

Cripley Meadow May Newsletter 2016

www.cripley Meadow.org.uk



Next Working party is Sunday May 8

Working parties are a good way

to meet other members so do come and do your annual 3hour membership commitment. Please make sure you wear suitable protective clothing and footwear.

Badger fence

This project has been possible due to financial contributions from our neighbours, Oxford University. It is probably our largest and most expensive project to date and it should secure growing on Cripley Meadow for the foreseeable future. It has been many years in the planning and now many hours in the making but we are making great progress. I think the badger fence will be complete by the time you get this, although there is a still large amount of work to do around it. More photos can be seen on the web page.



Jeremy has been our main man working on plots and the site and he has worked miracles in moving the very many obstacles in its path. You can see some of the obstacles and the end result on the web site.



The OU Parks team of Tim and Robbie completed the tree work in early April which allowed the fencing team access. Many thanks are due to the team for their work on site and of course for the wood chip which rapidly disappeared.

If you are a nearby plot member, please share these free resources!

The first day, line, trench and post was quite emotional after so much time in the planning!



Phil, Ben and Marius (latter two are in the photo) have been really helpful in solving the

problems as they arose and Wendy and Jeremy have been on site



most days to resolve any issues. It has been quite a task working out the weather! Bert, the digger man, has

managed to pull out stuff Jeremy could not and he has

worked really carefully around plots.

None of this would have been as possible if we had not had Jeremy working for us. I do not think an external contractor could have managed what he has without a great swathe of damage. Jeremy has moved sheds, fences and a lot of (horrible) stuff out of the way! Skips have been filled and the work will be ongoing for some time as we continue to manage the waste and install water butts. Please bear with us.



We hope the problems with the water butts filled by Castle Mill are resolved.

Watering cans and buckets should be used for collection, no cars please and no hose pipes please.



Many thanks are due to the all the members who have helped. The work was really disruptive at the back of some

plots. Nevertheless, almost everyone has been really supportive and encouraging. It would not have been possible without member's help and the rest of the members who will benefit are no doubt very grateful. Everyone is pleased to see it is the post and wire fence as described.

What Next

It is important that the fence is kept clear both sides. We aim to mow along both sides every month this year to ensure it is established and make sure there are no breeches. Generally members must not fill the gap between the shed line and the fence. Where it is now available we will need to be able to trim about a metre in front of the fence without having to move or avoid damaging stuff. Nothing must be grown or propped up against the fence. When the maintenance access gates are complete they will be locked.



We hope to leave the island gates open with the proviso that members always open and close as they use? If this proves unworkable we will have to think again! The fence looks discrete from the towpathand the site is looking good too.



WE shall be using our badger cams to see if we have any problems so now is the time to sow sweetcorn so we can really test it!

2016 Audit is on 22nd May

Our focus for the audit this year will be on fences and storage'/rubbish. The new fence work uncovered a lot of rubbish, some historical, some not but too many rotting, smelly piles of plastic, wood, glass, rubbish usually mixed

with weed piles. These made this work more difficult but also are not within the scope of our land designated for allotments. Obviously rats love it as full of runs and droppings!

A lot of this stuff was brought on, no doubt on the 'it could be useful' principle. Most clearly never makes it to the recycle/ upcycle state and meanwhile it damages the site. Please help us ensure Cripsey Meadow is used primarily for growing vegetables, fruit and flowers. We need to ensure we treat the land respectfully.

For many years now we have banned glass on site as once broken in the soil it is immovable. Please do not BRING on window frames, shower cubicles, double glazing units etc. They are almost always broken, usually before use. It is over 10 years since we started reclaiming some 160+ plots on Cripsey Meadow. Many of us know what it is like to clear a plots from a squalid state! We have such a beautiful site we must give it the care it deserves to go on.

Attached are the [2016 committee](#) and [2016 dates](#). The committee are volunteers elected by the members to manage the site in accordance with the lease, [constitution and rules](#). If you have not renewed your membership or responded to the early and late April reminder you will now have lost your plot and this will be your last newsletter. Invoices went out in April for payment in mid-March but some were not received as we did not have address changes. As you should now have renewed your annual membership

please remind yourself of our rules and help your volunteer committee members.



