

A different format newsletter as there are consultations and a model letter included.

Walton Well Car Park ChargesConsultation

Oxford City Council is asking for objections to the institution of charges and the removal of the present short fixed time to the Port Meadow Car Park and the Cripsey Meadow Car Park, recently renamed Walton Well Car Park. (see attached document) I am assured there was no intention to do this when we agreed to the installation of the machines and the free parking a few years ago. Longer term members will recall we used to have to close the car park to get machinery through for maintenance and we were assured there would be no charges when the machines were installed. You will see the consultation does allow for associated 'facilities' to have car parking permits and we are clearly an associated facility.

The consultation period to raise objections is 3 weeks (by July 7th)

I have drafted a response which will be sent on behalf of the association as this could seriously affect the site access. If you only joined in the last 2 years you will not know that prior to that we had to close the car park to get machinery/deliveries through and often got stuck or could not get through. The free timed (4 hours) tickets resolved this problem. In our experience it always helps if more people respond.

Members can adapt the letter as they see fit .

Please copy your emails to

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Dear Mr Reed,

Re Car parking Charges at Walton Well Car Park

I am writing on behalf of The Cripsey Meadow Allotment Association with regard to the institution of car parking charges and changes to the present restricted time allowance. The Committee worked with Andrew Bradfield-Barnes on the installation of the free ticket machine in the Walton Well Car park. This car park is adjacent to our site and our only access is through the car park. Prior to the parking restrictions we had experienced many years of difficulty in getting through the car park and using it due to permanent/poor/over parking practice. These two car parks were previously called Port Meadow Car Park and Cripsey Meadow Car Park. The latter has a long association with allotment members.

Vehicular access to our allotments is **only** through this car park. The OCC barrier gate has to be used for deliveries, skip lorries, and other heavy machinery needed for the site which has large trees and water courses that need maintenance. This machinery includes large tractors and mechanical diggers from time to time. Previously machinery was often either stuck inside or outside the site as we could not get through the car park due to over parking and / or bad parking. At that time we had to arrange with Parks to close the car park for mowing or tree work to take place. The wooden bollards were installed when the ticket machine went in to insure there was enough room for large vehicles to negotiate the bridge straight on as if cars are parked badly it cannot be accessed. One of these was broken two years ago and has not been replaced. We regularly need access through the Parks barrier gate, for which the committee have named key holders, and this is also the emergency access gate for us and the railway. The Barrier Gate used to have a sign alerting members of the public to this, but in spite of a number of requests to replace it this has been missing for some years now. This emergency access has been blocked a number of times by parked cars.

We are a large site of 250+ members. Our members agreed to the ticket machine in what was Cripsey Meadow Car Park when consulted as it was free and timed. This has resolved our problems with access. We fear that the facility for longer parking could result in similar problems with access. The internal tracks on the allotment are not suited to frequent car usage and they are unusable during the wet and cold winter months. Also environmentally it is obviously preferable to have cars and vehicles outside a site where growing local food is the prime function for the land available.

If our members have to bring cars on site the entrance is quite narrow over Castle Mill Stream bridge. This is problematic as there is no sign alerting pedestrians/cyclists using the Roger Dudman Way Track that this bridge has mixed use and it is a blind corner. Again we have alerted our councillor and your office to this Health and Safety issue a number of times.

If car parking charges are introduced and time restrictions altered we ask that :

- We are a related facility so presumably our members could apply for car parking permits.
- The car park markings will allow appropriate maintenance access for the allotments

- The signage will need to be improved to manage the additional health and safety risks on the bridge and protect emergency access/large loads through the barrier gate.

Many thanks. Please let us know if there is anything else we need to do.

Wendy Skinner Smith

Chair Cripsey Meadow

www.cripseymeadow.org.uk

Chair Oxford & District Federation of Allotment Associations

Joint Chair OCC Liaison Meetings with Oxford & District Allotment Associations

Development of the adjacent site (between us and the railway) Cripsey Road (Roger Dudman Way) 46

Go to - www.oxford.gov.uk/sitesandhousing

As you will read our voice has been clearly heard now so please keep up the pressure and write again to say thank you for the consideration and repeat need for action re. light, badgers, flooding and access. Letter as before but with thanks for consideration.

