

This development has impacted greatly on Cripsey Meadow. In 2011 we consulted all our 275 members as part of the planning process. We submitted our concerns and we were amazed at the lack of other interest. We understand that many people were not aware of the plans and so could not respond to the planning application.

When planning was granted we soon had our hands full with a building site next door, a badger protester trespassing on our site and new fencing for our reclaimed South Field was being damaged. We started reclaiming 3 acres of our statutory allotment land in 2009. In 2011 after contacts with Natural England we left 1 acre of this to badger protection. We stood aside from the post planning protests.

The building's impact was undoubtedly tempered by our awareness that this brownfield site was identified as student accommodation in 1999. We had our 'surprise' with Stage 1. We understood that housing was the primary concern of the council. In the absence of other objections we worked with changing times. We now welcome PhD students as neighbours and members. Sadly we have been uncomfortable with the actions of a very few protesters. The additional committee work made by Castle Mill has been enormous.

The future of growing food on the allotments is under threat. We accept we are flood plain and do our best to work with it. However this has been exacerbated by buildings on the flood plain that do not have remediation and streams around us that are not cleared. Heavy rainfall now quickly affects us. Badgers, a 'new' threat, were brought onto our site by the development of the embankment. Before 2004 we had no record of badger damage. We could grow sweetcorn! OU borrowed some of our land adjacent to the Stage I site and raised it to accommodate the power supply for building. At that time Cripsey Meadow was emerging from being a largely unused site. Unfortunately this land was left raised and badgers moved in. Left as flood plain our site could not support a sett.

Our Councillors, OCC Parks and Planners and OU were made fully aware of our concerns and the pre planning Sites and Housing report was clear about the need for our protection from badgers. These problems have got worse. In spite of the badger run, badgers have continued to access our site. They can exit and enter north and south from the sett on our 'donated' badger land without entering the allotment. In our experience they severely compromise the function of our allotments. After much hassle CMAA, OU, OCC and Natural England met finally with a police wildlife officer in March 2012 who published a statement that *"no breaches of the Protection of Badger Act 1992 had taken place and that sufficient foraging areas were available. It was also agreed that the allotment society have a right to take legal measures in accordance with the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 to protect the interests of their members in relation to land used for allotment purposes"* The fence on the eastern perimeter is ours. The badger run is on OU land except for a 40m stretch to the south on our land. This avoided OU having to remove existing hard landscaping. Work on the badger run started in 2012 and specifications were agreed between CMAA and OU. It was completed in April 2014. In 2013 it was blocked by rubble for a week and the 2013 diesel spillage put it out of badger use from April to November 2013. Consequently badgers have at times had to enter the allotments by the SW corner via the stream. Negotiations have continued with OU/OCC Parks to restrict this access. Presently EA suggest fencing the other two sides of our site. OU have been firm in their intention to help but there has been insufficient continuity in personnel and commitment to ensure action. After many meetings and plans the problem remains unresolved.

These concerns are not clearly accounted for in the EIA. We understand Eco Consult checked the badgers this summer. We do not see how tree planting in a raised badger run can 'enhance' this and do see how it will do us harm unless issues with badger access to our site are resolved first. We discussed some acceptable tree planting screening on the Castle Mill stream side with LDA. These plans were abandoned.

We understand the EIA confirms the advice we had from OCC/OU about contamination. We have been informed about the results of the monitoring of our wells after the spillage, however there is no recognition of the impact this had on badgers and thus on our site. Our option concerns are:

- The plans for the badger run break the conditions agreed between CMAA and OU.
- The plan raises a strip of land out of the flood plain.
- The fence belongs to CMAA. Any footing space will need to be from OU land.
- The 'new' boundary is higher. Our fence was set shallowly due to the nearby electric cable. A cable survey was done on our site on November 1st 2011. We have not had our copy.
- We presume the raised land is to take the trees above the water table. Our arboricultural advice is that the cubic volume root area here is insufficient for mature trees of the type and height specified and thus shade, root and canopy will encroach onto allotment land. The gaps with lower buildings give us some relief from the oppressive height and the impact of shade. They must be retained.
- Our willows on Castle Mill side were due to be pollarding by OCC in 2011. Since then we have had promises but no action. Clearly their use as screening is taking priority over the needs of the allotment. We think tree planting as discussed previously with LDA would be more effective and not harm the allotments.
- Concerns about remaining light pollution have not been addressed.
- We have had a building site next door for 2 years. Any building work before the resolution of our existing problems would be unacceptable.

CMAA committee
Cripley Meadow Allotments
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