

Cripley Meadow Allotment Association March 2011 Annual Report

AGM attendance

The committee started preparing for the AGM and the new membership year in January. We know member's appreciate this is a huge task with a membership of 250+. We do need member's support and interest and you can show this by coming to the AGM. Good attendance and a democratically elected committee means we can be confident in managing the site fairly. We look forward to seeing you all at the AGM on March 22nd at 7pm in St Barnabas School Hall and to another good gardening year.

Subscriptions

Payment has to be made within one month to sustain membership. The AGM last year decided that members will incur a small extra charge if paid after the one month allowed. Details of how to pay are on the invoice. If you are coming to the AGM to pay please come early as we intend to start on time. We have a subscription time at the Shed on Sunday, 27th March between 11 am and 1 pm. By paying your annual membership you agree to the current rules of the Association. The AGM invitation agenda and your invoice are being delivered or mailed to you. There will be a copy of all the AGM information on the web site and notice board. If you don't receive an invoice and letter in the next few days contact the Treasurer at alison@oxford-canal.demon.co.uk with your name and plot number.

2010 to 2011 Officers/Trustees

Wendy Skinner Smith - Plot 40-41 is Chair- membership visits, fieldwork, newsletter, web site, and audits.
John Sivell - Plot 46 is Vice Chair -Cripley Island Project Manager, machinery, working parties, and audits
Sheila Allen - Plot 12 is Secretary -minutes, keys, permissions for constructions/fruit trees, audits
Alison Campbell - Plot 13 is Treasurer -subscriptions, database, Cripley Island money, deliveries

and Committee members

Tony Clear - Plot 124 looks after the gate, fences, wells, association buildings, audits
Jamie Forbes - Plot 63 helps with transport, barbeques, makes notice boards, audits
Alex Hollingsworth - Plot 81-82 advises us on council affairs, and helps with audits, minutes
Cathy Ferreira – Plot 8a helps with minutes, events, editing, and audits
Aja Hansen - Plot 80b helps with audits, working parties, island work, and deliveries
Jeremy Hyde –Plot 91 co-opted to help with island project management

Next year

Cathy and Aja are standing down. All members are eligible for nomination and must be seconded by another member. We already have two new nominations for the committee. They are Claire Pike (Plot 48b) and Richard Haigh (Plot 15) who joined us in 2009 and 2010 respectively. John is standing down as Island Manager, WPs and machinery but is willing to continue on the committee where his advice is invaluable. Jeremy Hyde has been working with John on the island and was co-opted to the committee in January 2011. He is standing as a committee member. All the other officers and committee are standing again.

Working parties

All members are expected to do 3 hours working party work or make a donation of £15. All but a very few do this. The committee is keen to involve all members on the site in order to sustain its future. This generally works very well. It is a heavy committee commitment but it is the best way to meet other members and it is enjoyable exercise. Working parties are held on the second Sunday in the month 10.30 to 12.30 and second Wednesday evening 6 'til 8 during the summer months. The summer one was requested by members but it is less well attended. Dates and work records are on the notice board, newsletters and web site. Where we do not have enough volunteers we use the contributions to pay Ady Podberry. We have discussed before whether to make working party work/contributions compulsory but given the time/money commitment shown by members we think it works well as it is. However if the vast majority were not contributing in time or money we would not be able to run the site as we do. Member's voluntary work was a condition of our Island Lottery funding and this has been a really good experience. The members have achieved a wonderful transformation. Many other city associations are now adopting our working party model as it looks likely that OCC will be able to contribute little work to allotments. **AGM item the committee would like member's views on the Wednesday working party? (Tony)**

Voluntary group links

Our links with voluntary groups are growing. St Clare's have done two working party days this year. We provide community work for their Baccalaureate qualification and we get a day's help. The groups are accompanied by a teacher, Caroline Crook, who is a member. We like working with young people and our

thanks go to Caroline. This year we have also linked with the Oxford University Green Project. This is a group of Oxford University Staff and students. A small group came to the November working party. Similarly the Said Business School have a group interested in investigating the re-emergence of co-op models in energy, natural resources and agriculture. They have a plot so that students have 'first hand access to a real co-operative in their back yard'.

