

Cripley Meadow

May Newsletter 2011

www.cripleymeadow.org.uk

Dates for this year are on the web site and notice board.

May 27th City Allotment Competition Entry deadline. If you wish to enter this the entry form and details are attached and on the notice board. Please let Sheila know. The first judging is on **6 June**. We have a wealth of award winning plots and we hope to continue this tradition. There is a new age category this year. The major point of the competition is to celebrate allotments and growing local food. We are entering for the site competition again this year so please do your best with those headlands before June 6th...



Oxford & District Federation of Allotment Associations
working with
Oxford City Council
2011 Allotments Competition
Open to all plot holders in Oxford
Entry is free this year

1st prize £25
2nd prize £15
3rd prize £10

Highly Commended certificates
Categories

- under 35 years
- 35 – 59 years
- 60 to 69 years
- 70+ years

Best Kept Site
Open to ODFAA members only

June 4th is our first audit for 2011 We know a very few members lock their gates so in accordance with our rules please make sure they are open that day. The site is looking fantastic this year with so much variety of planting and sowing....
Here are the usual reminders

Care of plots Members must keep their plots in a reasonable state of cultivation and cultivated to at least 75% of the potential in a proper and husband-like manner. This is taken to mean that it is either in readiness for growing, well stocked with produce (relevant to the time of the year) or being made ready for crops or being prepared for the following season. Some plots are being reclaimed after previous neglect and one season's allowance is generally given for this.

Care of pathways and headlands All plots should have a pathway between them of minimum, of 2 to 2.5ft and managed headlands. Some of the paths got lost in clearing and fencing but they are a necessary buffer between plots. Traditionally **each plot-holder managed the path to the left when standing at the shed**. The main things are that members cooperate and keep paths between them managed. The headland is the bit outside your fence and up to the mowed path. **No adjacent plot boundaries can be planted so they shade light or take root space.**

What can be grown Plot holders may grow any kind of vegetables, flowers, soft fruit or herbs. No brambles, blackberries, large trees or very large shrubs are allowed on any allotment and we have a 5 ft fence/ hedging limit on

headlands. 'No Bamboo is allowed to be grown on site' is now a Draft Rule so we will be taking note of any existing clumps and be working to implement this direction from the AGM. Cultivated blackberries may be grown on headlands next to site paths or on plots 5 ft from boundaries. Fruit trees may be planted only with permission and on dwarf stock and managed at 10ft if at least 5 ft from any boundaries. This generally means: apples grown on rootstocks M27, M9 or M26; pears and quinces on rootstock Quince C; plums grown on rootstocks Pixy and Ferlenain; and compact peach cultivars. Fruit trees and bushes should be sited only where they will not create an obstacle or nuisance to others as they grow. Due to pressure for growing land we now limit fruit trees to no more than 30% of a plot holder's total land (by area). Communal plots cannot have permanent planting like fruit trees and bushes. If plot holders do have permission to cultivate a number of trees they must ensure that the surrounding areas are kept weed free and cut to avoid seeding.

Weeds Plot holders must take steps to eradicate pernicious weeds - such as bindweed, thistles, ground elder, golden rod, michaelmas daisies and nettles – and ensure that they do not spread to other plots. We are told by Richard, one of our new committee members that vinegar is an effective weed control substance. Members must not cause a nuisance to other plot holders by allowing weeds to seed. **Please cut dandelions and seal them in a bag ...they still seed when cut!**

PRIORITY 1 is Rubbish. No rubbish may be dumped on any part of the Association's land. We commend recycling but plots cannot be

used to store or accumulate material. OCC have reminded us that this is part of our lease and we must try to avoid a repetition of the eviction which took so much time and money in March. The ground is for growing. Unwanted vegetable matter must be burnt or composted on your plot and other rubbish kept in sacks and put in the skip provided from time to time or taken to Redbridge. —Kitchen waste that attracts vermin— e.g. cooked food, meat, — should not be composted.

PRIORITY 2 is Wells Plot holders who have a well on their plot are responsible for the safe maintenance of it and for providing and maintaining a strong, raised well surround and cover. New wells may be dug but please notify the committee so we keep their positions logged for safety.

Audits take place twice a year in May/June and September and are managed by an audit committee. The audit committee consists of at least 5 committee members. All letters are agreed by the Committee. The committee is elected annually and all members have a chance to influence the management of the site by standing for election. The main purpose of the audit is to keep people growing fruit and vegetables successfully. Membership is conditional on keeping the rules and with such a large community we are dependent on one another. The holder of a plot which is falling below an acceptable standard is sent a reminder letter. Reminders are intended to be just that: a friendly reminder or query to see if there is a temporary problem. The purpose is to get members to rectify problems within a set time. For obvious reasons, less time is given during the growing season. Members with a

succession of 3 audit letters risk losing their plot.

