

Cripley Meadow Newsletter December 2009

**Next working party is
Sunday Jan 10
Next committee meeting
is Jan 18**

The Committee try hard to have a holiday in December so please keep all requests until we start again in January. This will give us all some time to put out feet up with catalogues and plan for next year.



Whilst you are planning please see if you can find information about fruit trees you have for our **Fruit Survey**. The last AGM agreed it would be useful to pool information for members. If you find any please keep it handy. We keep a record of permissions and numbers but not all details. Although members send these now when they apply for permission these have not been catalogued or organised.

The following information on your trees would be useful if you can find it and keep it handy.

Your name-----
Your plot-----
Type-----
Name-----
Root stock -----
Characteristics-----
Cropping time -----
AV. Yield -----
Any other comments

Those with 'older trees' have all been audited as part of the reclamation work and only fruit trees are allowed and they should all now be within the 10 ft rule as they have had time to bring bigger fruit trees down gradually.

In January the committee will start the administration for **membership next year starting from March 2010**.

This is now a huge commitment with so many members (almost 250) especially from Alison and Sheila in raising invoices. We now make much better use of computer technology in managing our paperwork but with this number it is a lot of work. The best thank you for the committee's work is for all members to participate in working parties and come to the AGM to show your support and interest. Our new year begins at the AGM on March 11. The annual report and invoices will be sent out prior to this. **It is much easier for everyone if payment is prompt.** You can now pay online and by cheque. In recent years the start of the AGM has been in danger of being held up by so many wanting to pay at the meeting and not arriving early enough to do so. Please pay before this if you can. Do remember payment of your annual membership is your agreement to the rules. Please remind yourself of them as ignorance is no defence. Locally and nationally we have to manage the much greater demand for plots so we all need to make sure we use what is an increasingly precious resource wisely and our rules and advice are the basis for this.

Cripley Orchard news

The St Clare's working party in November was on one of the very few dry and sunny days in this very wet month.



A group of 15 was supported by Carolyn from St Clare's and 5 committee members. We did some plot clearance in the morning -then spent a lovely

afternoon session



on the island filling the ditches around the tumps. These will need topping up again in the New Year. The development of the island has progressed really well with over 300 voluntary member's work hours. Well done to everyone who has contributed to date. It has been really rewarding work.

Have you done your Working Party Work for this year?

Remember you only have 2 more months to get in your annual 3 hours working party work before the next invoices are raised!



At the end of November the island was beginning to show surface water and many of you will have noticed Fiddlers Drain is full. The island was largely flooded by the beginning of December.



It was out of water again by December 12/13 but is too wet to walk and work. Reassuringly the tump tops remained out of water! Members should not use the island when it has surface water as there are too many hidden pitfalls. John has got the first order of trees which we will plant next year.

Wet Weather

November was particularly wet and some plots are showing surface water. Now is a good

time to check if you have raised those beds out of the expected winter wet!

Many of the paths have no hard core and members should not use the grass paths (past The Green) when it makes ruts. Also you do risk getting stuck! These paths were never intended for car use. Now we have access to 'our' car park again we would like to encourage as many members as possible to leave their cars in the car park when they are not delivering stuff. The ticket system means it is available for its intended purpose, i.e. visitors to Port and Cripsey Meadows. This is also better for the site environmentally. There is a small car park area near The Green marked on the map and members must always try to avoid parking on the paths other than directly when delivering.

Skips

The general skip was removed (it was very full!) so all general rubbish must now be stored in bags on your plot until the next one arrives. We try not to bring skips on site when so wet as lorries churn up the path. We have had two skips this year (we generally budget for one) and continue to ask members to process their rubbish themselves as much as possible by taking it to Redbridge. We still have some members(s?) who leave asbestos/cement behind the shed, presumably for the fairies (better known as 'the committee') to clear away! You will not be surprised to hear this is not welcome behaviour. Please be considerate and take this to Redbridge yourself. OCC provides directions for safe disposal. The metal skip remains but please do not put anything else in there. It is only free if metal only.

We are hoping **to have water tanks installed to catch the rain from the Association Shed** before the AGM. I know it is very wet now but we are always conscious in these days

of flood and drought that we also need to conserve water too. Many thanks are due to Tony Clear for taking on managing this project.

In the New Year when the weather improves Alison will complete our **AGM commitment to use the rent rebate money from the floods of 2007 (not paid 'til 2009) to have some manure brought on site for member's general use.** Obviously with so many members a few trailer loads (another £300 worth taking the sum spent so far to £550) will not go far. Most members are supplementing their soil levels for themselves with manure, compost or MandM soil. As always we expect members will be generous. If you have benefitted from material in the past please leave it for others.

The Arcadian Living Green waste sites are filling (remember these must not be used by members who should be composting and managing their own waste) and as it rots down it should give us a few much needed cms for low plots. I have written to Barnaby to do ask them some housekeeping over the winter to aid the composting. The green path here should be kept clear and not used for vehicles when wet. It will not sustain vehicles. This mutually supportive green arrangement seems to have been successful and benefitted both parties. We shall be discussing this at the AGM with a view to continuing our eco friendly arrangements with Arcadian Living, St John's College, Parks and MandM skips.

Mower

The association mower needs servicing again. After this, with regret, the committee has decided that it will only be used on working parties for site work. This is due to our oft discussed insurance restrictions. We are confident members are covered for association work on the site at working parties. Very few members now use it as most

have their own or a share in a machine.

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Chair Oxford & District Federation of Allotment Associations
Chair OCC Quarterly Meetings with Oxford & District Allotment Associations