

Cripley Meadow Allotment Association Newsletter Feb/March 2014

www.cripley Meadow.org.uk

The next WP is on March 9th. The last Working Party was on Sunday Feb 9 and we managed to get on site and work.



Members did some repairs and moved slabs to the storage shed on SF119. These will be used to make a base for a new water butt when we can afford it. They also cut back some ivy from the tree by the gate and did some pruning on the green.

Flooding

As the rain is still coming down and the water level going back up so flooding likely to continue if not increase



for a while! The committee and many members now have a lot of experience in dealing with flood and the aftermath. We have Flooding is on the agenda for the AGM so do come along and share your dos and don'ts. The advice and various forums show quite a high level of debate on what can and cannot be done.

The following **food safety advice** has just been updated from Emily Green of OCC Environmental Health.



Flood water can be contaminated with sewage, animal waste and other waste, from drains or the surrounding area, and so could be contaminated with harmful bacteria or chemicals. Although, the water is usually very diluted and so the risks of getting ill are low. Following simple hygiene practices should be enough to avoid getting ill from flood water.

General tips

It's important to follow good food hygiene to stop harmful germs that might be present in flood water spreading to food.

Fresh fruit and vegetables

For fresh fruit and vegetables that are grown either for sale or for your own consumption:

You should throw away any produce covered by flood water if it is ready to eat,

and is grown above ground, such as lettuce or strawberries. It is fine to eat produce that is growing above the water and not contaminated with flood water e.g. fruit on trees.

It is OK to eat produce that has been cooked, even if it has been contaminated by flood water this is because cooking will kill any harmful germs that might be present.

The advice is you should wait at least six months after the area was flooded, before harvesting any new fruit or vegetables from that affected land. This is to make sure that any harmful germs that might be in the soil from the flood water will not survive and contaminate the produce. **You do not need to wait before planting new crops if the fruit or vegetables will be cooked before being eaten.**

OU maintenance workers are still working on site.

They have now completed re doing the badger run. They have built a wall at the south end to stabilise base of the OU fence. It is now wider here. The rest has been re dug and the wire now covers all of the base as was originally agreed.

They have re done the emergency water supply so it is now technically stable and safe if we have need to use it. It will only be turned on if the well water testing shows any problems. It has not done to date.

They are about to start stabilising and re hanging and re painting our gate area. The large upright on the right will be have to be re set so one gate will be removed

and the other blocked off. This upright needs to be stabilised which will require digging out and resetting. **They will start work on the gates on Monday 17th February and they expect this to take 2 weeks over which time there will be no vehicle access to the site. The pedestrian gate will be usable throughout.** They will also be working on mending the paths that they have rutted in working on site.

When the water recedes they will be improving the badger proofing at the south of the site, refitting the water butts so that they are acceptable and useful and clearing and preparing for planting fruit trees on the patch in front of the flats.

Paths Do remember these are paths not roads. When open please do not use if too wet and never drive on if frosty.

Trading shop. Information from Sarah
The next trading dates are: Sunday March 2nd 10.30 - 12noon and Sunday 9th March 10 - 10.30 and 12.30 - 1pm (i.e. before and after the Working Party). If anyone is looking for second hand tools, we have a range of these on sale for £1 - £5 depending on quality. The bags of horse manure are still available and in early March we will start selling other products - ground cover, canes and mesh. Keep an eye on the members' noticeboard and newsletter for more details.

We have registered to contribute to OXCLEAN from 10.30 til 12.30 on Saturday Mar 8.



This can be counted as a working party contribution. Here is the crew from last year. We meet by the gate.

The annual report is attached with a copy of the invitation to the AGM and agenda. We generally post or hand deliver the subscription invoice, letter and agenda. If you have changed your address make sure you let us know.

From Alison, our treasurer

If you are not planning to renew your subscription to work your plot this year please tell us now so that the plot can be available for a new member. Your invoice and invitation to the AGM should already have arrived or will arrive soon after this email. If it does not or if there is a problem contact any other members on your plot as only one invoice, invite is sent for joint members. If you still do not receive an invoice before March 1st email Alison.

alison@oxford-canal.demon.co.uk

AGM is on Monday March 17th at St Barnabas School Hart Street, Jericho. Meeting starts at 7pm but members of the Committee will be

present **from 6.00 pm** for you to pay your subscription. There will be nibbles/drinks/slides from then so that you can chat to us and other members. Andy, from mid shires Orchard Group will be there again selling fruit trees and bushes. If you have an item not covered on the agenda please send it to the secretary ASAP. It will now go into AOB as the agenda has been printed and circulated. .

Our gardening year starts on 1st March so the next working party will be credited in 2013.

It was agreed at the AGM in 2010 that late payers would be charged. A late payment surcharge of £10 will be any applied after 31st March 2014. Most members now pay by cheque by post or online but we have a **Subscription Hour** at the Shed on **Sunday March 9** from 11am to 12pm. If anyone has difficulty paying their subscription please be in touch with Alison or Wendy.

Note from Susanna Pressel

Susanna, James and Louisa, our local councillors have started a petition to try to persuade Mr Khuja (the landowner) not to remove the footbridge from Roger Dudman Way to the Thames towpath until a permanent one can be put in place. We know some of our members use it so they have asked us to circulate the link below.

<http://www.gopetition.com/petitions/save-the-footbridge.html>

Many Cripsey Meadow members grow flowers to support insects, aid germination

and pest management. Now we have got rid of most of the bramble, nettle and thistle rootstock we still hope to develop a few wild flower strips. Other plans for the future include more planting by the new flats, more work on the paths and using a shredder.

Just in case the water goes down enough to do some workthe following link will take you to the web site and some **things to do in Jan /Feb** once this weather has warmed up a bit.

<http://www.cripleymeadow.org.uk/Thegardensyear/Things%20to%20do%20in%20January%20and%20%20February.pdf>

Outdoor Sowing and Planting

Most of the site is still much too wet but if you have one of the few plots out of the water and you're going to plant out or direct sow into the ground in early spring, try putting a cloche up or covering the ground with horticultural fleece a couple of weeks before hand. It will warm the ground up a couple of degrees.

Chitting Potatoes

If you are chitting your potatoes in a shed or garage, watch out for mice and very cold nights. If they get frosted at this stage your chances are pretty slim. Covering with fleece or newspaper is usually enough for the frost but not the mice!

Pruning

Don't forget this is the generally the last month for pruning apples and pears. Next

month the sap will start moving and before you know it, they'll be in leaf. If you can get to them it is also the time to cut autumn fruiting raspberries down to the ground to stimulate the new canes and don't forget the blackcurrants.

Where you can... Good gardening

Here are some of the intrepid members at the January working party.



The weather is still appalling but many of us have been here before. Please do not get discouraged as eventually we will be able to get back on site and grow some food!