Waiting list and Audits

Our waiting list fluctuates but has averaged 15 since Sept 2008. We manage it by putting in more communal plots, which have been a great success. We now have 8 across the site. Most sites in the city are full and waiting lists total c.250. The Federation works to keep this information updated but people can be on more than one list or none as they believe lists are too long! However there is no slack in the system for neglected, underused plots and audits are an important part of site management.

In 2009 the committee published a requirement for 75% of all plots to be cultivated with fruit, flowers and vegetables and for buildings, headlands, trees and paths to be managed according to the rules to ensure growing space was kept at a maximum. We usually allow members a season to do this.

In May and September at least 5 audit Committee members tour the site. The purpose is to make sure that plots are being properly cultivated and managed in accordance with our rules. We are also increasingly aware that finding yourself next door to a plot covered with weeds that seed your carefully cleared ground or that is full of unsightly, unsafe rubbish is a great frustration to present and aspiring members.

It is a real pleasure to look closely at the ways in which people organise their plots and the variety of vegetables, fruit, and flowers. Year by year there are fewer problems for the Committee. This year we had concerns about 25 beds/plots, which from 250 members is very few. Of these less than 10 caused serious concern. A couple are ongoing. Next year we propose well safety and rubbish must be a priority.

We wrote to all members in May and only those with concerns in September. It helps if members respond promptly and members of the Committee continue to make return visits to problem plots and try to work with the members concerned. As a Committee we do our best to help members keep their plots if there has been a short-term illness or something similar, but in the interests of fairness we also ask that plots be given up. As a result of this year's audit a number of members needed temporary help due to personal circumstances, and other plots have been given up. Pleasingly the former outnumber the latter.

Generally by the time of the May audit, preparation is well underway for the growing season. An unwelcome sign of a lack of cultivation is the presence of perennial weeds! The second audit is in September. We send out reminders, warnings or, very rarely, final notices and following AGM advice we try to personalise them. We have supported longer term members, who saw the site through the bad old days, and they have had longer to adapt to new expectations.

Without this work many present members would still be on the waiting list. We work with the same expectations across the site to avoid neighbour disputes as we know it is difficult to complain. However members do contact us, especially if a plot is not managed in the growing season. We have also learned that for a significant number giving up a plot or part of a plot they have struggled with is a great relief. Please remember that you can have a co-worker without membership rights or keys but members cannot sublet. This is unfair when we have a waiting list.

Audit /complaints

We have tried to make audit reminders friendlier at the same time as responding promptly where plots are causing serious concern. However, like most sites in the city, a couple of members have 'complained' to 'outside bodies', usually Parks. Complaints have grown as audits now have to be used by all sites so we are in accordance with our lease. This issue has been discussed by the OCC /Allotment Association Liaison meeting. This meets 4 times a year and is open to representatives from 36 city allotment committees. OCC Park's position is that members must use the constitutional process if they have a complaint. They will not be involved unless a) this has been used and b) the committee are acting outside the constitution/rules.

Members who have complaints should formally write to the committee in the first instance explaining how they are acting outside of the constitution, rules and advice. The committee are elected to use their judgement and it would not be possible to manage the site if this is not respected. If, when the committee have had chance to respond, the member still believes the committee is acting unfairly then the constitution allows for members to call for an EGM if supported by 19 other members. Or they can raise the matter at an AGM by proposing an item for discussion with 7 days notice so that the committee and

members can be informed in advance. We hope that democracy and good sense will manage most difficulties. **AGM item Do we need to extend the constitution to manage complaints? (Cathy)**

