

Cripley Meadow Newsletter May 2009



April Path Grading

Members We now have 215 members and are running to keep up! **We would like to co-opt another member to the committee to share the workload.** James Allan has regretfully asked to stand down due to other unexpected commitments. We are sorry to lose such a great asset to the committee. If you think you can help please let us know. You must be able to attend monthly committee meetings and most working parties. The committee works as a team but everyone has jobs. We would like to reduce our average age but understand not everyone can afford the time needed for voluntary work..... However we live in hope.

We have Our Car Park back

The Car Park's free timed tickets (4 hrs and no return within 24hrs) started in April. Once again the car park can be used for visitors to Port / Cripley Meadow, as was its origin. Members are asked to use the Car park or come in if necessary. No member should park in the area outside the gates. We hope more will use the car park as this is obviously best for all, including the site and we are **very lucky to have free parking.** The paths must be kept clear at all times and members should not park on green waste areas. Some plots have designated part of their plot as a pull in. If you

cannot do this the Right Hand Side of Plot 54 (see map on notice board or web site) is quite hard and too poor to cultivate. There is space for a half dozen cars. Also the grass by the railway fence past plot 162 could be used for parking if needed...but it is just grass! There is also some space, if needed on the RHS of the shed but this is also used for recycling and maintenance (vehicles) so must not be blocked. It seems foolish to give potential growing space over to cars when we now have such a good and usable car park. Please do not use The Green, unless delivering, as this is for members, not cars. It will soon have picnic benches. Many of the paths are just grass so must always be used with caution. Our rules state **Members must drive slowly on the site. Cars / trailers must not be tested or repaired on the plot grounds/ Cars may only be parked while member is on the plot. /Members must not obstruct any path or access. /Members must not trespass upon other plots (including with cars).** We now have many more cars and children on site so everyone must take even more care. We have given Stanley (Plot 1a) special permission to parkas long as he is not on the road and does not run over the hazel sapling... ..so please do not follow suit. There will soon be some log seats here as it is a great spot to look over the site.

Green Waste As we reported at the AGM we have continued to work on another recycling project. As we have plots that are too low and need extra organic material we have been looking for more sources. We have worked closely with OCC Parks and now have permission

for a trial with '**Arcadian Living**'. They are a garden maintenance firm (mainly grass cutting, leaves and trimmings) and they will be the **trial member on Plot 84. This will work like St John's, who pay for and maintain plot 57 and use it for leaf mould. Plot 84 will mostly be grass cuttings, and later leaves...which you can use. You could supplement your own compost bins or dig it in or use as mulch.** It will not compost well on its own but we hope it will be useful and manageable. Arcadian Living has assured us they do not use any of the harmful 'weed free' preparations. The firm will be responsible for looking after the plot and strimming the edges so as not to interfere with neighbours. **They are also making a monthly donation to the association so that we can all benefit.** We anticipate it will mean less road miles, less land fill and more raised plots eventually. David Johnstone, the Operations Manager will oversee the work and we will evaluate at the end of the season's trial. Let us know if you have any problems. They will follow member's rules and close the gates when entering and leaving. They will use the new path, adjacent to 84, when suitable weather.



John and Graham on the new path

Waiting list Our waiting list remains a small but steady stream. Contacts are now almost all through our web site. New members have picked up all the space left by the (very few) non returning members but some have had to take small beds but want plots.

Most sites across the city are now full and we estimate the waiting lists number in the hundreds. We are one of a very few sites with unused designated ground available. This is on the south of the site beyond the fence. This is mostly overgrown with crack willow and some old bottle digger pits but it is about 20 more plots? It will need OCC resources to make it workable and these are few and far between but I know there are moves afoot to find these for the future. We already have the island to develop which will help with quiet space for our growing numbers ...but obviously we will support action to let others enjoy the opportunity of a plot to grow food. This land is in our lease and specifically designated for this purpose. It was originally fenced off by OCC in 1991 when the site was already neglected and overrun with rabbits.

Audits The first of our two annual audits took place on Sunday May 3. These help us to sustain the site and use the resources fairly. **We look at all plots using our agreed rules about use .If necessary we send a letter which is either a reminder or warning or, very rarely, a final notice. Obviously the rules give security to all.** We know sometimes events overtake us all and we try to help if informed of difficulties. Potential members are often

puzzled as to why they cannot have 'uncultivated plots'. Consequently in the last two years we have been much clearer about ensuring plots are used in accordance with our rules and in setting a time scale for cultivation. **We allow members a season... or two at most... to bring plots into cultivation.** As we all know a plot left untended for more than few weeks easily reverts to wilderness and we are all dependent on our neighbours. Weeds rapidly spread and seed themselves far and wide, which is against our rules and unfair on other members. We know letters are not great to receiveand the process is time consuming but this is a vital part of managing the site responsibly and sustainably. We try to do this sensitively. Sometimes members like the idea of a plot but just do not use it. With the present demand if you do not use it you will lose it

