

Newsletter September 2009

Next working part is Sunday Oct 4 at 10.30 til 12.30. We meet at the shed as usual. Please bring spades, forks, rakes and wheelbarrows... and loppers if you have them. We shall be tumping and cutting some willow whips.

Lunch on the Green



Two sorts of home brew beer, gazpacho, cous- cous roasted vegetable salads, allotment salads in glorious Technicolor, wheelbarrows celebrating produce,



Salsas, Quinoa with veg, spinach and feta pastries, Cripely Meadow pear and blue cheese oatcakes, barbequed burgers and sausages! What is more there was sunshine galore and great company which made for a lovely lunch on the green. The chocolate and courgette cake was a great finale. We christened the new picnic benches which we hope members will enjoy and said thank you to those who have helped so much with the Island and the site. Many thanks to Sheila, John, patsy and Tim who helped set up and to Jamie and Michelle for doing the shopping and bringing and doing the barbeque.

Allotment competition

This year we entered the site for the city allotment competition, not because we think we are a 'prize' site as so many others have never had such long periods of neglect, but because the

judges have been so fulsome in their appreciation of the remarkable change to Cripely Meadow. We now have a thriving, working site. **All the committee and members who entered the competition are invited to the allotment evening in the Town Hall on October 27th starting at 7.30 when certificates and prizes are awarded and the allotment year is celebrated.**

The September Audit

Was done at the beginning of the month. The audit committee were very impressed yet again with the greater level of cultivation, particularly after such a wet July with such a fast weed growth. The majority of members are making great progress with their plots.

There is a much greater level of vegetable, fruit and flower growth, with greater cultivation doing much to increase our insect, bird and (sadly in some cases) animal population. Weeds are a problem on a few plots to the detriment of neighbours. Your annual subscription payment is your annual agreement to keeping the rules as they are NOW. Please do not quote past practice as reason for not keeping your agreement. The published 75% cultivation guide for audits has made it easier to be fair to all.

Our waiting list is now almost stuck at 15-20 with replacements coming in all the time. Most sites in the city now have waiting lists.

Stolen Fruit

Some plots are not fenced and sadly we have had reports of fruit going missing. Members are reminded that no one has a

right to enter any other plot. (Committee members are charged with monitoring the site so can enter a plot as set by the rules.) An 'open' fruit tree may be a tempting thing but this is stealing and the penalty is immediate withdrawal of membership. Please keep an eye and let a committee member know of any suspicious behaviour or any unexpected people on plots near you. If you are going away and someone is looking after your plot let your plot neighbours know. . Do politely challenge anyone unknown on an adjacent plot.

Badger and Muntjak

Are eating for the winter and have polished off almost everyone's sweetcorn.

Fence

The 'non climb' paint has been extended on the fences so do not try climbing in or out if you lose your keys!

Keys

We are now finding the cost and demand for replacement keys too demanding and do not get enough returned on leaving. It is not a good idea for the number of keys in circulation to just build up so we will be advising the association of the need to increase the key deposit to £25 at the next AGM. We need to get more returned. Some members paid nothing (they have been here so long and never paid a deposit but just had keys replaced) some £5 and some £10 so entry date is recorded. Any replacment keys will be at the new deposit rate. We are therefore asking everyone to take greater care of keys. As you know we no longer offer co workers keys as with our waiting list this

could be considered to be waiting list jumping. All new members must join the waiting list.

Communal plot members

We have now developed a further communal plot and these have been enormously successful at keeping our waiting list manageable and giving lots of people some space to start growing. However please remember your headlands paths and fences must be managed by you all. The committee have been helping while they were established but this must be done by the members themselves.

Headlands

Many members have fences and the other side of this on a headland your responsibility up to where the communal mower does the path. Please make sure you go round your plots regularly to make sure you are not causing a nuisance with bramble and weed growth outside your fence.

Sheds

As the autumn and winter approach the site can be less populated and it is a time when we have had unwelcome visitors in the past. In spite of our better defences anyone determined enough will get in. Members reminded not to keep stuff in their shed they are not prepared to lose. We have had little lost or taken but be minded. Generally we find larger padlocks just result in more shed being destroyed if the shed is not substantial!

Cripley Island Orchard

John is sorting out the first of the fruit tree orders for February planting (weather permitting). We aim to do the planting in stages as establishing the trees is

more weather dependent than subsequent management and we could be unlucky with sudden floods! **Do let John know if you have thoughts or particular favourites that have grown well for you on Cripley Meadow.** Also the deferred work to take the fallen willow out of Castle Mill stream will be done this autumn. You may have noticed the magnificent weeping willow has a badly cracked branch sitting across Fiddler's Stream! The broken branch will be removed to ensure this tree stays healthy.

It has been a wonderful Indian summer but a little rain is apparently on the way..which will be welcome as I know most water butts are dry!

Do check the web site for further photos of the lunch and for some ideas of 'what to do now'!

I have heard from a number of members who I managed to exclude from the email list or who find it gets spammed. Do mention this to your neighbours and if it is not getting through let me know. With so many members it is difficult to keep updated but I do try!

Good gardening to all
wendy