Bamboo, Willow and Blackberry

You may recall a member raised the issue of growing bamboo and its alien and invasive nature in 2008 and called for it to be banned. The 2008 AGM minutes agreed it would not be banned but 'it should be grown with mown grass around and managed within our rules'. The committee have been unable to set 16+ft bamboo as being within these terms as agreed at the 2008 AGM. We cannot place it in the context of 5 ft headland hedge/fence or fruit trees above 10ft. With fruit trees at 10ft we ask that they are placed 5 ft from the boundary so that root space and light is not taken from another plot. On reflection we cannot see how fully grown bamboo is realistic on plots and can be grown 'within our rules'. During reclamation we have worked hard to ensure height limits are managed so that the site is sustainable for future generations for fruit and vegetable growing and shared security. Consequently all hedges on main path boundaries have been audited on this 5 ft basis for 3 years.

If bamboo is used on plots it must be as agreed within the context of managed hedges/trees. In practice this means it must be cut at the base when it reaches 5 ft so if grown on a plot it will not have enough space to produce worthwhile canes. Its height and alien, invasive nature are of continuing concern.

In the past 5 years we have also restricted the use of willow and blackberry on plots due to their rapid growth and invasive nature. Both of these plants were major factors in the site becoming overgrown in the past. Since 2005 we have advised members that willow must not be used on plots unless it is stripped. If willow bark is in touch with the ground it will sprout and rapidly establish. We now have a constant supply of willow poles (and some hazel intermittently) from managing the island. We are confident that using working parties we can organise this so that it is a locally produced resource that members can share. This regular pollarding keeps the willows manageable and preserves the banks. Similarly blackberry/bramble have been limited to headlands next to an external path or managed within a plot well away from boundaries so that their invasive nature cannot impose on adjacent plots.

AGM item. If bamboo is grown it must be managed as with trees and hedges. We have offered to keep bamboo on the Green where we can mow around and it can grow up but not out. All members can benefit from the canes if they prefer them to the indigenous hazel and willow from island management and invasion/height will not be a problem here. (Alison)

Bonfires

This has been the cause of some concern this year to neighbours and some members. It is an issue that involves us all. We were reported to Environmental Control by a neighbouring resident. He was not happy with our response to his requests that we ban bonfires except on one day a year. Whilst the officer was happy with our actions at the time we are concerned that if members do not adhere to the OCC code we risk further action. We believe that a site this size, with limited waste access, needs to use bonfires for: the disposal of diseased plants; of woody, hard-to-compost material and of large quantities of hedge trimmings/tree pruning produced by site management as well as the clearance of plots.

However we agree that most material can and should be composted on member's plots and members must follow the OCC code (Rule 13) if they have a bonfire. A copy is on the notice board. In August we moved the communal burning pile to the Association Shed area so it is the furthest distance away from any residence. This is for members with no space on their plot for a garden burner. If members burn stuff here they must supervise it directly.

When the complaint was made we had already asked members to take care. The resident complained to environmental control after a bank holiday (when bonfires are banned) and 4 smoky bonfires were reported and photographed. Obviously we do not want to lose the right to burn sensibly and whilst we can issue reminders to members, the committee are not always on site to see smoky bonfires. Our neighbours are! As we have advised members and adhered to the requirements to manage the site, any future complaints will be directed to the member concerned. In future years we hope to invest in hiring some wood chipping machinery for use on working party days. **AGM item Bonfires and rubbish concern us all so we welcome your views. (Jamie)**

Rubbish and Skips

This is an increasingly sensitive and expensive issue. Throughout the reclamation we have tried to clear plots before handing them on. We now we find we are having to remove rubbish from sheds and plots that have been worked since the clearance! Apart from the time taken from more positive working party work it means the association bears the expense for an individual's rubbish. We reckon clearing rubbish from

released plots has filled at least 3 skips this year. This is a very expensive subsidy of a few members. Rule 14 states that *Members must not deposit any rubbish or building materials on their plot or the site*. Glass is one of the worst hazards on the site and members have been consistently asked NOT TO BRING IT ON the site as broken glass remains in the soil. All waste from plots should be sorted in bags (glass and plastic, etc) and kept safely and tidily on your plot until the next skip. Please do not leave any rubbish by the shed. Some members still leave asbestos there! It should be managed following OCC guidelines and taken to Redbridge. Waste disposal will get more and more difficult so we must all ensure it does not accumulate. Members must not bring rubbish/rubble onto the site nor use the skips for skips for waste from outside.