Our two orchards are coming into blossom and Castle Mill Orchard should crop well this year. Cripsey Island Orchard willows were finally pollarded by Sylva Trees last month. At last they managed to get on before it was too late AND dry enough for access. and so we had lots more wood chip. If you recall we keep these on a regular 2/3 year cycle to keep light levels high for the orchard. The Island is looking light again and has had its first mow. As has the rest of the site. This year we hope to re-green the island tumps and remove some of the wire guards. Presently we have uncovered a big problem with soil erosion and exposed roots. It may be we will have to limit fruit here again until we have stabilised the trees. Rodney is working on this and numbering so will need working party workers. Hopefully we will be able to print a permanent board so members can identify the trees and know something about them.



We had our first apple harvest last year and hope for another in 2016. Members

can pick the fruit on working party harvest days, other than one as you go by. There are cooking and eating apples as

well as pear, quince, plum, and cherry.

More woodchip has arrived as Sylva trees have also been working nearby at St John's.

The SKIP is there for old carpet plastic, glass and metal from the site. No imports please and no soil, weeds, electrics, asbestos or rubber otherwise we risk additional charges. When full please keep waste on your plot or take it to Redbridge.

Help needed with transport to Redbridge

We have a pile of asbestos left by the shed. It is of the low grade concrete variety so often used in sheds. When properly wrapped it needs taking to Redbridge by a resident / private person. It needs to be booked in but if anyone has a large car. Non work van with a big space and can help us dispose of this without incurring huge costs please be in touch. As Oxford residents unearthing this material on our plots we can use Redbridge for disposal but we need to do it properly. There are also gas canisters, and other waste that members have left for us to dispose of which we cannot put in the skip.

Weed management

The weather must eventually warm up and the weeds will grow apace in May. Weeds are **valuable** green bulk so aim to manage them on your plot. Non seeding annuals are fine on your compost heap. Perennial or seeding annuals can be managed **most easily** in a thick plastic bag and left sealed til rotted. The green compost bags are perfect, This works with dandelion heads too! When black it can be

added when building or turning to a compost bin Drowning is the smelliest method so consider your neighbours when you tip it and ensure you bury it in a trench mixed with other compost. If not it will stink for days.

"Our shop is open Sundays 11 - 12noon We may close in bad weather. Remember that if you cannot get to the shop at the normal time, you can contact Sarah by text or email for a one-off sale:

sarahjehome@aol.com or 07960 352787.

Please look at the members noticeboard for updates" The shop team is Sarah with the trading: Emma, Sara, Annalisa.

Oxford & District Federation of Allotment Associations working with Oxford City Council 2016 Allotment Competition

The final date for entry is May 6th Details are available here or direct from Tim Treacher at treachers@phonecoop.coop or on 01865248577

- [click here for entry form](#)
[Judging criteria](#)

A lot of our plots could enter on their usual good management so if you can please enter and share in the celebration of allotments and growing local food. Our members have proved very good gardeners over the years with a host of high awards and certificates recognising



their gardening skill and the fantastic variety of food grown



on Cripsey Meadow.

In 2014 Rob and Louise Bruce from Plot sf19 and 20 won the 35 to 59 class. In 2016 Richard and Jean won the over 70s class and in 2015 Killian and Emilie came second in the under 35s. There is a new category this year for smaller plots (under 5 poles)



We are entering the site competition again. The prizes for this have been significantly increased £50/100/150 so that associations can do something useful for their site. Last year we won £100

Jericho Street Fair is on Saturday June 11th. This will be our 11th **Stall** at this important community event.



Do think of Cripsey Meadow if splitting perennials, potting on and pricking out seedlings or you have leftover seeds and onion sets. Please bring your plants to the stall between 11 and 1pm. You can buy from 12 until 4.00. All the money raised is used on developing the site.

[follow this link to find what to sow, plant, harvest](#)

Good Gardening to all Wendy