

Cripley Meadow Newsletter July 2016

Our next Working party is Sun 10 July 10.30 am-12.30.

Come and join in. Do make sure you read our health and safety policy on the notice board and wear appropriate clothing and footwear. In August we have an additional Weds evening working party for those who cannot do Sundays. Please try and come along to do your bit as it is a big site and we do need everyone to contribute.

Jericho Street Fair



Many thanks to Annalisa, Alex, Sara, and Wendy who managed the stall and to Annalisa, Claire and Emma for transporting plants from Cripley to Jericho.



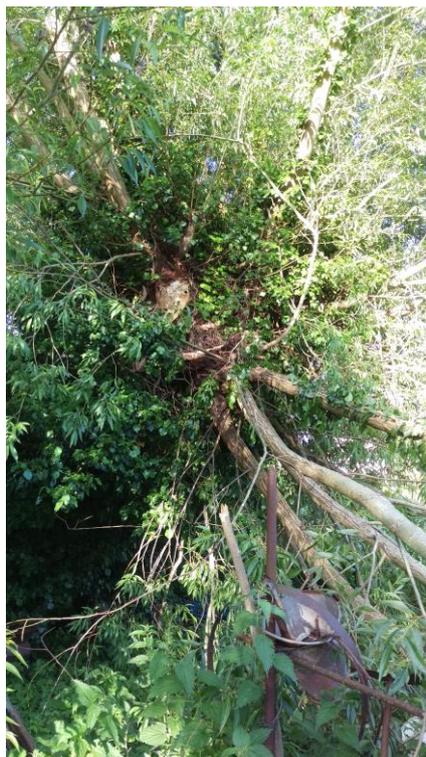
This is not a big distance but usually we have hundreds of plants to move. Annalisa managed the stall set up. It was a rather wet day but we took about £350 and Alex stayed open until the fair closed down. Again we had a great variety of plants with vegetable seedlings, flowers, shrubs and perennials. We could have used more perennials and herbs and less tomatoes but it varies every year! Many thanks to Annalisa, Gaby, Richard, Wendy, Alison, Jeremy, Judy, Ada and Sarah who donated plants and/or

helped on the stall. I hope I did not miss anyone out! The money raised will go to the association's site work. Again Chloe took our remainders for the Phil and Jim fete the following week and they raised £160 for the PTA.

Castle Mill - the next phase

If you did not manage to get to the presentations on July 1st and 2nd as advertised on the gate you will find the information and feedback forms online www.admin.ox.ac.uk/estates go to "latest news"

The committee will discuss at our next meeting and publish our response as usual. If you wish to copy us into your response, please do. The exhibition and online boards show an extensive range of possibilities for modifying



facades and planting as agreed with OCC in February 2016 when the buildings were signed off. We know there is still interest in using our Castle Mill stream boundary for larger planting but this is not there as these ideas only relate to OU land. The willows along our Castle Mill boundary have this week cracked onto a plot. This is what crack willow does if left more than the 5-7 years. They

were last done in 2007 and Parks agreed to do them in 2012. There is an interesting and novel change to the badger run planting which allows for the badger run to be separate and more protected than now and will not minimise flood plain. We have recently found evidence of a badger climbing the palisade fence where a compost bin had been for some years. We removed the compost bin but the habit was well established. They seem not to have stopped using this but we are still chasing gaps. A steel sheet would solve any climbing? The tree maintenance remains an issue as it is next to our path and it will block views **out** of the flats? We are still awaiting OU badger run maintenance and spraying this year so we will need a better agreement for managing the trees if they are planted. **Comments should be in by July 15th** and these will inform the next phase which will go out for formal consultation.

Our first trash pump trial.



Jeremy Rodney and Wendy gave one a run! There is a lot of force so you do not want to get in the way of the pipe or restrict



t it in any way! We tried it where there is the longest distance from water to butt. It was moved a lot of water but it is quite a long process to set up. The water butts are next for construction on Jeremy's list but it is not something we will be doing that often. Members should continue to harvest water on their plots as a first resort and the gates will remain unlocked until the water butts are in place.