Free green waste material. We continue to bring as much appropriate additional free material onto the site to help sustain and raise soil levels. A lot of members buy in soil, manure and compost to give their plots extra sustenance and this is a member's responsibility. Last year we bought some manure with money refunded from the floods in 2007. As we cannot ensure fair distribution we generally do not use association money for this. We do not monitor the distribution of free material but rely on members' good judgement and sense of fair play to share. This year we had a Parks delivery of rough **compost** and St John's Plot 57 had **leaf mould**. There was **wood chip** on green waste plots 109 and 57 from clearing the disused area as well as some logs. These have now all gone. Sylva trees make occasional deliveries of wood chip. We had two deliveries of **wood pallets** from BuildBase for compost bins. More wood chip was delivered in February when Parks pollarded some car park willows.

Arcadian Living Green Waste Plots. Our agreement with 'Arcadian Living' continues and was extended to include plot 109 as well as 84. These plots are unsuitable for cultivation, as is plot 66. The committee monitor this and it has proved mutually beneficial. They pay for and maintain the plots as members. They use 84 for leaf mould, grass cuttings, hedge trimmings and leaves. This would cost more to manage elsewhere and they make an annual donation to the association funds. Members can use the garden waste to supplement their own compost bins, dig in or use as mulch and use the resulting compost. This will we hope gradually raise these low plots. This year Arcadian Living did their required management and consolidated and turned the plots. They now have permission to use Plot 109 **for leaves and grass only**. The green path adjacent to plot 84 should be kept clear and not used for vehicles. Like all members, Arcadian Living should not to use the paths when the weather is too wet or frosty. Please remember these are not available for member's waste.

Reclamation of the disused area

Our site was one of very few in the city with unused, designated allotment ground. The land on the south of the site has always been in our lease. It was fenced off by OCC in 1991 when the site was largely neglected. By then it had not been in use as plots for many years. It was very overgrown with crack willow, rubbish and riddled with open old bottle digger pits. In 2009 we were asked by OCC Parks to submit plans for clearing this and we were awarded a grant of £2500 to begin this work. We had reserved our own reclamation Budget of £1500 from both 2009 and 2010 so we had 5,500 available for this work.

We consulted widely with Natural England and a local badger group as a sett had moved onto this ground after the building of Castle Mill. As you know the badgers around us have increased dramatically. Both bodies commended our efforts to live alongside badgers and were supportive and helpful. Parks were given the go ahead by Natural England to do the clearance work. We agreed to leave a section of land around the sett between us and the flats as well as further land at the south end of the site where it tapers. We cannot 'get rid' of badgers, nor would we want to as we understand 'the gap' would be filled by others. We realise there is a growing degree of frustration among members over lost crops and damage to plots so we do our best to work within these rather conflicting demands.

In July the self seeded trees on the interior were removed and the ground levelled. There was already a large pile of rubbish and rubble presumably from a previous clearance and this was consolidated but was too expensive to remove. The willows on the boundary with Fiddlers Drain and between us and the flats will be pollarded later this year. Alison, Tony and Wendy are working on a bid for more funding to move the fence to the outer boundary. As on the main site we will leave Fiddlers Drain as the other boundary.

