

Cripley Meadow Allotment Association Newsletter Feb 2022

The next Working Party (WP) is Sunday 13th of February, meet 10am at the green Association Shed on the NW corner of the site. We will tidy and cover 137 and lay chicken wire on the bridge to the Cripley Island as it is slippery, shift bags with orchard wood waste to the bonfire, and light the bonfire. As ever, sturdy footwear and gloves are likely to be needed and we encourage you to bring them along.

Reminder: We would like to remind you that this coming Working Party will be the last one to fulfil your commitment, or you will be charged an extra £20 per member on the annual membership invoice.

The January WP got a lot done! - main jobs were pruning fruit trees by the skip,



burning the bonfire,



clearing, and covering some plots (147s), and helping a member move a couple of stuff off 43.



Committee roles and contact information

We are still looking for someone to take over from Sarah in **running our onsite shop**, more information about that below.

We also need someone to lead on the Audit (Maria, who kindly stepped forward last month, is not now able to take this on). This would suit a good organiser and communicator. It involves going round the whole site twice a year with a small group of fellow Committee members, checking each plot for anything that needs sorting, then following up with members afterwards. It is quite a big job! Please get in touch by email or speak to any committee member.

Alice is intending to step down as Castle Mill rep soon, so please get in touch if you live there and might be able to help.

Meanwhile, in preparation for the 'changing of the guard' at the AGM next month, we have started re-shuffling committee roles and contact information.

Anything to do with committee meetings, membership records, gate keys to Phyllis - secretary@cripleymeadow.org.uk

Anything to do with waiting list, joining, site tours, plot availability including handing your plot back to the Association - John - membership@cripleymeadow.org.uk

For anything to do with the website, it's Jen - website@cripleymeadow.org.uk

As before, Alex can be contacted via chair@cripleymeadow.org.uk and Jamie via treasurer@cripleymeadow.org.uk

I am now responsible for the Newsletter including emailing it, and any other 'all member' emails, using Mailchimp or similar.

Email addresses for committee members can be found on [the Committee page of the website](#). This page will be updated after the AGM to reflect the new Committee line-up. There are still a few things to sort out, so please bear with us while we shift responsibilities and update the contact information. Thank you.

Help needed to run the 'shop'

As we mentioned above, we are looking for someone who could take over from Sarah, who has been organising it for several years.

The main tasks for the shop organiser are: ordering new materials, taking orders from members and agreeing how to pay, meeting them at the shop sheds, keeping a record of sales, liaising with the Treasurer and the Committee to provide updates, etc. Some members pay online, directly into our bank account, while others pay cash. Periodically we need to review prices.

You can see from the price list the things we currently provide e.g., bags of composted manure, plastic ground cover, insect mesh, hazel sticks, string, etc. In addition, we sell second-hand equipment and tools - bits and pieces that usually arrive when a plot is cleared after a member leaves. These are especially needed by new members.

Sarah says she is very happy to help someone with the shop e.g., she could take on some of the tasks if necessary.

Please get in touch with Sarah if you'd like to find out more (without making a commitment!) or if you might be able to lend a hand: sarahjehome@aol.com

Green Spaces in Oxford – Have Your Say

Members may be interested in this survey from Oxford City Council about green spaces:

<https://consultation.oxford.gov.uk/community-services/parks-survey/>

Open until the end of March.

2022 Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The 2022 AGM will be held on Zoom (same as last year). The date to save in your diary is **20th of March. We will start at 4:30pm**. I will be hosting the meeting. The Zoom invites will be sent via email closer to the time.

The AGM papers will be sent via email next week, keep an eye open for them.

Invoices

You should expect to see them soon, so please let us know if you haven't received an email in the next week or so.

Welcome to all our recently-joined members and thanks for your patience while waiting for a plot.

Vacant plots available!

We have now managed to offer all those on the waiting list a plot and have a couple of plots available. Spread the word if you know any gardening enthusiast willing to join!

OxClean Spring 2022

On Sunday **27th March** CMAA will be participating in this annual OxClean event; improving our environment by a City-wide voluntary litter pick.

CMAA will cover the Walton Well car park and surrounds.

Volunteers required. **Meet at 10am at the main gate.** Litter picking equipment provided. This does not count towards your Working Party Commitment.

Winter/Early Spring weather

We would like to kindly remind you NOT to bring your car on site if flood is present on site, please avoid using your personal vehicle or arrange for any deliveries or other heavy goods vehicles.

Fruit trees winter pruning

Ilias, our Orchard Manager, is giving us some tips on how to keep our fruit trees in good shape or shape the young ones.



For Young Trees (2-4 yrs)

- When pruning a Pome (apple/pear/quince) fruit tree it is recommended to carry this out during the **winter** while the tree is dormant.
- Always remember to cut at a **45° angle** and to wash any pruning equipment in a **sterilising solution** especially if you are dealing with anything diseased. This will help prevent the spread of contamination.
- The priority is to get rid of anything **dead, dying or diseased**. The goal is to manage the plant's growth so that energy is directed into **establishing the roots and healthy branches**.
- You then want to remove **any vertical and acute growing branches**. These branches won't be able to support the weight of fruit and usually end up getting damaged.
- You also want to prune away any branches that **cluster or cross over**. When these grow larger, they'll damage one another and help the spread of disease and pests.
- This may require you to cut as much as a 1/3 of all your branches if the tree is particularly unkempt.
- You should be **looking to train the tree as horizontally as possible**. So, with the branches you have left you should cut back to an outward facing bud. This will stimulate growth from this bud training the branch outwards.
- In the early years pruning is a form of training **designed to stimulate growth in**

branches capable of supplying fruit.

Even though by this point the side shoots may be very small it is a good idea to cut them off if they're growing inward to maintain the desired shape early on.

For Older Trees (5+ yrs)

As the tree gets older however, and especially if you've been suffering from poor harvests, the aim is to maintain the shape and branches which can support fruit maximising your yields.

- After removing anything **dead, dying or diseased** you then want to pick out any unfavourable branches. These again include any vertical, acute or congested branches. This opens the tree up allowing for air and sunlight to reach it.
- Additionally, if there are any branches growing from below the rootstock these are 'suckers' and should be pruned out entirely.

On the plot

The weather is quite warm, so the ground is not frozen at the moment. There is still time to plant your winter garlic. I prefer to plant mine in winter as this gives it a longer growing season. Did you know that garlic cloves need cold to trigger clove division? Some cultivar varieties available today can be planted in spring, but I was not as successful in the past in growing those.

Some of the varieties I'm growing this year are Edenrose, Germidour, Messidrome, Kingsland and an old favourite of mine, Rose Wight, which has a superb aroma. Another favourite, especially with children, is the Elephant Garlic. This variety is milder than conventional garlic, therefore can be eaten raw in salads or roasted.

As always, do get ahead with weeding when the weather allows – it's an investment that will help you stay ahead when the busy start of the growing season arrives.

Good gardening,

Julia

julia.cmaa.oxford@gmail.com