Wet weather

Last year in June it was so dry and hot and we asked you to remember to attach guttering and water butts to any sheds you have and harvest water. This is still always a good idea even though no one will have been short of water this month. The communal water butts by Castle Mill are now filling in heavy rain and we are working on installing more water butts on the communal site paths between Plot 6 and 7, adjacent to 9, between 17 and 18, 30 and 31, 42a 41a and adjacent to plot SF13.

School visit

a group of children mainly from the Dragon were led by Karrine from plot 18 on a site visit. Karrine and other parents wanted 'to encourage things we can do better in the community and share allotment life to show how one can 'grow your own' in a much more sustainable way and be part of a lovely community too!' No pictures as yet as Karrine's camera fell in a puddle.

We are trying to limit the spread of perennial weed.

Horsetail, ground elder and this year bindweed are moving through fences, unmanaged permanent planting and any bits of neglected plots. They are really difficult to remove so please do your best to stop them establishing across a wider area.

Please look out for them and remove immediately. **I have attached a sheet of info on this.** You are responsible for the headland up to where the site path is mown and for your adjacent path. This will sometimes be fenced but you need to keep fences clear both sides. Fences and permanent planting are really helping these weeds gallop along the site.

Please remember you must get permission

for built structures before bringing on any building material and then it must be used. There are some anachronisms on site but we are constantly working on these. As plots are vacated we always aim to return them to within the present rules or specify this in the new plot offer.

Audit

You will all have had an audit letter. The vast majority of our plots are well worked or have minor concerns. If you had a more serious concern which requires a response please make sure you write to Claire with your plan so that we can ensure a level playing field for all. Plots with serious



concerns will be revisited during wk beg 17th July.

Members of the audit committee are always happy to come and talk problems through with you as inevitably we will make mistakes or maybe you just need some advice or help.

We have a few some plots and now some completed raised beds

available. Enquiries and new plot holders are steadily coming in. Some plots have been covered to try to remove persistent problems before passing them on. Often this is where members give up way after the time where they have been able to use or manage the plot. It is always difficult and we try to support members but is a bit depressing to have to keep clearing wrecked plots.

Update on Cropping

Asparagus is our one of our most anticipated new crops and we it has been great picking every four days or so for the past 8 weeks. We are now letting it grow. June 20 is usually the date to feed and grow the ferns so that next year's crop builds up. It depends on keeping up the asparagus beetle squashing routine! Our **artichokes** are early again and are surprisingly fleshy. **Lettuce, spring onions, beets, new potatoes, peas and beans** are all being harvested regularly ... carrots are finally in but they took so long to get going this year.

Bees

Diana is awaiting a swarm for her hive on Plot 5a and we have two other applications for hives on 101 and 119. If all of these materialise and thrive this will fill our complement of 3 hives on site. Each plot and beekeeper will post information on the members notice board of contacts in case

Of problems. We are very fortunate on Cripsey to have an amazingly good wild bee population - probably because we have such a diversity of planting. There is limited evidence to suggest the viral problems associated with honey bees are moving into wild bees so we are cautious and intend to limit the honey number of hives and have them distributed across the site. We want honey and wild bees to thrive.

Trading shop –

Summer Sale 17th July

We will open as usual every Sunday 11 - 12noon during July and on July 17th we'll have a special summer sale. This will be an opportunity to buy a range of second hand equipment and materials e.g. watering cans, wire mesh, fuel containers, water containers, pots, compost bins and other miscellaneous things.



All the usual price list items will be available too.

As in previous years, we will close during August, as so few people need to buy anything and volunteers are taking

holidays. You will still be able to ask for a one-off sale for the first fortnight in August.

Orchard work We coppiced an overgrown hazel on the island this week. This should have been done in the winter but it was too wet and it was subsuming an apple tree so it was a bit of an emergency job! It took two of us an afternoon to coppice and shred



into the pond area refill. Unfortunately, there was not enough time available to move and process into poles. There are other hazels that will be coppiced in the autumn for poles.

We also bought in an extra strimming day for the island and plots 64 to 69 as we did not manage to get them cut last time. This weather is making for amazing grass growth.



For more info on crops and jobs go to the web site

<http://www.cripseymeadow.org.uk/Thegardenersyear/Things%20to%20do%20in%20july.pdf>

Good gardening...Wendy