

Cripley Meadow Allotment Association Newsletter March 2012

www.cripleymeadow.org.uk

Saturday Mar 3 10am -1pm



Do join us for our **OXCLEAN** contribution. *OxClean is an Oxford Civic Society initiative. Oxford City Council supply sacks and bins – and collect the filled litter sacks and boxes*

from the roadside throughout the city by the end of each day. We meet by the gate at 10.

We will be clearing the car park and the area around our boundaries. As last year (see picture for some of the crew) contributing members can use the last hour to remove sorted rubbish from their plots but they must contribute to the designated work first. More information is on the noticeboard/OXCLEAN web site

Sunday Mar 11

10.30 to 12.30 is the last **working party** for this old gardening year. If you have a donation on your invoice for last year



this can still be worked off before we start the new membership year on March 26th. The photo is of a fruit tree pruning demo at the last working party.

Sunday March 18 is Subscription Day at The Shed from 11am to 1pm.

Most members now pay by cheque by post but we still do this for the handful that use it. As agreed at the last AGM there will be a small surcharge (£5) if subscriptions are not paid by March 31st. If anyone has difficulty paying their subscription please be in touch with Alison or Wendy.

AGM Monday Mar 26 You should have already received your invitation to the Annual General Meeting of the Cripley Meadow Allotment Association on **Monday 26 March at 7pm in St Barnabas School, Hart Street, Jericho** soon. Some of you may already have it as we try to cover as much ground ourselves as possible. **Your invoice for 2012** and the **agenda** for the AGM are included in that posting. If you have not received these nor have a query about the invoice please contact Alison Campbell on alison@oxford-canal.demon.co.uk.

As usual members of the committee will attend from **6pm to 7pm** for you to **pay your subscription and meet members. As of February 15th the revised plans for Stage 2 of Castle Mill has planning permission** we have invited **Tim del Nevo, Oxford University Land Agent** and **John Mitri, the Project Manager** to come to this

informal time so that they can be available to talk to members informally.

Almost all our members have email **the annual report and associated material was sent out thus** on the 17th February and made available on the web site and notice board. Please let me know if you did not get it or cannot find it. To save paper we do not print these again for the AGM. WE aim as usual to have the AGM material on screen.

The work of the AGM is to approve the minutes of the 2011 AGM which will be available at the meeting as will the annual



accounts and draft budget. There will be slides of plots from 6 until 7 and then the chair is

showing slides of the reclamation of the South Field and bringing back 30 plots. We will present the annual report and accounts, elect the

officers and committee members for the coming year and discuss AGM items. Amanda Wilkins who was proposed as a committee member has had to withdraw as she now has a full time job. This is your chance to tell us your ideas and opinions about the future of the site. If



you wish to raise an item to be voted on at the AGM you must write to the secretary with details allowing for 7 working days notice so that we can notify members. **Wine and soft drinks will be available from 6.00pm** so that you can chat and meet others. The university team, local police rep and the committee will be there to say hello and answer queries.

AGMs are essential to the fair management of the site and they are always more enjoyable with a high turnout. This year we have revised our constitution and rules to take Cripsey Meadow forward. Local developments mean allotment waiting lists look as though they may become longer. ...and we have just about run out of reclaimable space!. **This year also you can say thank you to Sheila and John for their excellent service to the association so Do come along.** Andy will be selling fruit and our councillor, Susanna Pressel will be there to support the association.

Growing in your front garden

Guy has just joined us having moved from Leeds where his former colleagues developed a project about growing food in front gardens. This can be seen www.backtofront.org.uk and <http://www.backtofront.org.uk/manual.aspx>

Wildlife news

A Kingfisher is now regularly seen if you stand on the bridge over Castle Mill and on the island. It flies off down Castel Mill

and Fiddlers Stream. Goldfinches are all over the place!

Castle Mill starts work



The earthworks have begun. One of the first jobs has been to level the space for badger run next to our fence. When

they have completed earthworks the retaining walls will be built and the badger run installed.



Recycled short fence posts (from Castle Mill) are available for member's use on site. They are by Plot 126.

Cripsey Meadow's vegetables, herbs, flowers) go to..Chelsea Flower Show

At the AGM Mick Scott who has been a member since 2009 and a colleague are involved in a project called Urban Greening (an architecture project) and they have asked to give a short presentation (5 minutes) about their space at Chelsea Flower Show. They need some growing vegetables for the display and they hope other Cripsey Meadow members will be able to help them with this. They will need to have them ready to transplant or in pots by 24 to 28 May. They will recognise the help at the show.

So sow some seeds in a pot now for this (and of course for our own stall at the **Jericho June Fair** and spread the word about local food.

Some reminders for what to do

- If you have some fleece or polythene cover the soil to warm it up for first sowings.
- When the soil is warmed, (weeds start) it is worth trying some early sowings of peas, broad beans, beetroot, radish, cauliflowers, spinach, spring onion and possibly some early lettuce and carrots under cover. Fleece is effective cover and gives some protection from bird damage.
- Onion in warm sunny spots. Cover to protect from birds
- Feed over wintered brassicas like spring cabbage and sprouting broccoli and kale
- Early potatoes that you chitted in January can go in if they are not there already given the mild weather! . If you have trouble with scab on your potatoes try a layer of grass cuttings in the bottom of the trench to keep in moisture.
- Buy and plant fruit trees and bushes Remember you must have permission for fruit trees ..write to the secretary.
- Late march direct sow hardy annuals like cornflower, nigella, Californian poppy, poached egg plant (all easy to grow and seed and bird friendly. Liked by hoverflies which eat aphids
- Also Aquilegia, campanula, comfrey, everlasting sweet pea, fennel, > foxglove, geranium, potentilla, snapdragon, stachys, thyme, verbascum are flowers you could sow or take cuttings now for early summer action

More info on what to do is on the web site