

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Cripsey Meadow Allotments Association held on Monday 13th March 2017 at St Barnabas School, 7 – 8.30pm

Present: Wendy Skinner Smith (chairing), Francesco Nabergoi 103, Alex Hollingsworth 81/82, Cesar Campuzano 68D, Keith Holton 131/132, Sara Jones 71, Jamie Forbes 63, Sergi Caralto 103, Annalisa Cecchi 61B, Emma Delap 1A, Sarah Edwards 120, Manda Joyce 72, Sue and Bill Johnston 127B, Jane Mollison 42, Simon Mollison 122/123, Richard Sims 102, Henry Bailey 106C, Alex Nolasco 143, Anna Benn 145 – 147, Jeremy Hyde 91/92A, Alison Madders Scott 51, Tim Bone 99/100, Richard Haigh 15/16, George Burnett-Stuart 33, Tom Milner 62A, Christina Fries 60, David Edwards 119A, Sheila Allen 12, Sedhar Ball 94/95, Paul Allibone SF8, Liz Haines sf16, Meng Zhao 114 Susanna Pressel (for part of meeting). 35

1. Introduction by Chair. Wendy welcomed everyone to the meeting. She reported that Rodney was in hospital with a serious illness, but hoped to be home very soon. Wendy thanked Annalisa Cecchi and Richard Haigh, who were both standing down from the committee. Annalisa became a member in 2012 and very soon volunteered to join the committee. Wendy said she had been wonderfully helpful on the committee and had created a beautifully managed plot, which was in a terrible state when she took it on. She planned to continue with her plot, but was leaving the committee in order to spend more time away travelling. Richard joined in 2010 and now had 2 plots. Wendy said that Richard had been a wonderful asset, bringing a wealth of horticultural knowledge. Although new to growing vegetables, he and Jean had created prizewinning plots, which provided food for them most of the time. Richard had agreed to continue helping the association with spraying. Wendy presented Annalisa and Richard with books of photographs, documenting their activities at the site over the years.

2. Apologies for absence: Sarah Sheldon 9B, Nicola Harvey, Christine Long 7a/8a, Alison Campbell, Godfrey Cole, Emilie Clauzier 97, Christine Melia 5A, Mark Steinhoffel 150, Toby Jones 71, Ian Barry 50A, Margaret Belich 51, James Campbell 88B, Sheryn Simpson 133.

3. Minutes of the AGM of March 2016. The minutes were accepted as correct. No matters arising.

4. Annual Accounts and Treasurer's Report. Copies of the accounts, which had been inspected by Ken Jones independently, and the budget for 2017 had been circulated previously and were available on screen at the meeting. Sara Jones explained that less was spent than in the budget, because so much work during the year focused on the badger fence project, which was separately funded. The organisation was therefore in a slightly better position than expected. There were no questions on the accounts and these were accepted unanimously.

5. Annual Report. Wendy had circulated the Annual Report, which was also available on screen, and invited questions. She highlighted in particular Jeremy Hyde's valuable work on the badger fence project. Wendy said that CMAA was very fortunate to have his services, as it would not have been possible to find an outside contractor to do such a good job, including dealing with affected members, moving sheds, etc. She added that work was still being done to improve the fencing. Members gave Jeremy a round of applause.

6. Election of officers and committee members. Jane Mollison conducted the election for the position of Chair and asked the meeting for nominations. Wendy Skinner Smith was nominated and seconded and there were no other nominations. She was re-elected unanimously.

Wendy then conducted the election of other officers and committee members. Alex Hollingsworth (Vice Chair) and Sara Jones (Treasurer) were re-elected unanimously. The remaining committee members were all re-elected unanimously: Anna Benn, Emilie Clauzier, Emma Delap, Sarah Edwards, Jamie Forbes, Keith Holton, Jeremy Hyde. A new committee member Manda Joyce, plot 72, was also elected unanimously. Wendy thanked Manda for agreeing to join the committee so soon after taking on her plot.

Wendy reported that Claire Pike, former Secretary, had resigned to enable her to travel more and the committee had made a presentation of thanks to her. Wendy thanked the committee for sharing the secretarial duties while someone else was found and trained for the role.

7. AGM items

Item 1. Suggestions for using £150 allotment competition prize money for items on the Green. Wendy said the committee felt that members should benefit from the prize, as winning was a joint effort. Ideas were put forward: fruit juicer; brick barbecue; shared water pumps for plot wells; table(s) to replace dilapidated ones ; shelter on the Green for members without sheds. After brief discussion on some items, it was agreed that the committee would consider all the ideas and decide which to implement.

