

Cripley Meadow Allotment October 2019 Newsletter

Next Working party is Sunday 13th October 10.30 to 12.30 - As usual meet at the shed. Please make sure you wear suitable clothing and footwear for strenuous work. There is always lots of rewarding and companionable work! **This will also be a fruit picking day.**

Your committee needs the help of expert legal advice in negotiating our new lease with our landlord Oxford City Council as the old one nears the end of its term. The most cost-effective way to achieve this is for our Association to join the National Allotment Society. The Committee will be considering this at its meeting next week. Assuming it is agreed, as well as the legal advice we need, this membership would give individual plotheolders gardening advice, and £50k personal liability insurance against accidental damage/injury to others and our **Data Protection Policy would change to reflect the fact that we'd need to pass on members' names, addresses and email addresses to the NAS as you, individually, would become NAS members.** The proposal is that the £3 per head annual membership fee would initially be covered by association funds and that we would review at the AGM.

We know some members, me included, already have individual membership which costs £30 so this would be a saving to them.
<https://www.nsalg.org.uk/join-us/>

Changes to the site - New Mowing Team

You may have already noticed that our old mowers, Arcadian Living have not been using their Green Waste plots. The focus of their work has moved to between here and London and it has become more difficult to fit in our mowing dates and access. So, we are moving our grassworks contract to Oxford Direct Services (Oxford DS). Their recent trial run had some problems which they are striving to resolve. On their advice, after many years of collecting mowings, to remove perennial weed and bramble root stock, we are increasing the frequency of cutting but the cuttings will be left in situ. This will be a

similar cost to our old contract. They **will be mowing again this week.**

Unfortunately, Direct Services cannot guarantee to use the same people every time so, unlike Arcadian Living's Jose and Tiago who knew our site so well, the new cutters will need more committee time to keep on track. It is a difficult site and many small plots no longer have their path markers! Please keep your 2.5ft small plot paths marked and clear. We may need to put a cutting cost into the small plot subscriptions and on those plots where we cut large headlands.

Our track repair work is now booked for with Oxford DS 7th-11th Oct before the ground gets too wet. **During this time access by foot and bike may be a bit limited especially when they are doing the stretch by the gate and members should assume car access will not be possible until the path work is complete.** Please use the car park.

We have extended this work and it will now include

- shoring up the path by plots 2,3,4,
- removing the unusable beds on 159
- redistributing the green waste on plots 84, 109 and 66/67 to return these to plot cultivation. Apologies we will need to use the compost to dig through the plots.

Do bear with us as it could be messy and disruptive. A committee member will be on site to manage any problems.



Another plot recovered from misuse. We have as usual a regular turnover of plots but this year we have had more that require lots of work on removing sometimes 4 ft weed and growth. Please let us know if you find you cannot manage your plot. We may be

able to help or find you a smaller space. A poorly managed plot can cost between £250 and £400 to reclaim, often far more than the member's subscription.

Autumn Audit this Sunday, October 6th
Tia Sedley is now our Field secretary and Audit Manager she will be managing the next audit. Please bear with us as we work through some changes.

We mentioned bramble, willow and boundaries in [the last newsletter](#) and the history of the reclamation of Cripsey Meadow. Bramble and overgrown boundaries were major problems and it has taken us many years to reduce the rootstock. Unfortunately, we have again some patches of bramble, self-seeded trees and boundary/path problems. Please remove any that do not comply with our agreed rules. Adjacent boundary growth must be no more than path width with no willow or bramble, and to be 10ft fruit trees must be at least 5 ft from any boundary.

Competition The second judging day for plots and the site took place on Monday 9th September. **The results and awards evening, to which all entrants are invited, will take place on October 28th at West Oxford Community Centre (WOCC).** Fingers crossed for our fantastic gardeners.

ODFAA's popular Annual Talk is by Val Bourne, an award-winning garden writer and organic gardener who gardens on the windswept Cotswolds high above Bourton-on-the-Water in Gloucestershire. Her third of an acre garden is managed without using chemicals. She is a hands-on gardener. She writes for many publications, judges RHS floral and dahlia trials, lectures widely, produces books with an organic theme. Many Oxford gardeners will know her as she was the gardening correspondent for the Oxford Times. Val also presented ODFAA's competition awards in 2012. Saturday 30th November at 7:30pm at WOCC – Tickets £10 details in [this poster](#) – do put one up in your window.

Castle Mill update from Beard is [here](#).... In addition, we have been told by Oxford University that the trees by Block L (nearest the



“badger hotel” by our main gate) may have to be removed for access. If so they will be replaced.

The galvanised badger hotel fencing was removed and has been partially replaced. This work will be completed shortly

so that it is badger-proofed. Ware fencing, who worked on site in 2007 to install the original galvanised fencing, are back with us working for Beard. They are completing the wiring below the metal framework in the badger run. This cannot be done from the Castle Mill side and they will be parked on our side, by the gate, for some time. They helpfully removed the viburnum by the gate which had been ravaged by viburnum beetle. The badger hotel was finally strimmed by Oxord University Parks team. It is not yet finished but was always intended to be a habitat for lizards as well as badgers. It should be strimmed 3 X per year.



CMAA along with other Oxford and District Federation of Allotment Association (ODFAA) members were invited to a **reception in The Lord Mayor's Parlour** to celebrate ODFAA's 100 year. Jeremy and Wendy

attended for CMAA.

Planting Do remember about planting garlic, autumn onions, broad beans and sowing winter ground cover, or covering or mulching bare earth. **Also there are still some community apples available by the green shed.**



Good gardening, Wendy