Site area: 1.53 hectares / 3.78 acres

Ward: Jericho and Osney

Current use: C2 residential institution

How site was identified: Local Plan allocated site and call for sites

Designations: Within 200m of SSSI SAC; view cone (small area at north)

Flood Zone: FZ2 but FZ1 for sequential test

Local Plan allocation: DS.22 – student accommodation

Planning history: Planning permission granted for graduate student accommodation (517 bedspaces)

Landowner: University of Oxford

Landowner suggestions: Students (University of Oxford)

Public consultation: Strong concern about overshadow and make flooding on the allotments worse; depends on the detailed design; full of wildlife; poor access especially for emergency vehicles;

Analysis

This site is a narrow area of former railway sidings at the northern end of Roger Dudman Way. It is adjacent to the Cripsey Meadow Allotments which is a popular and well used site. The whole site has been granted planning permission for 517 bedspaces although only the most southerly block has been built to date. As the planning permission has been implemented, the rest of the development could be developed at any time without an allocation or further planning application although the landowner would need to reapply should they want to redesign the development. Any impact on the nearby SSSI could be mitigated by Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems. We received comments through the public consultation which included representation from 268 allotment holders. They were very concerned about the possible overshadowing and loss of morning light to the allotments. They were also concerned that development here would push known badger sets onto the allotments which they say has happened in the past following development at Castle Mill. There was also concern that flooding would increase on the allotments. The precedent for student accommodation on this site has already been established with a planning permission and local plan allocation so an allocation for student accommodation is accepted. However, with potentially a new application to come in from the University, the opportunity should be taken to try to address issues raised through the public consultation. Sunshine is vital to the productivity of allotments so any development should be designed in such a way as to not cause unacceptable overshadowing onto the allotments. As there are known badger sets on site a biodiversity study will be important to ensure adequate mitigation. An allocation for development would be subject to a biodiversity survey and, in order to minimise the chances of badgers moving onto the allotments, a contribution should be made to improve fencing along the allotment boundary. A Flood Risk Assessment required of an application here will be important to assess and minimise flooding on the allotments. The access is restricted so is most suited to a car free development such as student accommodation. The Highway Authority will consider the suitability of the access for emergency vehicles.

The options you are given are

1. Do not allocate n/a

The site has an extant planning permission for student accommodation which could be built without an allocation or further planning applications. The principle for student accommodation has a precedent. It is a brownfield site although no other uses likely to come forward for the site due to the narrowness of the site and being owned by the University of Oxford.

2. Allocate for student accommodation. Design of any development should minimise any overshadowing onto the allotments. A contribution will be sought to improve fencing along the allotment boundary (PREFERRED OPTION subject to biodiversity study)

Yes, landowner's preferred use Promotes the redevelopment of a brownfield site. Whilst it would conflict with the emerging policy for the location of student accommodation, the site has a precedent for student accommodation and it is not considered to lead to an unacceptable increase in the movement of students past residential properties off the main thoroughfares.

3. Allocate for car-free residential (REJECTED OPTION)

No, the landowner considers this a key site for student accommodation. Promotes the redevelopment of a brownfield site. If housing, site would most likely need to be a car free development due to the narrowness of access and the site but would still require access for emergency and refuse vehicles. May be difficult to design family housing so as to avoid habitable rooms facing the noise of the railway.

