

Cripley Meadow Allotment Association

Newsletter

August 2021

The July Working Party (WP)'s main jobs were continuing work on communal rainwater harvesting by plot 70 (just in time for the first lot of heavy rain, hurrah!) and clearing a plot ready for a new occupant. The cleared plot was immediately allocated to someone on the waiting list who is delighted – thank-you. More on the waiting list below.

The next WP is Sunday 10th August, meet 10am at the green Association Shed. Don't forget, you can find WP dates to March 2022 on the website's Diary Dates page. If you don't mind a dirty job, the **anti-climb paint on the gate** still needs to be done - old gloves and clothes you never want to wear again are the order of the day. We didn't get to the **brick bin** last time (only half bricks or bigger should be in there but it has turned into a bit of a dumping ground for stones, broken glass, rusty metal etc. and is overflowing). Other jobs too! Bring gloves and sturdy footwear.

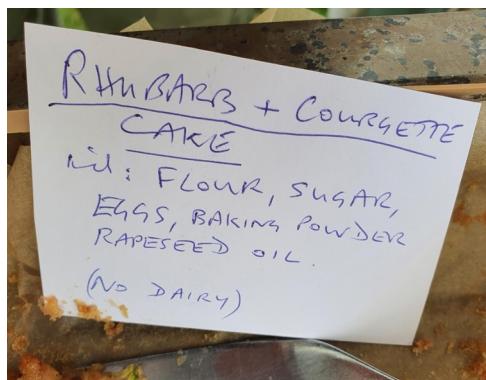
Summer Party Sunday 1st August

I was anxiously watching the weather forecast all week. The morning started showery and grey, but, miraculously, it had pretty much dried up by noon and the fifty-or-so party-goers were able to enjoy each other's company without getting wet!

Lovely to be able to share Jamie's BBQ fare and the delicious contributions from members.



There were 101 uses for a courgette! Rhubarb and Courgette Cake among the many excellent permutations.



Our Chair, Alex, was able to thank Wendy in person for her eighteen years' leadership of the Association.

Wendy invited members to see for themselves what she had spent her 'retirement collection' on, including a newly-covered and re-planted pergola and a new fruit cage.



Wendy then had the pleasure of awarding **Harry's Cup**. She explained that Harry Stone had won the tiny silver cup in 1938 when a member of a now-defunct allotment site in Cowley. The cup was sponsored by William Morris, Viscount Nuffield (of Morris Motors fame).



Harry's family kindly sponsor a £50 annual prize in Harry's honour to the most promising newcomer on Cripley Meadow allotments. Congratulations to the holders of the four shortlisted plots – Carey and Jamie on 27A, Elizabeth and Dexnell on 50B, Lottie on 68D and Carly on 153A – as selected by the Audit Group and judged by Wendy on a nationally-recognised points-based system.



Elizabeth and Dexnell were delighted to be announced the worthy winners.



Glimpses of their winning plot, 50B.

For all of us who enjoyed this party, and for the many members who had to send their apologies because of school holidays, seeing family etc... we hope it will not be so long until the next social!

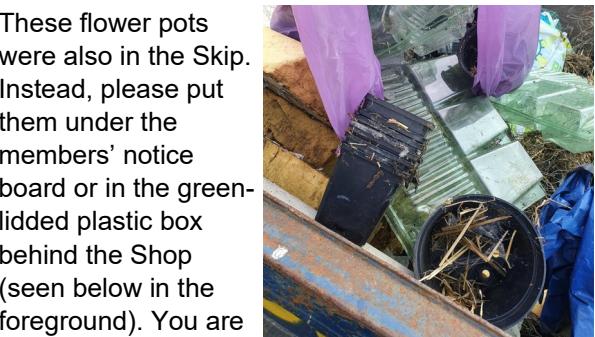
Skip Etiquette

Oh dear, I spotted food waste, drinks cans and perfectly good flower pots in the skip recently.



We do not want to attract more rats than we already have! So a reminder to take cooked food waste, BBQ leftovers etc home with you or put them in the giant, closed bins by the entrance to Port Meadow. Drinks cans are eminently recyclable, so please take home and put in your recycling bin.

