

Environmental Development

As part of the Council's programme of testing various allotment sites in Oxford, Cripsey Meadow Allotment site was tested by specialist research consultancies in 1996 and between 2008 and 2011.

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Cripsey Meadow Allotments

The first stage of the investigation was to carry out soil sampling across the whole site and to analyse the results to establish whether any contaminants were above desirable levels, and any significant patterns in their distribution. Three contaminants remained of concern: lead, copper and chromium. The results show that chromium is in the less toxic trivalent form and at levels that do not pose a significant risk to site users. The majority of lead concentrations on site and the overall mean concentration of lead fell within acceptable levels for the site. However, there were a number of exceedences which were investigated with cluster sampling around the hotspots. This sampling could not replicate the initial high results from the first round of sampling, indicating that the hotspots observed across the site simply reflected the heterogeneity of the soils rather than indicating true hotspots of contamination. It was concluded that due to their small size and volume they do not warrant being determined as Contaminated Land. The majority of copper concentrations fall within acceptable levels. Three exceedences were identified, but following further investigation with cluster sampling it was concluded that the hotspots were likely to be very small in size and volume and therefore do not warrant being determined as Contaminated Land.

It was noted that polyaromatic hydrocarbons are present on site, probably due to Victorian ash and more recently, bonfires. Advice from the Health Protection Agency is that further study was not necessary, but bonfires should cease/continue to be discouraged on the allotment site.

The Health Protection Agency advised that the following good practice should be followed by allotment holders.

- **washing or peeling vegetables before consumption,**
- **changing shoes after visiting the allotment site, so as to limit the amount of soil tracked into homes**
- **washing hands before eating**

The Council has completed its investigations and concluded that the site is not presenting a significant risk of significant harm and will not be determining the site or any part of the site as Contaminated Land as defined under Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and the allotment members for their cooperation and patience during this investigation and assessment.

Karen Dixon/Team Leader Environmental Development Thanks for your cooperation in this matter. Please contact Karen Seal either by telephone on 01865 252316 or email kseal@oxford.gov.uk for further information

