

Cripley Meadow May Newsletter 2017

www.cripleymeadow.org.uk



Next Working party is Sunday May14 from 10.30 to 12.30 Working parties are a great way to meet other members. We had a great turn out last month and got lots done. Do join us and do 2 of your annual 3-hour membership commitment. Some members do another half session or simply do two! Please make sure you wear suitable protective clothing and footwear.

Castle Mill and machine noise

We recently had a request to limit the days / times machinery can be used on site. Whilst we could not see a way to do this given the number of members, their

commitments and the English weather without compromising managing the site we would ask that members show our neighbours consideration when using machinery.

Similarly, we are all bound by OCC bonfire code and environment act of 1990. There is no law against having bonfires, though it is an offence for the smoke, or the smell of the smoke, to cause a nuisance.

We have a burning area by the shed which can be used when the wind is blowing towards Port Meadow. Still no one should be burning anything wet, particularly not wet weeds, all of which can be composted.

Weed management

Most **weeds** are still slow going as it is very dry now. Except dandelions which love the dry. Please dead head or mow and put the seed heads in a bag to rot down. Once the rain arrives the weeds will go made so be prepared as weeding little and often is far easier than letting things go. A good sharp hoe makes short work of most of them. Allowing the weeds to grow will influence growth and yield of your crops, particularly early on. Weeds reduce the available nutrients, water and light that your plants need to grow. Once crops are established they'll shade out some of the weeds but some say allowing weeds to affect crops in the early days could reduce the eventual yield by up to 50% even if you weed properly later.

The weather is challengingvery dry and alternately beautifully warm and cold. Weeds are **valuable** green bulk so aim to manage them on your plot. Non-seeding

annuals are fine on a good hot compost heap. Perennial or seeding annuals can be managed **most easily** in a thick plastic bag and left sealed until rotted. The green compost bags are perfect. **This works with dandelion heads too!** When black it can be added when building or turning to a compost bin. Drowning is the smelliest method so consider your neighbours when you tip it and ensure you bury it in a trench mixed with other compost. If not it will stink for days.

Audit date and focus

Next audit is 21st May 2017. Please take this opportunity to remind yourself of the rules. Weeds and progress with cultivation are always the base line and following on from the AGM we shall be pursuing path and overgrown fence issues. Please check your last audit note from October. Repeated audit notes, of necessity, do get more insistent as we all need to work together to keep a fair and harmonious allotment. The site is looking great with some fantastically varied plots full of good ideas. If you have a moment do take a walk round the site paths as it is one of the best ways to learn new things. Please remember plots paths are not open for other members.

Attached and on the noticeboard, are the [2017 committee](#) and [2017 dates](#) The committee are volunteers elected by the members at the AGM to manage the site in accordance with the lease, [constitution and rules](#). If you have not paid your membership fee or contacted us you will have

ceased to be a member at the end of April.

Our two orchards are coming into blossom. Anna Benn has been working on the espaliers on the Castle Mill Orchard.

The SKIP is there for old carpet plastic, glass and metal from the site. No imports please and no soil, weeds, electrics, asbestos or rubber otherwise we risk additional charges. Amazingly we have had 4 since the beginning of the year! When full please keep waste on your plot or take it to Redbridge.

Our shop is usually open on Sundays 11 to 12 but we will not be open on May 21st Please look at the members' noticeboard for updates.

ODFAA 2016 competition prize money

We came first last year in the site competition and asked the AGM to give us ideas for using this to improve the site. We had lots of great suggestions. We opted for a simple brick BBQ structure on The Green and refurbishment of our picnic tables.



Jericho Street Fair is on Saturday June 10th. This will be our 12th **Stall** at this important community event. Do think of Cripsey Meadow when splitting perennials, potting on and pricking out seedlings or if you have leftover seeds and onion sets. **Please bring your plants to**

the stall between 11 and 1pm. You can buy from 12 until 3.00. Usually we have a good mixture of plants and many members turn up to fill a few holes left in their planting. All the money raised is used on the site.

We welcome children on site but please ensure they can be seen by you and are not outside the fence. We have a couple of trees with built platforms that are in the urgent process of being removed as required by OCC. They must not be climbed on.

Several the new gates in the badger fence through to Fiddlers Bow were found left open this week. This is the first time this has happened so hopefully it will be the last. It compromises the badger fence and if repeated we will have to lock them. Please close every time.

Farewell to Francesco



Francesco on Plot 103 is returning home to Italy this week. He and Allegra and their son, Andrea have been frequent visitors since arriving in Castle Mill in April 2015, just as Andrea was born.

Francesco has been a fantastic member reclaiming plot 103 and managing it beautifully. He has also been a great help to the association, joining in working parties but also proving himself to be such a good plot clearer that we co-opted him to the committee to work on this outside of

working parties. He has done us proud and always worked with efficiency and good nature. His last project was to move the shed from Plot 1 to Plot 74, which he did with the help of two friends and Jeremy and for a time David and Gerard who turned up at the gate when another 2 pairs of hands were needed. Many thanks to them for responding so quickly and positively. I have a video of some of the journey which I shall get onto the web site as soon as I can. Meanwhile here are some photos to give you an idea.



[follow this link to find what to sow, plant, harvest](#)

Good Gardening to all Wendy [Follow this link](#) if you want to see what else I do! My studio is open for Artweeks You will be most welcome.