

Cripley Meadow Allotment Association AGM 2015 -held at St Barnabas School, 6.30-9pm, 16/3/15

1. Introduction by the Chair. Wendy showed slides of Alison Campbell working on Cripley Meadow. Alison has resigned as Treasurer and Wendy spoke to her very significant contribution to the Allotment Association over the years. In addition to her work as Treasurer she was responsible for two successful Lottery and one OCC bid for the Association. In appreciation she was presented with a book of photographs documenting her working on Cripley Meadow over the years and thanked again for her very significant contribution.

2. Members present and apologies for absence. Present: Jamie Forbes 63 John Langsbury 101 Bill & Sue Johnston 127B Richard Haigh 15,16 Sara Jones 71 Annalisa Cecchi 61B Claire Pike 48B John Sivell 46 Alison Campbell 13 Henry Bagenal 139 Jeremy Hyde 91 Alex Hollingsworth 81,82 James Campbell 88B Paul Allibone SF8 Sasha Shepperd 19A Wendy Ball 159A Louise & Rob Bruce SF 19,20 Sheila Allen 12 James Allan 73 Liz Saunders 129 Anita Jassi 74B Christine Long 7A,8A Tim Bone 99 George Burnett-Stuart 33 Godfrey Cole 14 Emma Delap 1A Keith Holton 131,132 Jane Mollison 42 Rodney Smith & Wendy Skinner-Smith 40,41 Simon Mollison 122,123 Sarah Sheldon 9B Anne Taylor S17 David Feeny 76. Apologies: Dot & Godfrey Stone 46, Sarah Edwards 120, Tony Coombs 104 Christina Fries 60 Allesandro Nolasco 143

3. Minutes of AGM of March 2014 and Matters Arising. The minutes were accepted as correct. In matters arising it was noted that a Saturday and Wednesday Working Party were included in the WP programme. Allesandro decided not to pursue this. The member's notice board was available.

4. Annual Accounts and Treasurer's Report. Copies of the accounts, which had been inspected by Ken Jones, were circulated. Alison explained the miscellaneous receipts included a goodwill payment (£200) from Barclays Bank for major inconveniences in setting up the on-line banking system for CMAA and a payment for metal salvage. She noted there are some vacant plots at present which slightly reduces this year's subscription income. There were no queries about the accounts for 2014 which were accepted as correct. Sara, who has been acting as assistant Treasurer from June 2014 talked about the budget. In the 2015 most of the increased maintenance costs relate to mowing, strimming and skip hire. The budget was accepted and Alison and Sara thanked for their work.

5. Annual Report 2014. This had been previously emailed to members. Wendy noted there had been plenty of woodchip available this year and reported on the recent successful bid from OCC for raised beds which will be available to those with reduced mobility. She explained about the clearing of Fiddler's stream. Susanna Pressel highlighted the recent episode of Gardener's Question from Oxford to be broadcast on 22/3.

6. Welcome from Susanna Pressel. The committee and officers 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, unanimously. Subsequently the following officers are committee members were elected unopposed and unanimously: Chair – Wendy Skinner-Smith, Vice Chair – Alex Hollingsworth, Treasurer-Sara Jones, Secretary – Claire Pike. Other committee members – Tony Clear, Jeremy Hyde, Sarah Edwards, Annalisa Cecchi, Richard Haigh, Jamie Forbes, Emma Delap, Keith Holton.

7. AGM Items Subscriptions. Alex Hollingsworth reminded members that at last year's AGM it was noted that subscriptions have remained unchanged since 2007 and would need to increase in 2016. He explained that although the recent rent review by OCC had not increased our rent payment from 2016 there are other increased costs necessitating a subscription rise next year. These maintenance costs include the increased costs of mowing, path repairs and skip hire. To cover this it is proposed to increase the membership fee for plots on Cripsey Meadow by £1.25 per pole per year from March 2016 with a similar percentage rise in smaller plots. Even with this increase our subscriptions remain modest compared to many other authorities. The Association's policy of helping those who have difficulty paying will continue. The proposed rent increase was unanimously agreed by members.

New plot holder event. Jamie Forbes explained that attendance at the last Lunch on the Green events had been poor and asked for suggestions of alternative events. Suggestions ranged from wassailing/ a bonfire-night/ an apple picking event/ a harvest festival/ a plant swap. Finally it was agreed to explore Louise Bruce's suggestion of having a 'bring your food' lunch after a Sunday WP on a warm summer's day and Jeremy's suggestion of an evening barbeque when good weather was forecast around 21/6.

Management of rats on site. Richard Haigh commented on the increased number of rats and his success in catching them with a wooden rat trap using peanut butter as bait. He doesn't set the trap initially and only does so when it's evident they are taking the butter. He puts the dead rat on the compost heap and it has usually been taken by the following day. Wendy uses rat pellets under her compost bins on her plot and Henry had heard of a high frequency deterrent but others had found this unpleasant. Alex noted the importance of not putting kitchen waste on the compost and turning compost regularly to discourage rats from nesting there.

Our first year of trading. In Sarah's absence Sara spoke to this item. Opening times continue as previously – Sundays 11-12pm except on Working Party Sundays 12-1pm. Sales have provided a modest income for the Association but the major focus was in reducing vehicles on site and providing bulky items. Sarah is happy to be emailed about sales and other suggestions about the Trading shop. There is a small team of members who help. Please contact Sarah if you are interested in helping with the shop.

Castle Mill update and Badger proofing. Wendy reviewed developments regarding the Castle Mill site and proposals to camouflage the flats. The previous suggestion of growing native trees other than willow along the stream has been dismissed by the EIA on conservation grounds as it might prohibit potential water vole habitation. The EIA report proposes planting trees in a raised area along the badger run on the eastern perimeter of the site. This will involve building a new wall and Our concerns about this were detailed in our response to the EIA to OCC. Effective badger exclusion from the site remains a source of discussion between OU and the Association and Wendy has attended many meetings focussed on this. The committee is agreed that successful allotments are not compatible with badgers and their exclusion from the site is essential. She outlined the 4 proposals agreed at a recent meeting with OU, Estates and the Conservator of Witham Woods –
Fiddlers stream clearance with ditch digger. Badger fencing with chevrons out in badger land.
Electric wire with chevrons out into the stream. Badger fencing long the western and northern boundaries. Members voted unanimously to proceed with these steps successively with OU & OCC support. **8.AOB**. No items -Meeting closed at 8.50pm.