Item 2. Plot paths. Alex Hollingsworth did a presentation on paths between plots. He explained with diagrams how paths had changed over the years, from a regular grid to the current situation, where some paths were absent or not where expected. He said the path rules had not been enforced during recent audits, because of the complexity. The South Field was an example of how the path arrangements should work, with a path between each plot and each member maintaining the path on their left as they look away from the established shed line. (Wendy added that plots by the flats were now allowed sheds at either end of the plot, which complicated the picture). Alex explained that over decades, large areas of the site had become overgrown eg with brambles. There had been wildlife to contend with, especially rabbits, and fences had been put up which complicated the situation. Some paths were misaligned when reinstated. Alex said the committee was encouraging people to remove fences, unless they were needed. Plot fences were no longer needed to deter rabbits and they provided no protection against badgers or deer and were increasing the perennial weed proliferation across the site. Alex said that audits would again be looking at paths and trying to get to the situation where there was a buffer path between all plots - a 'cordon sanitaire', a biological barrier. In some places measuring may be needed to work out where the path should be. The committee would talk to anyone who was unclear and may need to work gradually round the site. Wendy added that there were only a few places where there were problems – the main issues were where there was no path.

Some members commented on how much easier it was to maintain boundaries with no fences. Sedhar asked if she could avoid having a fence between her and a neighbour, who did not mind her dog. Alex explained that dogs must be under control and on the owner's plot. Tim Bone asked that members be warned before fence removal. Alex said that was the intention. Francesco asked if a bit could be taken from each plot to create a path. Alex said the idea was to have a path which one person was responsible for.

Item 3. Tree management plan for the site boundaries. Alex explained some issues relating to managing the existing trees on our boundaries. Because of the concerns about views of the Castle Mill flats from Port Meadow, some pollarding had been delayed and work was overdue. He explained why pollarding was important for crack willows. Looking ahead, a new agreement had just been reached between Oxford City Council and the association about the timing of tree

maintenance. Some trees were on our side of the river, some on the edge of Port Meadow. The agreement included a cycle of pollarding, to avoid trees all being cut the same year. The current pollarding would end when the nesting season started and would then be completed in the autumn. The new plan was to pollard every 8 years. The Port Meadow ones would be done in approx. 4 years time. There would be limited work in 'badgerland'. This included pollarding one large tree that was very close to the flats and unsafe and keeping the allotment fence clear.

Item 4. Members' waste management. Jeremy outlined where members could and could not put different types of waste and get some recycled materials.

Plot 66 : the pit on this plot could temporarily be used to put green waste such as brash, weeds, prunings, cuttings, bramble and clods. Jeremy added that Arcadian Living were also putting some green waste there. (Jeremy explained that plots 84 and 109 were for Arcadian Living to put green waste routinely, to make compost for members to use. Members should not add their green waste to these two compost heaps, because perennial weeds would spoil the compost.). In answer to a question about burning dried bindweed roots, Wendy advised instead to put these in a black bag to rot.

Recycling yard: this was an area managed by Jeremy behind the big green association shed. He collected items for reuse (eg metal sheet, poles, bricks, slabs, netting) and sells them to members for £2 each. The money went towards skip costs. He invited members to ask him if they want anything and to pay him (plot 91). Members should not help themselves. He added that any useful equipment usually went to the allotment shop.

Skip: Jeremy reminded people what could and could not be put on the skip eg plastic, glass and metal were ok but not tyres, asbestos, electrical goods and a few other items. He referred to the information already circulated by Wendy and the signs by the skip.

Wood: if fit for burning to go on wood burn pile. Bricks: to be left by the green shed.

Item 5. Castle Mill update. Wendy referred to the proposals for mitigation measures relating to the student flats. They had been available for consultation, which was ending 15th March. She displayed about 12 diagrams and images and focused particularly on plans for the boundary with the allotments, especially badger provisions. The badgers would be contained in a wire run with light entering at intervals. Trees would be in planters above the run, artificially irrigated. Wendy expressed concern about some aspects of the plans, including where grid or palisade fencing may be installed (as opposed to sheet metal). The key issue was whether badgers could climb the boundary. She said some badgers had managed to climb the palisade fence already in place. She added that current incursions were being monitored by Jeremy, using badger cams, and the committee was still working to exclude them. Wendy pointed out that the Castle Mill site would feel closer, as bike racks would come up to the boundary with the allotments and students would be able to walk to the boundary in places. She added that while it was very positive having the students as neighbours, members may find it a bit intrusive having residents so close and looking down on the site. She had asked the consultants to look at this issue. Wendy had also talked to the consultants about scheduling, security issues, sound and dust protection, and she had requested monthly meetings between contractors, OU and Criphey. A Castle Mill resident who was also a member asked the meeting to spare a thought for the residents, who would experience a lot of disruption. Wendy agreed and pointed out that one of the committee members lived in Castle Mill, enabling the committee to be more aware of the issues. Wendy answered questions from members on: security, ground levels, whether the badgers could be moved and issues with other wildlife other than badgers, such as rats. The work was due to start in August 2017 and to take about 2 years.

8. Any other business

Wendy and Alex reported that the car park was to be resurfaced soon, with a proper drainage system and durable surface. Access to Cripsey would be largely uninterrupted.

The meeting ended at 8.25pm.