

Cripley Meadow April Newsletter 2018

www.cripleymeadow.org.uk

Second Sunday Working party
Next working party is on 8th April 10.30 to 12.30. We meet at the shed as usual. Do come along if you can. As always, we have lots of jobs and it is a good opportunity to meet other members and get to know another bit of the site. We have some plot clearing and covering to do.

Spring has finally sprung as we pass the Vernal Equinox and the clocks went forward on March 24th. It's an important point in the growing year, with many things to be sown and planted. We've had a cold March, so my sowing timetable is about a month later than usual. **I have attached a useful sowing guide you can print and put up in the shed.**



Some of our OXclean group with car park pickings.

Our AGM in March was very pleasant and productive. Wendy Skinner Smith (Chair), Alex Hollingsworth (Vice Chair), Sara Jones (Treasurer) Manda Joyce (Secretary), were elected as officers of the association. Emilie

Clauzier, Emma Delap, Sarah Edwards, Jamie Forbes, Keith Holton and Jeremy Hyde were all re-elected unopposed and unanimously. We will publish a new diary and committee responsibility list on the web site and notice board after we have met on April 4th.

Many thanks to the members who attended. It was a lower turnout than usual ? **Do let us know if there are things we can do to tempt you to join in. Working together as a community is important to us.** Susanna Pressell, our local and county councillor, attended and officiated in the election of our chair. We do appreciate her sustained support. The Draft AGM minutes will be on the web site shortly. They will be ratified at the next AGM.

Our AGM discussions focussed on sustainability.

Here is a summary

- email will become the default for sending out annual invoices.
- The 'Shed day' for paying subscriptions will now be dropped as not used.
- If you have not paid for this year and intend to continue there will now be a surcharge not pay before the end of March their plot will return to CMAA.
- Next year the late payment surcharge of £10) will be applied immediately after the AGM and the plot will return to CMAA if we do not hear from you before the end of March.
- This will avoid a month of rapid weed growth and further deterioration of the plot.
- We will continue to contact people and be understanding of individual circumstances.

CMAA is working to be compliant with new General Data Protection Legislation or GDPR. This is coming into force on May 25th this year.

Working party contributions and donations.

- Subscriptions and WP donations rate will stay the

same next year. The number of members coming to WPs is stable but donations in lieu do not cover continued need for plot clearance of plots.

- Members attending working parties **are the most valued, valuable, efficient and cost-effective way to manage site work. Please try to attend where you can.**
- The committee of 10 presently contribute as many WP hours as 200 members. Please do help where you can and share the work.
- Members confirmed that a greater donation was fair and reasonable and should be applied if the present need for clearance continued.
- NB second Sunday in the month There is a regular pattern to working parties – do note it
- The WP will be highlighted in the title of newsletters.

Introduction of a short summer audit

- This year we will introduce a light-touch check around July. No letters would be sent to those that are OK, only those with major problems would be picked up.
- This should reduce length of time other plot holders have to suffer neighbouring problem plots and save CMAA the cost of delayed clearance.
- Audit dates will be published as usual.

Composting all your green waste on your plot. See the attached sheet. Please try to make compost on your plot as you can recycle (almost) everything that comes off.

- The experiment of opening a communal compost plot to members had proved unworkable.
- All site waste plots are as before not available to members.
- all members should be composting as much as possible.
- Of 235 plots, only around 100 have a recognisable compost bin; half of which appear to be making compost.

- **There is a one-page sheet on composting attached.**
- We will try have the CMAA Shredder out for WPs and have members bring their material for shredding.

Water harvesting on plots. See the attached sheet. We are asking all members to maximise their rainfall harvesting.

- We would like to see an increase in the number of sheds with water butts, and to increase the number of cascaded or syphoned butts.
- **Let us know if you want a free green OCC bin** (Only to be used as a water butt) and if we have enough responses we will organise a delivery.