These flower pots were also in the Skip. Instead, please put them under the members' notice board or in the green-lidded plastic box behind the Shop (seen below in the foreground). You are welcome to help yourselves to these flower pots – no need to ask.



Box for used flower pots by the Shop and its contents

As ever, if you have any questions about, or wish to buy something from, the Shop, contact Sarah (sarahjehome@aol.com).

The area under the members' notice board is traditionally where members leave spare produce, seeds, plants etc for others to take. If you have a glut, do share here.

Cripley Meadow Allotment Association

Healthy, productive leisure time

≡ MENU

Waste management

We have written a Good Waste Guide for members explaining what facilities are available on site, and an A-Z of waste, with advice about what to do with it.

If you have waste that you aren't sure what to do with, the answer will probably be in our Good Waste Guide on the website. It has an A-Z of materials and how to dispose of them, and a list of waste disposal facilities on site, and what you can (and can't) put in them. It is easy to find on your mobile to refer to on site.

tenants and the body that is negotiating the new 21-year leases.

At the moment Oxford allotment associations (including CMAA) are unincorporated – meaning the association has no legal personality, so only the possible target of any litigation are its trustees (for Cripley Meadow, the trustees are myself, our Chair Alex and Treasurer Jamie). In this litigious age, trustees are increasingly unwilling to run the risk of potentially ruinous legal action. The solution is for the Association to become a legal body in its own right - called 'incorporation' - with limited liability, which then means this 'body' would be the subject of any legal action, not the individuals who belong to it or run it. More details are available in 2020 and 2021 AGM papers on the website.

Understandably, Covid pushed the priority of this work down the Council's priority list, but, following the latest ODFAA liaison meeting (28th July, Zoomed into by our ODFAA rep, Christine, and me) we are now able to update members.

It was a positive meeting. Although our lease expires in September, the Council confirmed that current arrangements would be allowed to continue to allow time for Associations to become incorporated. Rents under the new leases will bring all of OCC's allotment sites in line with a standard 'cost per hectare' and all rents will go into a 'pot' that will only be used for the maintenance and improvement of allotment sites with the budget being transparent to allotment reps/ ODFAA. There will be a standard set of OCC rules for all Associations; Associations can add their own rules as long as these do not conflict. Two forms of incorporation are suitable – co-op or limited company. ODFAA has been trying to rectify the issues identified with the model co-op rules previously offered by the National Allotment Society (NSALG). Cripley's Committee currently favours us using the Limited Company form but will not finally commit until more progress is made at OCC/ODFAA level.

Weed Alert – last month it was thistles and other seeding weeds – still a challenge! This month **bindweed is staging a takeover** with its long runners. It has a habit of running over and under black plastic and along fence lines etc. Please keep an eye out and, as a minimum, pull out the runners before they take root.



National Allotment Week - 9th to 15th August

The National Allotment Society (NSALG) is running a series of online talks as part of National Allotment Week. The theme is Plotting the Future and they will be at 3pm each day. Themes include no-dig, composting, water harvesting and climate change, organic gardening, and gardening on a shoe-string.

See <https://www.nsalg.org.uk/news-events-campaigns/national-allotments-week-events/> for details including how to register. Their website says sessions will be recorded and available later for those who cannot make it live.

Incorporation update

Regular readers will be aware that, along with most Oxford allotments, our lease with our landlord, Oxford City Council, is coming to its end. Cripley Meadow is a member of Oxford and District Federation of Allotment Associations (ODFAA), the Council's interface with its allotment

Yes you can! Several members have asked me if it is OK to **lend their allotment key to a friend** or family member when they go on holiday, so that they can water tomatoes, harvest a glut etc. Yes, that is fine - our generic term is 'co-worker'. Members continue to be responsible for co-workers so make sure you brief your co-worker on the basics of being on site. Another question is about **BBQs on plots** – again yes, you can as long as you use a designated grill or dome BBQ and BBQ fuel (not wood, to avoid complaints about smoke). If your plot is too small, you are welcome to use the **communal BBQ on the Green**. Again, use designated BBQ fuel. Friends are welcome but remember we have no loos on site!

