

Cripley Meadow

Newsletter August 2016

The Working party planned for this month was Sunday August 14th 10.30 to 12.30.

Earthworms

This is an initiative from Earthwatch, a world-wide conservation organisation in Oxford that engages people in the natural world and uses scientific research to help build a sustainable future for people and wildlife

One of these projects is called Earthworm Watch and they hope this will engage and inspire Gardeners and Organic Growers.

ODFAA will be organising an evening talk on this over the winter but meanwhile you can sign up as an individual to join in.

<http://www.earthwormwatch.org/>

Diana welcomed her bees to her new hive.



This is the first of 3 hives we have given permission for, each singly and distributed across the site. We anticipate this will be a full

complement for some years to give us time to reflect on any impact on members. Neighbour members have been informed as required by our agreement and information will be on the board asap. The bees were delivered on Saturday and seem to be peacefully settling in.

Weather

Unusual as ever but great for growth! This year my onions were out to dry on the hottest

day and some were just too soft and got burnt! I should have just released the roots earlier and looked at the forecast!



Cripley Meadow in July

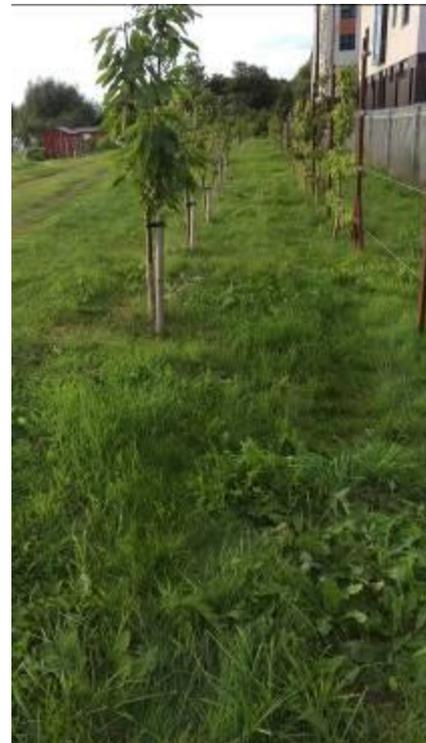
One of the annual Cripley Treats, the lime tree in Walton Good car park was in flower this last few weeks. Its sweet perfume was most prominent around the gate area.

Another recent spectacle was the amazing crane activity on the railway which had quite a few of us on both bridges watching the removal and rebuilding. I did not hear anyone mention it was happening nor that the long term badger sett under there had been managed?



Walton Well Road Bridge itself is to be raised to accommodate electrification - Submission of planning application/prior approval anticipated **end of 2017 or early 2018.**

Rodney and Wendy spent a pleasant day in August summer pruning The Castle Mill Orchard.



The trees are being kept small to enable mowing, picking and in anticipation of more work along this boundary? We want the new young trees to survive challenges. We still need to work on maintaining root stock and stability on Cripley Island trees but this will take more than one year. We have made

progress with renewing the management of the guards, tumps and weeds.



Other projects have taken up more time this year. It seems to be a patchy fruit season with reports of little by way of plums, cherries and fewer apples and pears. It was a very odd spring! I had one plum!

Yippee.another delivery of wood chip onto plot 57 ..thanks to Sylva trees.



Badger Fencing

Our badger cam shows that we still have egress but we are short on access info. We know they have stopped coming around Fiddlers s stream which was their previous main access. Water. Unfortunately, as we have reported previously, we know that occasionally they can climb the palisade fence, aided by the wire and it seems past obstacles! We need to loosen this. Out of twenty video shots most are 'fruitless' digging but then one climbs. Not sure if the

can all do this but it looks pretty risky getting over those spikes.

As you know we have been working (tirelessly!) with OU on this and we have made progress but there is more to do and members must keep access along the new fence clear for a metre. This was a unanimous vote in the 2015 AGM and we are all bound by these. We will be snagging for a while yet!

Meanwhile in spite of my early optimism the electricity is back on for my sweet corn. We had our first cobs this week so fingers crossed. Sadly, other members have already reported damaged and eaten gooseberry and strawberry crops.

Jeremy is working on managing the fencing snagging and installing work sheds, pumps and water butts as agreed at the 2015 AGM.



Our response to the latest Castle Mill consultation.

The committee were impressed at the range of treatments on offer and trust that visual sense will prevail in not making them darker and bigger. No one had any particular preferences and think we will be happy with what works and consoles. It will inevitably mean further disruption to Cripsey Meadow.

We noted to OU

- We expect to be consulted about any dust, noise or further impingement on Cripsey Meadow in the event of works being decided.
- We were impressed at the ingenuity and cost of a solution to developing

planting in the badger run. This keeps our flood plain and possibly improves protection for the badgers. Not sure it is good for trees.

- We think better to have steel fence all along present stretch of palisade fencing up to Fiddlers Stream rather than just some stretches. We presume rusted rather than shiny. Our palisade fence will need to be removed/relocated as other steel layer will facilitate climbing
- Natural England must be consulted re enclosure
- Insertion of new badger run units must be in separate sections so at no time will the badger run be closed to badgers nor Cripsey Meadow be open overnight for badger access
- We are not convinced of the impact of tree planting here but if goes ahead we will insist that the maintenance schedule is tighter than that applied to the badger hotel and run as this has not proved readily accessible. We agreed the run and badger hotel area it would be cut twice and the fence itself sprayed annually to remain as meadow. It has only just been cut after having to remind OU for 4 months. The badger hotel was so dense it made safe turning on the pedestrian cycle track impossible.
- The trees will need to be kept from overlapping our site path. We presume height will not be in excess of any lower buildings.
- Other queries. are there any implications for water butt feeds? Could still be improved as never solved valve problem. Only fills in heavy rain.
- We understand we will be talking with OU, ORME and

OCC before long about pollarding our willows on Castle Mill and Fiddlers Stream. These are now cracking. WE are awaiting negotiations about substituting willows for another planting along our Castle Mill boundary.

- Our boundary pollarding was last done in 2007. It was originally planned to do it every 5/7 years to limit disruption to plots. It is now beginning to crack so action must be taken soon if this is not to be a danger to members.

Trading news from Sarah

There will be no regular trading sessions during August, because we expect very few sales and several volunteers will be on holiday. But we can still arrange one-off sales with Sarah until 18th August. Contact sarahjehome@aol.com.

Audit Summary

The follow up took place in July



Wherever we can we are continuing to remove overgrown fences from plots where they become vacant. Members are charged with keeping fences clear to prevent further ground elder, horsetail and bindweed creeping along fence lines and though unmanaged permanent planting. Please help by working towards managing 'the buffers'. These are the 2-3 ft. paths that must be kept between all plots.

Green waste plots

Plot 109 needs to be turned and then be left to cook for compost for winter digging.

Please do not use these plots for your own weeds.

You can share use of the pit on plot 66 for some less compostable plot waste as long as it is not invasive perennial weeds nor very long and thick woody growth. The latter should be managed on the bonfire site, which will be back in action once not needed for material storage. We are still working on clearing 53/54 and 67 and 146.

Meanwhile I hope you are coping with your gluts.. courgettes and beans are in and they usually challenge everyone in their capacity to eat enough! Remember you can leave beans to mature and pick as beans for drying AND communicate with other members AND leave excess crops by the members notice board.

Good gardening to all

Wendy