

CRIPLEY MEADOW ALLOTMENTS

ANNUAL REPORT 2004-5

Recommendations to the association and Items needing further work are in bold

February 2004

- AGM minutes available at the meeting

May

- Extraordinary General Meeting. 32 plot holders passed a vote of no confidence in the committee elected at Feb AGM. City Council did not recognise this body and were concerned about breaches in our lease arrangements. Membership voted in new committee to resolve this.
- Committee draws up new Constitution and Tenancy agreement.
- Letter sent to all members inviting them to a meeting to discuss this.

June

- Special General Meeting called to agree new constitution and tenancy agreement. This was formally accepted by The Association and copies passed to City Council.
- Members discussion points at this meeting included requests that
 - bonfire rules are posted on notice board
 - complaints are dealt with by the committee as a body
 - Allotments can be let free for one year if bramble covered.
- Committee cannot use notice board or shed as no keys. We are informed they are lost.
- Mike Gass (City Council i/c allotments) agrees to pay for lock cutter for gate and shed.

July

- Stuart Thorp (City Council Environment Projects) tells us about possible new gates with part funding from both City Council and University as part of redevelopment scheme.
- Skip available on site.
- Final warning notices delivered to non rent payers by hand
- Discovered City Council lock had been changed on outer car park gate. City Council had to cut off unknown lock and replace.
- Mike Gass contacted about funding for clearance.

August

- Agreed plan of action for work post August 31st deadline and estimates collected for hiring equipment and workmen.
- Allotments advertised in the Jericho and Osney Ward 'Rose'
- Mike Gass agrees £400 grant for clearance.
- Central path cut over summer by committee members.
- Committee to investigate numbering each plot. **(Started plot numbers but not finished)**
- Committee member to coordinate incidents of damage and /or harassment.
- Jamie Wood retires as chair, as we knew he would, to take up new post in Edinburgh. Committee thanked him for his work on new constitution. Patrick Watt (Vice chair) takes over as chair.

September

- Investigated path and hedge clearers as many paths now inaccessible.
- Site visit to agree potential plots for clearance. Agreed 79 -86 and 104-107 so blocks in different areas of site. It was more difficult to choose as broken incidence of overgrown, let plots.
- Plots cleared in March now totally overgrown with thistle and committee unable to find time to keep these down. Agreed to try to cover as many newly cleared plots as we can afford to avoid this problem in future.

- Letter with Constitution and Tenancy Agreement sent to all members. No responses received.
- Still cannot use notice board so letter includes information to members about -
 - future work on Car park and new gates
 - Importance of controlling own plot. Members who take on a plot lot and do not work it are detrimental to us all
 - importance of keeping wells covered
 - tenancy agreement will have to be signed so members need to check rules and ensure they are doing their bit so that everyone can benefit from a more workable site
 - our intention to clear paths and some plots

October

- Patrick has to resign as chair as unexpectedly moving.
- Committee accept joint responsibility as an interim measure prior to next AGM.
- Notice about a missing pony notice appears in (still inaccessible) notice board?
- Agreed to use association funds for black plastic rolls and pegs to cover cleared plots. Costs about £100 a full plot
- Walter Sawyer of University Parks asked to estimate cost for clearing paths
- Committee members spend half a day clearing some potential sites of metal/glass. (5 of us for 2 hours barely scratched the surface of 79-82)
- Susannah Pressel (Local councillor) asked us to join scheme of 'plots on prescription'. Agreed but we expressed concern that present state of plots may not be great therapy. **If we get any referrals it would be good if existing members would agree to help a new plot holder?**
- Look into setting up a simple website as a contact vehicle.
- Look into applying for funds from charitable bodies.
- Committee working party recorded as many well sites as could be found on the central map. New plot holders will be alerted of whereabouts.

November

- Skip on site for metal cleared from plot. As usual fills up very quickly. **It would be good to be able to set regular skip dates through the year as site is full of metal and glass?**
- Agree for Sheehans to get on site to do heavy clearance.
- Work on car park to put in cycle path begins. Committee talks with Stuart Thorp about gate and barrier and contractors access. We allow equipment on our site overnight.
- Rent day agreed and plans for AGM started. Still no access to notice board as awaiting city council lock cutter.

December

- Plot clearance on site for two days (£500)
- Paths cleared and cut (£500)
- Fund raising and information at Jericho Christmas Fair-trade Fair.
- Discussed rents as present rent does not allow for maintenance of paths or small improvement works. Rent also thought to be too cheap as low enough to take and not use. Committee to look at allotment costs locally and nationally.
- Gain get access to notice board and post notices including -
 - names and contacts for committee members
 - what to do notices
 - where to buy plastic and pegs for covering
 - bonfire rules
 - working party day on Jan 29th to cover plots
 - Car park will be closed Jan 24th to install gates and new pedestrian/cycle bridge from Walton well Road to Car Park.

- Discussed new gates and reserved funds of £180 for keys for new gate.
- Discussed grant opportunities and agreed to apply for Coop Community dividend fund.
- Request from a member for a gate at south end declined on security grounds.

January 2005

- Bid made to Co op Community Fund for funds for clearance. **We will probably hear in February so will report outcome to AGM.**
- Our new lock on notice board removed and another put on! All committee and contact details removed and false notice of AGM posted for 28th. The association lock on the shed was also removed and a different one put on. We therefore have had access to notice board for only 1 month in the last 11. Both these incidents were reported to the police.
- Some plots covered by committee members. No plot holders turned up for working party date but notice only briefly available.
- Discussed AGM material for letter and report
- Agreed we need additional funds to maintain and improve paths – at least two mowing (@ £250) are needed to recover grass and eliminate perennial weed. In some places clearance involved 5-6 feet of bramble on paths.
- Agreed need to reclaim unworked plots. We are getting a lot of enquiries and it will soon be difficult to offer new people suitable plots.
- Two members who have rent arrears will be sent different letters.
- New Gate installed and arrangements made for handover of keys after tenancy agreement signed and rent paid.
- City Council removed illicit lock from notice board and removed hasp so cannot be locked out again. The shed padlock was also removed and both locks changed. This is very expensive vandalism.
- With national information about plot rents **we recommend a two tier rent increase £1.50 a pole in 2006/7 and £2 a pole in 2007/8. This will bring us in line with present national average of £25 for 12 poles. We need to discuss whether a maintenance fee is also desirable. Concessions will be available on application**

February

- A sighting of someone removing notices from the board was reported to the police.
- Gate finished and bridge installed. Still needs bollards and lights are on the way.
- A problem with locking the gates was resolved by Stuart Thorp.
- Committee working Party recorded condition of plots prior to AGM.
- We hope to fit further clearance work in February.
- Committee is worried about the intimidating appearance of the industrial fencing which has been appearing around some allotments and wonders whether this is appropriate for the site. **We would recommend that fencing is of posts and wire-netting and should be no more than 5 feet.**
- Equipment is available for a hire charge for individuals to do their own plot clearance.
- Collection of material in preparation for bids to Area Committee, Oxford City Council (March) and Awards for All Lottery funds. These applications require information on our membership and funds and expect evidence we are inclusive of all. **Members' priorities for improvement to go forward for Lottery bid can be discussed at AGM.**
- **We need members' support and ideas in fund raising ideas. A member has suggested we have a car boot sale on the allotments (or in the Car Park?) one Saturday or Sunday, where people could sell off old gardening books/gardening tools?**
- **We would like to put on a short course on site for new growers –any ideas?**
- **We recommend we have a regular working party Day (for e.g. First Sunday in the month) for members to help with site clearance of metal / glass / old sheds?**