association

Minutes of AGM held on Monday 25th March 2013

- 1. Introduction and welcome from the chair:** Slide show of allotments across Oxford city involved in last year's allotment competition.

Wendy spoke about the role of the Oxford and District Federation of Allotment Associations, (ODFAA) for which she has been chair since 2007. She explained that all but 2 of the 36 allotment sites across the city are members and ODFAA organises an Allotment Liaison meeting thrice yearly with a representative from the OCC Parks Department and the City Counsellor with responsibility for allotments. 40p of member's annual subscription goes to the Federation. ODFAA Allotment Associations site/ committee/Trustees are covered by Public and Employer liability (insurance) held in the name of ODFAA. Since 2007 the Federation has opened up 500 plots on existing sites. Last year there were about 208 applicants on the waiting list for plots in Oxford. Given the turnaround of plot holders this is not an unreasonable number. OCC is currently undertaking a rent review of its allotment sites and it is hoped this will be agreed by the time of our 2015 AGM. We have held our rent for 4 years now but the cost of maintaining our site has gradually risen over the years and these various increases and any rent rise will have to be passed on to members in due course.

- 2. Members present and apologies for Absence :-**

Mikal Ann (2b) Alison Campbell (13), Jamie Forbes (63), Wendy Skinner Smith (40,41), Rodney Smith (40,41), Tony Buxton (25), John Sivell (46), Tony Clear (124), Keith Holton (131,132), Hannah Yeadon (90), Tony Coombs (104), Vinh Tu (98a,2) Reneth Schoetz (48a), Richard Sims (102), Paul Allibone (SF8), Alex Nolasco (133,134), Tim Bone (99), Jane Eagan & Andrew Honey (5), Sarah Wilkin & Chris Hardy (149), Bonnie Mappin (SF4), Andrej Sufranson (SF6), Sue Perry (8b) Louise Bruce & Rob Bruce (SF 19,20), Alex Hollingsworth (81,82), Mark Doran (142), Gina Cowen (154), Godfrey Cole (14), Sheila Allen (12), Jane Mollison (42), Simon Mollison, (122,123), Peter Brandt (30), Damion Young (43), George Burnett Stuart (33), Rhianna Hughes (54a), Jonathan Finnerty (SF3), Carolyn Dutton (9, 64,65), Christine Long (8a), John Langsbury (101), Claire Pike (48b), Victor Elms (130), Joe Shallis (113), Carolyn Jarvis (SF9),

Annalisa Cecchi(61b) Roger Trafford (20) Ada Grabowsky (50), David Feeny (77) Jeremy Hyde (91) Katharine Lomas (96) Jane Wilson (103), Virgil Clarke (111) Patrick Curran (121) (53 attended all or part of the evening from 6pm) Apologies for absence: Chris Smith & Anita Jassi (74b), Nicola Harvey (61a), Sarah Sheldon (26), Andrew Lindridge (141,142a)

3. Minutes of Annual General Meeting of March 2012 and Matters Arising

At the 2012 AGM the committee was asked to draft a statement on the use of herbicides (6.2.10) for the Constitution and Rules. This was circulated to members via newsletter, web site and notice board in April 2012 but now needs to be formally adopted by the AGM. It reads

6.2.10 For information Only

Weedkillers. Please

- *Only use them if there is no alternative*
- *Only use glycosphate, which is sold under a number of names including Roundup*
- *Be considerate i.e. discuss your plans with your neighbours before use and only use on a calm day.*

The statement was unanimously agreed.

The minutes of 2012 were accepted as a correct record of the meeting.

4. Annual Accounts and Treasurer's Report.

Copies of the accounts which had been inspected independently by accountant Ken Jones were circulated by Alison. The paper included figures for the last 2 years showing a slight reduction in membership subscriptions in 2012 and a slight increase in donations. The lottery funded project to fence the South Field is completed. The accounts for 2012 were accepted.

The budget for 2013 was reviewed. There will be only 3 skips this year.

Members were again asked not to put unsuitable items in the skip and take their own rubbish home. The budget was accepted and Alison thanked for her work as Treasurer.

5. Annual Report 2012

This had been previously emailed to members. There was a question about bee keeping on site. Hives can be kept on site but the bee keeper has to be appropriately trained, must keep the hive on their plot and take responsibility for the bees. Unfortunately 2 previous hives on site did not survive for very long.

6. Welcome from Susanna Pressel and Elections

The Committee and Officers all stood down. Susanna thanked members and the committee, and Wendy in particular, for their hard work during the year. She proposed Wendy as Chair. There was no other nomination and she was elected unopposed. Subsequently the following officers and committee members were elected unopposed: Chair – Wendy Skinner Smith; Vice Chair – Tony Clear; Treasurer – Alison Campbell; Secretary – Claire Pike; Field Secretary – Richard Haigh. Other committee members – Alex Hollingsworth, Jeremy Hyde, Jamie Forbes and Mark Doran. Annalisa Cecchi and Carolyn Jarvis were elected as new committee members.