Hard Landscape stuff

We installed the large **water tank** to capture rain off the Association Shed so that we can conserve water. Thanks are due to Tony Clear, John Langley and John Sivell. **Plot numbers** are on the increase but not yet a full house so please make sure you have one. Lewis won the £15 garden token for this last year. A section of the **fence** was found unscrewed this year. We keep the area around the fence clear so it can be looked after as in the present financial climate it is unlikely to be replaced. The 'non climb' paint needs re-

doing and we have to do something about access over the bridge, but this is costly! No members have reported finding the gate open this year ...so well done everyone. As agreed at the last AGM we increased the **key deposit** to £25 and this has resulted in more returns. In February Ady Pod berry started on some hoggin repair work on the **site paths**. The main path by plot 1-6 was mended in March 2009 by an impressive working party chain gang. We continue to encourage members to use free timed tickets for the **Car Park** whenever they can as this is best for the site. However when you do need to access by car please do not park in the area outside the allotment entrance or on the paths, the Green waste areas or The Green, or in front of the association shed. There is an area at the side of the shed. This is used for moving the skip and access to the island but it is usually available. Centrally Plot 54 has some hard areas and the grass by the railway fence can be used in good weather. Stanley (Plot 1a) has special permission to park just inside the gate. Please do not use the paths in wet or frosty weather and **DRIVE SLOWLY**



Cripley Island Orchard

We are about to sign off our Lottery 'Local Food' funding and everyone deserves thanks for this. So many have helped with this. It looks wonderful and it is already a wonderful communal resource for our members. The committee have all worked hard for this, especially John who as the plans and manages the work, Alison who has managed the money and Wendy who has

done the recording and reporting. We have achieved all we set out to do with the exception of bat and bird boxes which are on the 'to do' list. As with all the site children must be directly supervised at all times while on the island and we have installed a lifebelt. We don't feel we need further rules for the island but please let us know if you think otherwise. The Cripley Island project is detailed in a series of leaflets which are on the web site and published for educational purposes. Jeremy was co-opted by the committee to work with John on managing the island this year. The orchard is now firmly established and Jeremy, if elected, will take over managing the member's work at working parties. This is needed to sustain the planting, coppicing and pollarding. All members continue to have access to the island for quiet walks and are responsible for helping with it through working parties as part of their membership. We will eventually need to discuss the fruit harvest! If members want willow /hazel poles they must contact the island manager. We hope members will increasingly use this indigenous and readily available resource for hurdles/headland fences. We pollarded the willows on Fiddlers drain again this February and we aim to keep these low to keep the light on the island.

City Allotment Competition

This year we entered the site again for the city allotment competition. The competition is managed by the Oxford and District Federation of Allotment Associations with Parks. We came 4th so were not awarded a prize. The judges reported that we did well in our environmental management of the site, our site composting and recycling facilities, our reclamation and management of plots and our notice boards and fences. We did less well with maintenance of headlands, weeds and rubbish. Well done to everyone for their contribution. 5 Cripley Meadow members entered and we took 4 major awards. Jeremy won and John Sivell came third in the Challenge Trophy which is the highest award for the best plot in the city. Jo Davies won the Under 35s Best Plot. Amanda Morley was one of only 4 newcomers in the city to win a highly commended certificate. Amazing stuff.

Events

We put on events when members ask and our major ones remain the Jericho Fair and Open Day so we keep in touch with our neighbourhood community, and Lunch On The Green where we celebrate the allotment year and produce. Working parties are another way you can join in and meet other members. We have volunteered to join **OXCLEAN** again this year, Saturday 5 March, 10-12. We aim to clean up the car park and land on our boundaries which include vacant land outside our gate, the Port meadow footpath along Castle Mill, the cycle track as far as Castle Mill. Contributing members will be able to remove rubbish from their plots using OXCLEAN bags. OCC will remove this bagged rubbish from the Port Meadow gates during these times. If you can help, please let Wendy know.

June Jericho Street Fair The committee think it is important we participate at this community event and hope that more members will be involved in bringing and buying plants. This year the stall was managed by Aja, Wendy, Micki, Cathy, Tony, John and Patricia from 159 came along to help. Alex helped with watering. As always it was a busy time talking gardening and food. We use the Street Fair to distribute information about the orchard project and Open Day.