We suggest you send in a written reply. A suggested answer is on the web site under planning issues

SKIPS



We will not be replacing this skip 'til late autumn as it is being misused. We would not have replaced the skip this time but we had to as it was so over full they would not take it! It was **not** full of old allotment stuff, which is what it is for, but a lot of domestic food and bottles and waste brought in from outside, including a couple of bags of perfectly ok toys ...which we recycled to the Oxfam shop after a cleanup. This skip is for old allotment waste, not general daily waste or junk from home. The food, particularly BBQ stuff, is just pulled straight out by our resident foxes. Some of committee members have watched just walk past strewn rubbish. We have pick it up ourselves almost daily which is VERY IRRITATING. This picnic waste can go in the Port Meadow bins if you really cannot get it home (?) as they are emptied daily. Also members are still leaving asbestos here which means members of the committee have to do the wrapping and booking into Redbridge! If the skip continues to be misused we will cease to have them and members will have to manage their own rubbish. Please use TAKE ON TAKE OFF policy for your own waste, then we can continue to use the skips for the proper purpose, unearthed and unmanageable allotment rubbish.

Audit

All members should have received their spring audit notice, by email or post. Please let your nearest audit committee member or Wendy (who sent them out) know if you have not. We have already had comments back saying thank you as the site is looking better than anyone can recall previously. Some have included a note if there has been a problem or asked for advice. This does help us manage the site fairly and sustainably, so thank you for this. One has so far recorded her 'faint irritation'. The audit is a vital part of managing the site so thanks to all. Locally grown food is clearly an important part of the future and we need to look after this resource as well as possible. We all benefit from productive plots that are well tended. We are supporting a half dozen members who have temporary hitches and 2 members have had their membership terminated after long standing failure to use their plots in accordance with expectations. This is always disappointing for everyone involved.

About 50 members had small reminders in amongst their thanks (we all need them sometimes!) and only 20 plots contained a request for audit action in one or more areas. We ask that these are addressed before the next audit, or if this is a repeated concern we set a time for action. If members have had 3 audits with the same problem unresolved they do risk losing their membership. As we have c.250 members we feel this result shows we have a good working model. We included a note to the 5 members who had bamboo about the AGM call for this to be banned. We are working with members to implement this.

We noted there is an increase in ground elder on the site particularly in boundaries, fruit areas and paths where they are not regularly weeded or cut. There has also been a resurgence of horsetail. These weeds can have terrible consequences for plots so we ask that members are aware and work to remove immediately. They are difficult to dig out as they have a resilient root structure but constant mowing/weeding will eventually work to limit them. We are having to reclaim one plot after 4 years of neglect and this now has very significant bramble boundaries, ground elder and bindweed.



Ground elder

Characterised by apple-green, lobed leaves and flat heads of cream-white flowers in summer, ground elder spreads rapidly. What makes it even more difficult to eradicate is it can creep between cultivated plants. It creates large clumps of foliage that obscure and smother smaller plants. Ground elder dies down below ground in winter, which means it's difficult to spot when cultivating the soil. However, it's capable of re-growing from only small fragments of root, making it a particularly virulent plant. This vigorous, spreading perennial is rampant, growing over cultivated plants and making them compete for light, water and

nutrients.

Organic Solution -In existing flowerbeds, it's best tackled by digging up the cultivated plants and washing their roots to tease out the cream-white roots of ground elder. Regular cutting of the foliage, just below ground level with a hoe will gradually weaken the plant, but this needs to be done every 7-10 days, as soon as re..growth appears.

Alternatively, fork through the soil every 10 to 14 days, removing every piece of ground elder root that's found.

Chemical - Apply systemic weed killer to the foliage as soon as it appears in spring. Re-apply throughout the growing season at four- to six-week intervals, or as soon as any re-growth appears. Horsetail needs similar action



Do take care with fruit planting as once established can remain productive for many years. Perennial weeds may require removal by hand but land infested with perennial weeds should be avoided as far as possible. Black polyethylene entire or woven sheeting is widely used to suppress weeds within the crop row. A range of other materials is also used including straw, bark chippings, old carpet, grass clipping and composted organic materials. Some organic materials are likely to lock up nitrogen as they decompose. Loose materials need to be applied as a substantial layer, at

least 3 inches deep to prevent weed seedling emergence.

Sorry that so this is so long... but everyone wants your opinion. Please respond as we will need to make sure the development does not result in us becoming a dark site full of badgers! And with raised awareness about our historical and continued link to the car park I expect our members will qualify for car parking permits.

Wendy