**Jericho Street Fair
June 11
Cripsey Meadow Stall**



Do come to the stall to bring and buy. Committee members will be there from 11 to set up and we open at 12 for our 7th year at this important community event. Alex and Alison will be managing it this year with help from John, Jamie, Tony, Claire and Richard.

Next Working party is Sunday June 12.

These are the second Sunday in the month and members will be notified about occasional Wednesday evenings. The last working party saw us weeding tumps and still clearing rubbish from Plot 11.

Allium Fly/Leek Moth and Environmesh

Many reports of damage are now coming in so do cover your leeks and onions. Environmesh is said to work and lasts a long time but it expensive! If you follow the link to www.allotment.org.uk you will find an outstanding allotment website. If you register for their newsletter you get a code which gives you a discount on a lot of gardening sites. Or we have been invited to use Trap Grounds shop (see their web site for times). Our committee does not contain any willing shopkeepers!

Rats We have had a few reports of more rats than usual around, particularly in the centre of the site. Do remember to turn your compost regularly as this is a favourite nesting site along with under sheds. If you use rat poison do follow the instructions carefully. Personally I work on the premise that the rats are generally around (we are next to water and have great nesting sites) and I put poison down if I see them in my compost bins during the day. I have a tray I put under the bins and shed so that it cannot be taken by other animals or children. The committee considered a request bring in the pest officer but we are loathe to have poison all round the site. Richard Haigh, one of our new committee members is an experienced rat catcher, having previously been a farmer and market gardener. We are buying some rat traps and will loan them to members who find they have a problem. Please go and talk to Richard on Plot 15 if you want advice on rats. Like all things there is an element of risk with a trap and members must take responsibility for using them safely on their plots. Obviously all children on site must be told they must not go on any others plots.

Also news is that the site now has a few squirrels. They will eat anything!

Member's Sad News

You may not have heard that Paul Cullen Paul died suddenly at the beginning of May whilst out cycling. Paul worked Plot 3 with

Ros and they have been members since 2004. He worked hard for cyclists and pedestrian organisations across the city. He will be in many hearts and minds all of



rather than by name. This is Ros and Paul on an island working party in June 2010

Weather

A goodly amount of rain finally arrived over the weekend of May 7th and thankfully filled a few water butts. Do remember to make sure your shed can collect water for you. Members can take water from Castle Mill Stream and Fiddlers Stream and the member's access points are **between plots 6 and 7 and between plots 30 and 31**. All other paths belong to individual members and must not be used for access. The present path between 6 and 7 has got overgrown at the end by the water and we will clear the proper path to the water directly behind the wide path, **in between 6 and 7**, in the autumn/winter ready for next year.

whom will be sad and shocked at what seems to be such an untimely death.

The committee sent condolences. Ros will continue with the plot. I have attached a photo as many know other members by sight

There was a sharp frost earlier that week! Usually frosts are over by the end of May so beans and tender plants can go out then or be sown ready to emerge. However take care as the last recorded frost I have for Cripsey Meadow was June 6th!

Further to the request for you to write about changes to statutory duties Please note that

"In Prime Minister's Question Time on 4th May 2011:

"Mike Gapes (Ilford South) (Lab/Co-op): More than 100 years ago, Parliament legislated to make sure that local authorities provided allotments. Healthy local food is a very good part of good British values. Why therefore are the Prime Minister's Government scrapping the obligation on local authorities to provide allotments?"

The Prime Minister: "I was as concerned as the hon. Gentleman when I read that report. I immediately checked, and found that that is not the case. It is extremely important that allotments are made available. Many Members will find that when they ask about that in their constituencies there are massive queues for allotments, as many people want to grow their own vegetables and food and understand more about where food comes from. It is a great movement, and it has my full support."

There is more information on this and waiting lists nationally on www.allotment.org.uk This is an excellent web site which always has a wealth of information on current topics. The web site shows you the latest news on statutory rights etc . which appears to show writing has helped.

Also there is information on the latest 2011 Allotment survey of waiting lists. OCC did not reply with data, which was an oversight as we do keep it. Parks assures us this will be done next year. It is always hard to do comparisons but Oxford City statistics.....show that associations have cleared plots and made plots available for over 400 people over the past 4 years. This is mainly because of site clearance by committees with the help of other members lucky enough to have a plot but also with some support from Oxford City Council. The Allotment Grant has been used for reclamation for 3 years now. So although OCC has not opened new sites all sites have made much better use of the space available. There are still over 200 recorded on waiting lists across Oxford and less than half that is available if all the land on working sites is used, cleared or fenced to make them available. There are 4 designated but unopen sites in the city but the city has stated they have no money to re-open these as allotments. Many Thanks if you wrote.

Good Gardening
Cripsey Meadow Allotment Committee