August Cripsey Meadow Open Day Our Open Day remains a simple affair - we open the gates and committee members give out information and maps. Plot holders are encouraged to be on their plot to welcome visitors. We have vegetables for sale on The Green and drinks and shelter under our newly bought gazebo and the island to visitors - it attracted much positive comment and some donations. Please consider taking part this year - **visitors really enjoy talking to members on their plots.**

September Lunch on the Green was a Chilli affair! We had a slow start due to a very cold north east wind. As the band arrived they outnumbered us! However our numbers gradually grew and we ended up with a good crowd and a feast. We missed the sunshine that has previously graced this event but Jeremy moved his mobile fire grate so we had a lovely warm..and non smoky fire. Luckily it was the year of the chilli which warmed up a tomato soup starter and a courgette/chilli soup later. We also had yellow tomato flan, spicy apple cake, spicy samosas, local cheeses, crackers with pear cheese and rocket as well as sausages, veggie and beef burgers. Delicious pears and apples from what has been a bumper fruit years abounded and we were all well fed and warmed up. Thanks to Jamie for supplying the BBQ, Cathy for doing the shopping, Sheila, Aja, Wendy and John for erecting the pergolas and bunting and Karl for doing the BBQ. There was great music from 'Horns of Plenty and they enjoyed the food too. We would like to invite them again!

Bonfire Night In spite of the most awful weather there was a gap in the rain about 4 so we decided to go ahead and put up a pergola. Jeremy quickly got a wonderful blaze. A small but very hardy dozen kept warm and celebrated Jeremy and John's competition success with fireworks and sparklers. It was wet!

Landrace and saving seed. Ellen Burnett, a student at Brookes, spent the summer on the allotments asking people what they grow. Because of this research, and research done by two other MSc students on similar topics, the School of Geography and Landshare organised a Saturday evening event to explore whether allotment associations can actively promote seed saving to breed local distinctiveness.

AGM Item. A member has asked if the committee would organise communal ordering or run a shop. Presently there is no one on the committee interested in this role. We have linked to a company web site (VegetableSeeds.net) that will give 10% Discount (our code is AD486) s for our allotment members. Schemes with more discounts have bulk deliveries. Sheila

Birds and bees stuff

Leek Moth and /or Alliums' Leaf Mining Fly. Sadly we had to report the arrival of Leek Moth and /or Alliums' Leaf Mining Fly on Cripsey Meadow. This has been a problem on other city sites for the past 2 years. Affected crops should be dug up and bagged or burned when dry. We have posted an info sheet on the web site. The good news is that environmesh may be a possible way forward!

Bees. Our first bees have arrived on Plot 151 in September when we started our trial year. Diane writes "*After a couple of false starts, including an abortive trip into Gloucestershire to collect a colony that turned out to be less than satisfactory we finally managed to source our bees at the end of last summer. Far too late for any honey production and a bit of a risk as the colony is still young and has to face the winter. But we were so desperate to get the right bees we decided it was worth it, and we are very glad to report that as at the time of writing the bees are still alive despite the shocking weather.*

The bees have all the characteristics we were looking for – local, healthy and gentle. John who very kindly helped us move the colony into our spanking new hive (painted lilac) handled them without gloves or protective gear – which rather impressed us novices who were completely suited up and armed with smokers. Apparently this may mean that they are a bit 'lazy' and not the most productive bees but for our first attempt we think it is a good trade off. So far so good then – but we will know better once the warm weather comes and we can start proper inspections of the hive. Hopefully by the AGM we can bring you all some pictures of our expanding colony....weather permitting!" Diane will be at the meeting. The Allotment Regeneration Initiative has produced a useful set of guidelines about hives on allotments and we seem to have followed the major recommendations. These are on the web site.

Environmental testing. The City's Environmental Health Department still cannot advise us about the outcome of the results as they still await revised guidelines from the Environment Agency and DEFRA who determine the evaluation of the figures.

Fruit Survey. At the 2009 AGM a member suggested we pool information about fruit trees on plots. We did not get enough responses to make this worth annotating.