SKIPS

There is second metal skip by the shed. The general one was filled quickly in March and has gone. Thankfully we did not have any imported rubbish! There was still some organic material which will burn or rot and lots of stoneswhich should not be in the skip as they can be used as clean rubble. Glass is still one of the worst hazards on the site and members are asked NOT to BRING IT ON site. **All waste (except metal which can go in the skip) should be sorted in bags (glass and plastic etc) and kept on your plot (tidily) until the next skip in the autumn. Or you can take it to Redbridge yourself.** It must not be left by the shed. Tony and John have taken the asbestos that was 'left' there to

Redbridge following the procedure included in the April newsletter. Members are asked to do this themselves rather than abandon it for the committee to do.

WOOD CHIP The wood chip and logs by the shed are for the island, as is all the wood chip already on the island. It must not be used by individual members.

Notice Board Thanks to Jamie Forbes for the new board and in anticipation to **John Langsbury will paint it in shed colours.** The NBoard should be safer inside the gate. We plan to remove another section of the railing so you can get closer. Does anyone have a metal grinder? We will use the outer one for contacts info for a while.

Mowing Ady Podberry has started his monthly mowing. **Please make sure you do not leave stuff on the verges and that you keep the rest of your headland cut.** No bramble is allowed except managed on headlands or trained well inside, not on, other boundaries. Headlands must be managed so neighbours do not have to put up with problems with weeds or access. With the strip of land between us and Fiddlers Stream we will never be short of trees, brambles and nettles.



Cripley Island Orchard Over 100 members working party hours have been used on the island this year. We have also helped make new

paths, cleared plots and maintained the site. The island pollarding and felling was completed on 31st March. Removal of trees from Castle Mill Stream has been delayed until the autumn because birds were nesting. March and April working parties did log clearing from ditches and edges where they were rooting, as well as raking and burning sprouted willow twigs and clearing the pond. The large shed was demolished and lots of rubbish removed. Some of the barbed wire has gone from the willow trees and gate. We have cleared the remaining branches from Fiddlers Stream and are now stacking wood chip for rotting (to use for planting and raised tumps for new trees) as well as paths. There is much to do but it is now light enough to support growth and has had a first cut to remove the predominant nettle which grew over 10ft high last year. The bridges are on the way and we will let you know as soon as it can be used by all for quiet strolls. Please do not enter for now unless in a working party or asked by a committee member. There will soon be a new notice board here too.

City Allotment Competition



Bartholomew Road Allotment judging 2008

The competition is being managed by the Federation this year. **Details can be found on the web site, the notice Board or from Sheila.** The entry forms and information about different categories as well as the judging criteria are available so you know what the judges are looking for. These

have changed slightly from previous years. It is a fairly tight timetable as the first judging is in June. **You should let Sheila know if you want to enter by May 27, or download the forms and send them to her. There is an entry fee of £2 this year.** OCC is no longer able to fund the competition as it has in the past and it is being managed voluntarily by a committee of the Federation. This should be given to Sheila with your entry form. Forms can be downloaded from our web site. See 'Dates for your Diary' page

The prizes for the best kept site and for each category within the individual plot competition will be: 1st prize £25, 2nd prize £15, 3rd prize with 4th and 5th places receiving Highly Commended certificates.

The individual competition is open to plot holders on all sites in Oxford, whether they are affiliated to the Federation or not. The entry fee, if not affiliated in this case will, however, be £3.00. Cripsey Meadow is a federation member.

The competition will be judged using the criteria enclosed. The judges will be John Alcock, who has been a judge on many occasions in the past, and Mike Kent from the Bartlemas Allotment Association. The judges will be accompanied by at least one of the members of the Federation's Competition Sub-committee. These are Tim Treacher from Spragglesea Mead, David Mead from Cumberland Road and Reg Curnock from Kestrel Crescent.

The Timetable for the competition is:

Final date for entries: Monday 1 June
First round of judging: week beginning 15 June
Second round of judging: week beginning 14 September
Presentation of prizes and awards: Tuesday 27 October
REMINDER
JUNE Fair Saturday 13
Put it in your diary to Bring and buy at the Cripsey Meadow stall. Starts at 12

Soil for plots 67 and 68



There is another delivery of soil on Plot 10 but **this is designated to raise plots 67 and 68.** These are communal beds and amongst the lowest on the site.

ARTWEEKS 2009

I am not around or available much this week as it is ARTWEEKS time again. If you want to come and see me paint rather than garden do come and visit.

Visiting Information

13 Friars Entry
The Eckersley School of English
Oxford
OX1 2BY

☎ 07752033370

@Email exhibitor

🔍 Visit exhibitor website

Directions

[Map of this exhibitors location](#)