7. AGM items

- **Strategies to mitigate our flood plain status.**

There are no easy solutions to cultivating land in the flood plain when there is persistent heavy rain. Alex and Jeremy spoke about their approach which essentially involves marking out beds and raising the level of land in the bed. Observe the lie/ level of your plot and raise the areas which flood readily first. This can be done with soil, leaf mould, compost, manure etc. Jeremy tries to collect and apply a couple of wheelbarrow loads on every time he's on his allotment. Paths can be dug out to raise beds. Members were encouraged to resist taking any earth/ weeds from their plot. Almost everything can be used for paths or to raise beds. Perennial weeds must be rotted first. Jeremy has been building up an area of land on the island with green waste. Check with him first if you want to join this project.

- **A shredder for organic waste management**

Using bonfires to dispose of 'woody' waste is likely to be less acceptable in the future with the proximity to accommodation in the University student flats. Also the 2009 environmental analysis identified a theoretical risk of bonfires producing 'bad' chemicals so the council would like to encourage communal bonfires rather than bonfires on individual plots. The overall message is: burn as little and compost as much as possible. An alternative means of disposal is for the Association to acquire a shredder. We have a good reputation for bringing projects in on time and successfully and have been asked to apply for further Lottery grant. We expect a shredder could be purchased with a combination of a Lottery grant and our own funds. Tony has investigated the matter and felt an effective shredder could be acquired for ~£2,000. He suggested we hire one and try it out first before

buying our own. At least one individual would need to be trained to use it and the equipment would have to be kept in a secure place. He thought the current shed might be suitable for this.

Questions were asked about when the shredding would be done and arrangements for collecting the chipped waste. Members wondered if a bigger machine would be more suitable. Initially the shredder might be used at the weekend and then according to need and would depend on the availability of the individual(s) trained to use it. By an overwhelming show of hands the meeting approved the proposal to acquire a shredder/chipper and asked the committee to take the process further and make a Lottery application to assist with the purchase, training and storage of the equipment..

- **Setting up a trading shop on site**

Vbeke Mannion spoke enthusiastically about her experience of setting up and running a shop at Trap Grounds Allotments. A container was acquired for this purpose in 2007 for £1,200 and the shop has run successfully since then selling a variety of items (farm manure, mulch, fleece, canes, ground cover etc.) sourced from low cost suppliers. The shop is open for 2 hours on Saturday and 1 hour on Sunday and is manned by a small group (2 - 3) of volunteers. Some years the shop has made a profit of £1,000. It is much welcomed by Trap Ground plot holders (and is open to others too) and has encouraged social interaction among them.

By an overwhelming show of hands members showed their interest in Cripley Meadow having a trading shop if a person could be found to take responsibility for managing it. Those who expressed an interest in helping with a shop were :- Sheila Allen (12), Tim Bone (99), Alex Nolasco (133), Roger Trafford (20), Godfrey Cole (14), Paul Allibone (SF8), Ada Grabowska-Zhang (50b), Simon Mollison (122), Hannah Yeadon (90), Sue Perry (8b), Louise & Rob Bruce (SF 19,20), Tony Coombs (104), Rhian Hughes (54a), Christine Long(8a).

Meanwhile members were encouraged to visit the Trap Grounds shop and the one at the Osney St Thomas allotment site. Vbeke was thanked for her presentation.

- **Plot Fences**

Plot fences were installed mainly to keep rabbits out. We no longer have a problem with rabbits and the fences do not exclude badgers or muntjak. South Field plots without fences haven't experienced any more animal

damage than fenced plots. Fences do act as a boundary but they make it very difficult to clear perennial weeds, such as horsetail and ground elder and are felt to be adding to the perennial weed problem on site. Most allotment sites don't have fences and paths between plots are easier to manage. Members were asked what they felt about not erecting fences when they need replacing. It was noted that fences can benefit the safety of children on site and confine dogs to a plot although to do this they don't need to be sunken rabbit fences. Some members reported frustration with their fences when trying to remove weeds growing through them and would be glad to remove them. One member asked how boundaries would be recognised. As all plots should have paths between them this is not a problem and the absence of fences would probably help with this. 3 members recorded their objection to the removal of fences and it was clarified that having a fence remained an individual's preference except on the south field where membership was agreed on the basis of no fences. Existing fences must be kept clear of perennial weed.

- **University accommodation buildings**

The new building scheme has proved very controversial.

A rumour that acquisition of the South Field site had contributed to CMAA being more sympathetic to the building was strenuously refuted. The South Field site belongs to the Association and CMAA was one of the few to participate and make any critical comment through the planning stage. In answer to a query it was noted the planning documents were still on line, The committee will continue to work positively with the University and Longcross regarding work on badger proofing and access to water tanks as agreed as mitigation during the planning process. The plan to put some fruit trees by the fence adjacent to the buildings was approved.

8. AOB

Ada Grabowska- Zhang is keen to share her extra plants/ tubers and seeds and wondered if others would be interested in doing likewise. She offered members her chitting potatoes and Jerusalem artichokes and would like to set up a seed circle. Her suggestions were well received and she was asked to write a column in the next newsletter about this.

Meeting ended 9.20pm