OADFAA

Cripsey Meadow is a member of The Oxford and District Federation of Allotment Associations which represents 30 sites across the city. Wendy chairs the Federation and the Oxford City Allotment Association

meetings. Oxford City Allotments Public Liability and Employer's liability insurance is held in the name of the Federation. This insurance covers Cripsey Meadow members and any visitors (and intruders) for accidents on the site providing we are complying with the terms of our lease. It also covers us and volunteers for working party work. This year the associations concerns have been the continuing shortage of plots and the increasing need for associations to be financially viable and accountable. Here are some of the items brought to the meeting for discussion this year: Allotments Competition/Site Rents /Budgets and grants / Insurance / Auditing plots and rule enforcement/ Complaints/ Machinery loan and insurance issues/ Animal and pest problems/ Disused sites/ Leases /Supporting members with disabilities. It is always useful to set the site in the wider context of city wide allotments and share experiences.

Castle Mill Development Site (This is the land between us and the railway)

"Cripsey Road, Land at North End Yard, Osney 14.2.35 This site is an area of former railway sidings at the northern end of Cripsey Road, which is near to the central academic core of the University of Oxford. The site is adjacent to a car-free residential development. The access is very restricted but the site is considered to be suitable for purpose-built student accommodation. It may be necessary to plan for emergency access from the north. Due to the forecast growth of the University of Oxford and the need for purpose-built student accommodation for its students in this location, it is considered that any other form of residential development would undermine the need to strike a balance between different land uses and needs. POLICY DS.22 - CRIPSEY ROAD, LAND AT NORTH END YARD – UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD USE Planning permission will not be granted at land at North End Yard, Cripsey Road for uses other than purpose-built student accommodation for use by the University of Oxford. "

We were asked to participate in this planning consultation which closed on Dec 24. The committee agreed a submission and informed our members by email. The process is a lengthy one and continues until 2012. It is as follows - Gathering information 2009/10 Pre-Options Planning Events Nov 2010 Produce Options Document for consultation Apr 2011 Produce Proposed Submission for consultation Nov 2011 Submit document to the Government Feb 2012 Examination in Public Jun 2012 Adoption Dec 2012

The committee made this submission to Oxford City Council.

"We are concerned at the proposed development of the CRIPSEY ROAD, LAND AT NORTH END YARD as student accommodation. () Our concerns are

1. Proximity of the development would take light from the allotments
2. There is very long established badger set on this land and others either side of it. The badgers used to have free run of the railway embankments but are now squeezed in to a narrow space and building here would put further pressure on them occupying more of the allotment land. The building of Castle Mill has already pushed one set onto our land and we have had to give this up to them. We were not fully fenced by the previous fencing programme and now need to find further money to protect us from badgers. Further building will concentrate the badgers even more onto our land and we are suffering great damage to crops by their ever increasing numbers. We have tried to live alongside but many members are reporting they are finding it more and more difficult to do so.
3. We have recently had a complaint from a member of Castle Mill about bonfires. Whilst we recycle as much as possible and use skips we have no waste collection and 250 members. Bonfires have always been used as part of our recycling process and we advise our members of the OCC code.
4. The access over the small bridge is already hazardous as it is uninformative about its use which includes cyclists, pedestrians and vehicle and maintenance access to the allotments. The emergency access gate and route through the car park is often blocked by poor parking. We reported the absence of any information to stop parking in front of the emergency access gate recently. This also served the railway emergency access.

Whilst we understand the need for housing and student accommodation, light and consultation about the badgers and access is of the utmost priority to sustaining the allotments as a now thriving source of local food.

5. We continue to be concerned about the effect of continuing to build on the flood plain.

AGM MAIN item we recommend this is the major item for discussion. This will potentially have a huge impact on Cripsey Meadow. The committee recommend the AGM writes to OCC to ask that foreseen problems with light, flooding, badgers, access and proximity are addressed before planning proceeds and if necessary what mitigation is possible to preserve the sustainability of Cripsey Meadow.

Wendy

Cripsey Meadow Allotment Association Committee