No bonfires on plots still – the communal bonfire area is there for you to deposit your dry, woody material. The Committee will manage its burning.

Waiting list update

I expect we are all aware of the massive upsurge in interest in allotments. Copley Meadow managed for years with no waiting list – normal turnover and new applicants being more-or-less in balance. Then along came Covid and, despite digging more plots, we could not keep up with demand. More would-be-growers kept applying and few were leaving.

Now it seems that things are changing again; several members have recently moved on. So I have been able to do a few tours and allocate plots. There are still too many waiting and more enquiring most weeks. But wait times are reducing and we are now caught up to applicants from April 2021. Still not great, but nowhere near as bad as it was.

Blackberries are crops



This is the time of year when ripe, juicy blackberries dangle temptingly over our tracks and paths. Please resist. Blackberries on site are someone else's crop.

On the plot

There is a real sense of the tipping of the year. Watering, harvesting and weeding have taken over from sowing, seedlings and planting as main allotment activities. As I am harvesting too much of this and not enough of that, I am thinking already about how I will change things next year. The sputnik form of kohlrabi is eye-catching but we do not relish it in the kitchen. Why am I growing it? No more next year!

What I've really noticed, walking around the site, is the flowers. The joyous orange of marigolds and nasturtiums, the other-worldly haze of artichoke heads... gladioli, dahlias, snapdragon. On hotter days you catch a whiff of something scented from the track, sweet peas, honeysuckle, lavender...



I have harvested my currants. The redcurrants made just two jars of redcurrant jam. One is almost gone already.



Thankfully my autumn raspberries are nearly ready to harvest.



This is the time to keep on top of those long, arching stems that blackberries send out to try to colonise more land. Chop them off before they thicken up and / or root and become a real problem.

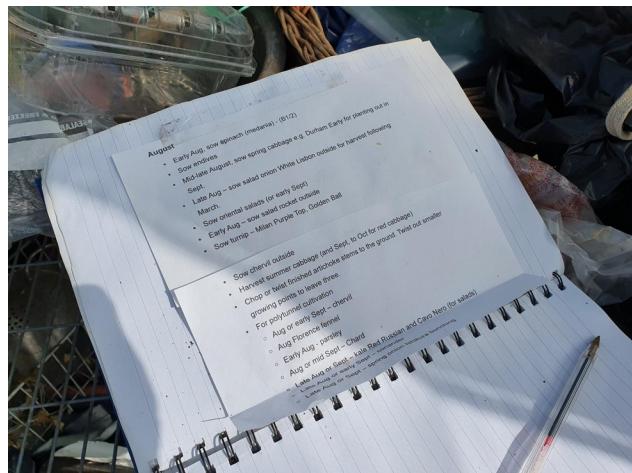
I have inherited blackberries on the back of plot 79, the one I am reclaiming. Our rules say blackberry is limited to the headland next to an external path or can be grown on plots if pruned annually to produce fruiting spurs and kept at

least 5 ft (1.5m) from any boundary. So I need to keep digging/chopping it down as it should not be there.

I was not quick enough to rub off the eggs that cabbage white butterflies? laid on my January King and Cavolo Nero. A mass of tiny wriggles soon turned into a few fat caterpillars sneakily aligning themselves along the veins of the plants.



I have picked them off and planted the battered plantlets out under netting but I know there will be a few green sausages that I missed so I will need to check again. And again.



My allotment notebook tells me I'll soon be sowing spinach, rocket, oriental salads and chervil for harvest this autumn. Also Spring cabbage and Spring onions for harvest next year.

And I shall also be sowing seeds to grow in my polytunnel over winter. It is incredible how these tiny plants survive in an unheated polytunnel, establishing roots but keeping their tops very small. Then suddenly they zoom off in early Spring to give a modest but welcome harvest.

Good gardening,

Manda, CMAA Secretary and Vice-chair

secretary@cripley Meadow.org.uk

