

**Cripley Meadow Allotment
Association Newsletter
March 2015**

www.cripleymeadow.org.uk

**Saturday Mar 7th is
OXCLEAN/WP**

OxClean is an Oxford Civic



Society initiative. Oxford City Council supply sacks and bins – and collect the filled litter sacks and boxes. We clear the car park, willow walk and that side of Port Meadow and our boundaries. If you can make it you need to read the attached health and safety advice.

**And the 7th is also
Subscription Day at The
Shed from 11am to 12
noon.**

Payment was due as from March 1. You can pay by

- **cheque to Cripley Meadow Allotment Association c/o the Treasurer, 53 Southmoor Road OX2 6RF**

- **cheque or cash at 6.00 pm St Barnabas School before the AGM on Monday, 16th March or**

- **bank transfer, quoting a plot number and surname as the reference to: Barclays Bank, Sort Code 20-65-18 A/c No 90304328 A/c Name: Cripley Meadow Allotment Association. (Send confirming email please.)**

If you have difficulty in paying your subscription please contact the treasurer

(alison@oxford-canal.demon.co.uk) as we do not wish to lose any active member because of this. **A surcharge of £10 is made on any subscription not received by 31st March, unless there has**

been agreement about late payment. Failure to pay by 15th April will result in the automatic termination of your membership. **Your payment renews your membership and gives you use of this plot for 2015 as long as you keep to your membership agreement.**

March 9th is BBC Gardeners' Question Time hosted by ODFAA at Wolfson College. Tickets have sold out and it should be a good 'allotment gardening event'. We will let you know when we know when it will be broadcast.

**Our AGM is Monday 16th
March at 7pm in St
Barnabas School, Hart
Street, Jericho.**

You should have received your invoice, invitation and agenda in the post in February and the annual report and minutes of the last meeting by email. Please let Wendy know if you did not get these. Technology willing we aim to have the AGM material on screen and so we only print a few of these papers as usual. Please bring your own if needed. The accounts and treasurer's report will be available at the meeting. Members of the committee will attend from 6pm to 7pm for you to pay your subscription and this is a good time to meet other members and share a glass of wine/ nibbles. **This AGM we will**

- Say goodbye to Alison who is retiring as treasurer
- set our new membership fee for 2016
- .discuss how to manage rats/ a new social event/bonfires
- catch up with Badger and Castle Mill developments
- report on the progress of Cripley trading,

We are looking forward to seeing you on the 16th. A

good turnout is always more enjoyable and essential for the fair management of the site.

**A Fruit Sale
on Cripley Meadow
Saturday 14th of March
from 1.30 - 3.30**

Andy Howard usually comes to our AGM to sell fruit trees/bushes and equipment. **Andy was a great help to us in advising and supplying trees for Cripley Island Orchard. He is Joint founder of The Mid-Shires Orchard Group (MSOG) and Cripley Meadow is a member. He runs the pruning course for the group as well as running grafting and budding courses. Some of our members have attended these and found them very useful. They also work to conserve historic heritage fruit trees and orchards and organise Apple Days and fruit events. www.msog.btik.com**

Andy 'saw the orchard in the autumn and was looking really good.'



Attached is a list of all fruit and sundries available. Members **Must, MUST, MUST -let Andy know if they are interested and RESERVE IN ADVANCE** by phone on 01295 810516 / 0795 000 6813 or email to

johoward@metronet.co.uk if you want to guarantee / reserve a specific tree as he cannot bring along all his stock in his van.

Andy will give 10% off to all pre-ordered trees/fruits/insect prevention, saws and sundries

Andy Howard writes

Most on the list are suitable for allotments as they are on the smallest rootstock i.e. Cherry Gisela 5 or Colt, Pears on Quince and Plums Gages, Damsons, on Pixy. Some of the apples are on M106 which is good for step-overs, cordons or espaliers. The Plums, Gages, Damsons or Peaches on SJA are also good for fans and I will also bring some dwarfing M27/M9 apples, and some non chemical products to stop fruit pests.

They can also reserve other stuff from the sundries list as well i.e. stakes guards

Cripley Trading

Our shop is now opening every Sunday morning, weather permitting. We currently have lots of second hand tools and equipment for sale, including: forks, spades, hoes, compost bin, water butts, barrow, shears, buckets and more. For the price list of other items, please see the noticeboard or 'trading' page of the website. We have all the things on the list apart from canes, which will be arriving soon.

Normal hours are 11 - 12 noon, except on Working Party days, when it is 12 - 1pm.

This Sunday (8th March) there is no Working Party because we are doing Oxclean on Saturday instead. **So we will open the shop this Sunday at 11 - 12noon.**

Remember you can ask for a one-off sale, if you can't get to the shop when it's open - email Sarah

sarahjehome@aol.com or Sara sara@qtq.org.

Cars

Please remember we have paths not roads and only bring cars on site when necessary. They should not be parked on paths or where they damage headlands and all must keep to the 5mph limit.

Bonfires

Parks report they are receiving complaints about allotment

bonfires as the season starts up. Please check the bonfire code on the notice board and the web site and ensure you are not smoking out allotment or residential neighbours. There is a burning pile spot by the island and on SF 5.

Fiddlers Stream Clearance

OCC cleared this of trees in January and we now are due to start on more of this work using the Probation Service. They plan to be working on site on Fridays in March from 9 till 4. The welfare unit for them is presently parked by the gate.



Plots 32 to 18 should be aware we will need access across these plots that back onto Fiddler's Stream. The probation service have their own supervisor on site and there will always be a committee member on site as well.



We have dug a VERY large pit on Plot 66 to house and rot down the cleared material. It is not on a site walkway so should not trouble anyone but take care if going to have a look. This plot was already designated a waste plot and has just been mowed for 4 years as it has been too low to use for some years. We are applying for some funding to build some raised beds on plots 64/65. This is a comparatively

high plot and it has good access from the central path so we hope it will improve our inclusive access.



If we have enough soil we will also raise adjacent plots 67/68 as these were also made lower by earlier clearance.

We may also have the use of another Probation service team on Sundays when we will be using them for plot clearance. We still have an outstanding list of jobs!

Our Web site and The Gardener's Year

Remember our web site has monthly lists of what to do. March lists

You could be picking

- Over wintered spinach, leeks and kale. Old Brussels sprouts stalks will give a late head of greens that are good to eat.
- If you still have parsnips and jerusalem artichokes in the ground they will be beginning to sprout so lift and store if you want to eat. Keep cold and dry.
- Lift covers from forced rhubarb at the end of the month. Pull rather than cut to reduce infection. Once picked leave cover off so plant recovers.
- Lambs lettuce and corn salad leaves if you kept them from getting too wet

You could still be digging and clearing

- If you dig get as much done as soon as possible but try to do it when the soil is dry. Do not dig if the soil is clagging your boots or when frozen as you will bury wet and cold soil. If you are digging try to add some organic matter (compost or manure) to make it worth while.
- Build a compost heap. This would be my priority if you do not have one. You can compost most material from a plot and get back good compost to use. Do note if your compost pile has weeds growing out of it .. it is not working!**
- To reduce digging - look up 'bed systems'.
- Try to keep soil covered when not being used to keep it clear of annual weeds.

Good gardening
wendy