



Cripley Meadow Allotment Association Newsletter April 2009

AGM

70 members sets a new record.

St Barnabas School apologised for their double booking which meant we were a bit cosy in a Classroom. Major items agreed at the AGM were the new constitutional and democratic base for our trustees and membership. We left the Class some Oxfam flower seeds, donated by Tom Hann, Plot 105.

New Committee

Officers/Trustees are

Wendy Skinner Smith -Chair,
Membership, newsletters,
emails Plot 40-41

John Sivell

Vice Chair, Project Manager
for Cripley Island, Mower hire
Plot 46

Sheila Allen Secretary
Correspondence

Shed/construction/fruit tree
requests Plot 12

Alison Campbell Treasurer
Subscriptions Plot 13

Committee members are
Tony Clear Gate/Association
Buildings Plot 124

Jamie Forbes

Transport/Notice Board Plot
63

Alex Hollingsworth

Audits Plot 81-82

We welcome Gabi Topliss Plot
78 and Cathy Ferreira plot 8a
to the committee who will help
with audits, minutes and
editing.

This Executive Committee
meets every month. Some of
us are always at working
parties so if you want to meet
us... and other members and
know the site better ...these are
a really good opportunities.
We try to reply to requests and
enquiries quickly but cannot
always so do check committee
meeting dates..

Working parties

Dates for these will be on the
notice board and web site asap
and our next one is This
Sunday April 5th 10.30 to
12.30/ We will be on the island
where the tree work is
complete. Members are now
asked to contribute 3 hours
per year to the site or to pay a
£15 donation. Most members
find working parties hard work
but good fun and you get to
know the site and meet other
members.

Cripley Island

We now hold this in our
signed and sealed lease
which extends for the next
14 years. We are also
now an active 'Local
Food' funded project for 2
years. The Island is not open
to general access until the start
up work is completed but
working parties will be on
there. The pollarding has been
completed but the stream
clearance will now be in the

autumn.. You may have
noticed we had some intruders
so all need to be careful about
locking the gate and not letting
in strangers. Next step is to
rake the willow branches and
organise paths and we have
ordered a local man to build 2
new bridges. One by the shed
and one to replace the bridge
that used to exist across from
what was part of Plot 18.

Members can get a good view
of the progress from the back
of Plot 10 by the shed, which
is now a green waste site.

Cripley Island is bordered by
Castle Mill and Fiddlers
Streams, both of which can be
fast flowing and it does flood
so the banks are often a bit
unstable, particularly as a
number of willows have fallen
and taken holes out of the
banks in the past. You must
read and take responsibility for
the known risks and act
accordingly **when** you can
access the Island individually.
Children must never be
allowed on there without direct
supervision.

The major work was
pollarding the willows some of
which had not been done for
30 years so there is a lot of
new light and views across
Port Meadow. Damaged and
unsuitable trees were
removed(as decided by the tree
officer) and some chipped on
site but this has to be
completed. We shall need the
wood and chips by the shed so
please do not take them.. This
wood chip will make the paths
and help us raise levels.

Not such a Black day

One of our members reported
some black tulips had
been removed from his plot.
John Sivell took a look as did
others and it appeared that

someone had neatly scooped out each bulb with a trowel. Since then John has reported "Today I discovered some of my tulips had been removed in a similar manner. But there were other signs which showed it was badgers, such as the plant tops and footprints. I later saw the same thing on another allotment. Another member has since pointed out that we now have many productive plots. The varied vegetation supports more varied wildlife than the previous bramble and nettles and it is a far more interesting place for badgers and others to forage. It is a huge food resource for a variety of wildlife. The badger will eat slugs, snails etc., he will dig out rabbit nests, rats nests and wasp nests. Perhaps we should not complain if he should occasionally prefer our roots and berries to the wild variety."

Waiting list and audits

We continue to manage a waiting list and to be fair to members and the community we shall continue with 2 audits per year both of which will be noted on the calendar. Where plots have been with the same member for more than one season we shall be looking for $\frac{3}{4}$ cultivation so that plots that are not being used in accordance with our rules can be used by others. It is important that if members are having temporary difficulties they let us know but we also ask members to be realistic. If they have not used the space please release it so that others

can make use of what is an increasingly limited resource. We have just passed the 200 member mark last week.

Skips

A new metal skip and a general skip were delivered on March 16th and are full already and have been returned. We have replaced the metal skip but will not now have another general one until later in the year. Members must now store rubbish on their plot until the next skip is due next year or take it to Redbridge. The committee stored some found asbestos behind the shed where unfortunately it has grown like Topsy! Tony Clear is arranging with Caroline Crook to remove this. Carolyn Dutton has donated some plastic to wrap it in. We cannot store this safely so if you find some please organise with city waste to take such material safely to Redbridge as you can do so freely as a council tax payer. Ref is <http://apps.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/wcm/connect/Internet%2FCouncil+services%2FEnvironment+and+planning%2FWaste+and+recycling%2FHousehold+waste%2FDisposal%2FENV+-+WR+-+Asbestos>

Soil and green waste deliveries.

We have finally managed to arrange with MandM skips (who sponsor our free metal skip) for a delivery of soil reclaimed from green waste. This is 6 metres and is on plot 10. We have used some fool money and will be buying in more with the rest but it will not go far so please if you have had some before please leave it

As we have estimated it takes some 35 tons to raise one 10 pole plot by 3ins it will not go far among so many plots but we continue to try to source other green waste possibilities. Obviously they must be authorised and members must not bring on any builders or waste spoil individually. Do check with the committee if you are in any doubt and keep composting as much as you can. Dry out weeds and burn in a garden burner to reclaim the ash and keep compost heaps moving. Never throw away organic material away,, recycle.

Path Grading

Just as I had given up on getting this work done we got a call and Graham from Parks had a slot he could use. He spent a day and a half scraping back the paths so the ruts have gone. A shower would help it settle and like the railway path it will go back to some green eventually. The soil which is no good for plots has been used to make the green waste site on 84 more accessible for green waste deliveries.

Events

North Oxford Plant Association, 25 April Summertown

April 10th, 2 p.m., Borders - Sara Banerji and Chas Jones, authors and allotment holders, talk about growing and eating and surviving on the allotment. Free.