CMAA Good Waste Guide

- Many thanks to Manda who has pulled together different bits of info. There are two sections –
- one on the facilities available on site,
- the other an A-Z of waste materials and what to do with them.
- A finalised version will soon be available as an attachment and on the website.

Fences and path update

- Most paths are in the right place. We are still working on re-claiming about 10 paths where there is no path between plots.
- The audit will continue to work with reinstating missing paths.
- If you are not sure, ask.
- If worried about a neighbour planting in the path, tell us.
- We ask people to remove fences where unmanaged.
- We take un-managed fences out when people leave.
- We are not banning fences or introducing a 'no fence' rule but we are strongly advising that they come out.

CCTV on the site

- We currently use CCTV cameras onsite to monitor badger incursions.
- Over the last year there have been incidents including: the theft of bag by the gate; a camper coming on site from a neighbouring island; fly-tipping in and around the skip.

- We are planning to use cameras more, not all the time, but where there is a concern.
- Signs will go up where we need to use it.
- There were no adverse comments to this plan which will be adopted.

Bonfires. How do we sustain them?

- Members were reminded to be considerate of onsite and offsite neighbours when burning onsite.
- Complaints from Castle Mill residents come to us, but, if persistent we risk being banned from having bonfires.
- Some other associations have had to stop members from having fires on their plots
- Guidelines are online but are obvious, dry material, not tyres, paint, plastic etc, no accelerant.
- PLEASE compost as much as possible, use the communal burning area, burn when wind is away from Castle Mill and burn your material when you bring it to the communal area (when the wind is in the right direction). If the wind is in the right direction, on WP day, we will have a fire in the communal area.
- We managed one at the March WP and a few people joined in and got rid of stuff from their plot.



- Soon there will be an incinerator for use next to the big communal burning area.
- If poor bonfires are a persistent problem, we will have to prevent members from burning on their plot as we cannot risk a ban on the site.
- Twenty Pound Meadow near Abbey Rd, have already banned burning on individual plots because of complaints.

- Members asked if the Committee follow up inappropriate burning. We do.
- Members can also comment if they see other members burning inappropriately.

Information on Castle Mill Flats work

- We are going to have a building site next to us VERY SOON. It keeps being deferred but presently the start date is mid-May?
- The contractors will be taking out our fence and replacing it. One badger can climb our current fence, so we will benefit from its replacement. Planters and bike sheds will go over the badger run.
- For about 18 months we will need to accommodate disturbance on that side, and there will probably be no car access for some plots along the Castle Mill side (we will aim to help with deliveries). We will let you know details when we have them.
- We have requested path improvement to facilitate this work and as a quid pro quo for the disruption. Again, this will result in some temporary closing of car access.
- A tripartite agreement between the University, Oxford City Council and us, will be required before we can agree to use of our space.
- It will include onward maintenance of trees on our boundary and the badger run.
- Beard, the contractors are working on one block at a time.
- The whole badger run must be done first, as it must be finished by end October to allow for badger breeding.
- Temporary fencing will go in, and scaffolding skirt supports will be on our side.

We will keep members informed and write individually to members as soon as the limitation of access is clear.

**Site grass cutting is starting
on April 12th**

Communal plot paths (on plots 64/65, 68, 69, 86, 106, 107 and 147 paths will be cut **BUT only if clear.**

We have had lots of wood chip throughout February and March but because of this the path on 56 is muddy so please take care.

Please remember pot paths are only available to the plot member. Only Site paths are available to all. members should not use others plot paths without permission



A tree is down at the back of plot 27. OCC is aware and should be arriving to fix it. Meanwhile please stay away.

On my plot

Whilst my asparagus still feels a long way off and broad beans and peas have not yet got out of the ground. we have just started picking some fresh white sprouting, sorrel and daffodils. Always a silver lining! We have been cutting down our hedges, so they are waist height. Ladders seem to suddenly be the source of friends with broken bones, so I am avoiding the possibility.

AAs I write there is water on the island again and in Fiddlers Stream so do take care.

**Good growing to all,
Wendy**