

Cripley Meadow May Newsletter 2019

www.cripleymeadow.org.uk

Next working party is this Sunday, 12th May 10.30 to 12.30. We meet at the green shed as usual. Do come along - as always, we have lots of jobs and it is a good opportunity to meet other members and get to know more of the site.

[Dates for 2019/20 membership year](#) are now on our website.

Reminder: Our 1st Audit is this Saturday 11th May – see info from Emma Delap who is leading our audit team.

John Sivell Gift

John was a member from 2006-2013 and an important figure when we were reclaiming the site and establishing Cripley Island Orchard. He has recently moved into a home where his Parkinson's disease can be better managed. His friend Wendy Stone contacted us to offer some tools that John no longer has use for. John is keen to visit the site if he can; the provisional date is the next working party.

Benches and Bridges

We are working on replacing the benches on the Green which, after 10 years' service, are no longer fit for use. We can no longer source them from the locally-cut timber so will be buying recycled plastic ones. We will also be replacing the bridge between plot 17 and 18. Meanwhile please do not use it. The bridge by the green

shed is ok to use *with care* but will also be replaced asap.

Castle Mill News See separate information from Beard's Paul Renton Rose on [Castle Mill construction work progress](#).

Water Harvesting

After further dreadful news this week on the environment we continue to encourage conserving natural resources and water harvesting, individually and collectively. Cripley Meadow has been allotments since 1894 and has never had mains water. The Committee is keen for this to be sustained and is aware that Thames Water CEO is predicting that *'By 2045, our region is expected to be home to two million more people. In contrast to the increasing demand, we expect to see a declining supply of water as climate change increases the likelihood and severity of droughts.* The Committee has been working for over 5 years to conserve and sustain water harvesting.

If you have shed, polytunnel and/or tool box please collect and store water safely and effectively. [ODFAA information on water harvesting](#).

Rodney Smith is working on installing a solar powered pump to drip-feed one set of water butts from the stream.

This is presently much more expensive than using our existing petrol pumps. We will continue with both methods until we assess the efficiency and maintenance of the drip feed from the stream.

Unfortunately, there have been thefts of solar panels from two other allotment sites recently which complicates the issue.



Please note that this is for a communal supply. Members should not access water from the streams individually.

Whilst we develop more experience in this field it would be good if experienced members near to the site water butts

- the gate in South Field &
- the site path between 30/31 plots

would consider being trained to fill the water butts near to them using the petrol pump, in case we experience another dry summer like the last one? Alison and Richard are volunteers for the water butts by the green shed and the one by site path 17/18. Do reply to Manda, our secretary, if you are interested in learning more. This would count as your working party commitment.

Trading Shop - FREE SEEDS: thanks to those who have donated spare seeds to be given away free at the shop. More would be very welcome, especially veg seeds. We open as usual 11 - 12noon on Sundays, unless the weather is bad.

When you are growing seeds or taking cuttings, we would appreciate a few extra ones for us to sell on our stall at **Jericho Fair (8th June)**.

Cripley Meadow Facebook group - a new Facebook group for Cripley Meadow Members has recently been created by a member for members. Just search Facebook for '**Friends of Cripley Meadow**' and join. Share your photos, tips and get help with those gardening conundrums. The terms of reference clarify that requests, complaints, permissions etc. must still go to the secretary as usual as this is not a committee group nor a communication route for the association.

Waste

This broken petrol mower was put beside the skip. The committee is not responsible for disposing of members' waste, but we do provide a skip for some items as clearly identified in our [GOOD WASTE GUIDE](#). We placed a notice on the mower asking for the culprit to contact the Council for disposal, only to find it fly tipped nearby. There are badger cams here which we are checking for any relevant footage. Fly tipping is illegal!



Our first Bat Box

After many years of wanting to install a bat box on Cripley Island we have finally got around to making one. More [information on bat boxes is](#)

[here](#) – If you make one, please make sure it is untreated wood.



Cars on site

As agreed at the AGM, the Committee will shortly set out the issues and options on car use on site. These were previously briefly noted in the Annual Report and the minutes of the AGM, which are both on the web site.

Our understanding is that the majority of members use bike / foot to regularly access the site with some using occasional car use for delivery. A small minority use their cars on a regular basis.

The AGM was clearly alert to the need to limit the number of cars on site in order to reduce pollution and conserve our tracks. It was very helpful to hear a range of members views and we shall be asking all members for further information on this issue before we come to a decision on future use.

Meanwhile please limit your car use as much as possible:

- If you **have to come in a car regularly** please [apply to OCC for an Affiliated Club rate \(£20 a year\) permit for the Walton Well Road Car Park](#).

- If you have mobility issues please check with us if you do not have a safe spot off track nearby.
- **ALWAYS** keep to 5mph limit. **We will now issue warnings where we are informed of drivers exceeding 5mph.**
- **NEVER** use a car on the tracks when frosty or puddled.

OXFORD PLAN BEE

We have recently received news of [bee-friendly activities supported by OU and OCC](#). Cripley Meadow Allotments have a limit of two beekeepers as we are keen to protect and enhance the variety of wild bees which are attracted to the great biodiversity exhibited by Cripley Meadow gardeners.

On my plot

We ate the last of the apples, potatoes, onions, carrots and celeriac in April. But the asparagus is now cropping well and there is plenty of lettuce and still some white sprouting. My potatoes got a bit frosted this last week in spite of having some cover, but I expect they will recover as usual. I continue to dig up dandelions galore and bag them to rot down!

**Good growing to all,
Wendy**