

Google Groups

TRAPGROUND ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION - AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2013

me <jonathan.clark@whatho.net>

Sep 12, 2013 6:14 PM

Posted in group: **Trap Ground Allotments**

TRAPGROUND ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2013

Railway News

Plans for Network Rail's proposed "Oxford Corridor Enhancement" are to be submitted to the City in November for consultation. If approved, the Aristotle Lane footbridge should be replaced in May 2014 and related mitigation measures to enable the closure of the level crossing will occur at that time. Car parking for twelve cars and a turning circle have been agreed along the bottom of the eastern bridge path slope which will itself be cut back to the south and replanted.

The western end of the Port Meadow path from the bridge is to be raised to the level of the concrete track across the meadow to allow access during floods, and we have asked for an access ramp directly onto the allotments from the western end of the new bridge.

Only when all mitigation measures are complete will the level crossing be closed. The drainage ditch west of the crossing is to change places with the old siding on its western side, the latter being extended to form the freight train loop from the station to Wolvercote.

The Chiltern Railways Oxford to Bicester line will branch off the existing lines so a new track on the eastern side of the crossing will not be built. The aim is that this, the new signalling, electrification to Oxford and the freight loop are all to be in use in 2015.

You may have seen the recent picture in the Oxford Times of about twenty of us standing at the level crossing in support of its retention. Ian Salisbury is mounting a legal challenge to the "permitted development" of the new freight loop and in the meantime we continue to show that we value its safe and convenient use.



Photo by Ric Mellis

Communal compost

John Ashby's hard work on our behalf to accommodate and process the recyclable debris from our plots have produced very useful material for raising levels of low-lying plots and providing compost and mineral-rich ash. Our thanks to him and his helpers. John has now added a bay for turves so if you have big lumps of earth with grass – or weeds – attached please put them in the turf bin which is clearly marked and situated between the communal compost bays and the communal bonfire.

Please help yourself to ash from the pile from where the bonfires used to be. Good for fruit bushes and trees, though you'll need to store it for use in the spring. There's no point spreading it now because the potash will have been leached from it within a few weeks.

Rubble bank

This autumn we plan to relocate the rubble bank - which is currently next to the Port Meadow gate. There will be two rubble banks, each sited on a low-lying plot so that rubble can be deposited directly in a bid to build up the ground level. Until this happens, please continue to use the current bank for stones, broken china, glass and bricks. Please do not use the rubble bank as a general dumping ground for rubbish which cannot be recycled. Save it for the skip which will be arriving shortly.

Pests

There's nothing we can do about the badger problem but there are traps available for catching rats. So if you have a rat problem on your plot, please let Pete Jarvis know your plot number and the exact location of rat activity on your plot. Please also return any rat boxes that are no longer in use to Pete on plot 88.

Thefts

Sadly, there have been crop thefts again this year. If you have suffered from theft of any crops, please let Jonathan Clark know.

Mowing

Our thanks to the team who kept the site looking kempt and the machinery in working

order.

Plant Sale

Despite the difficult spring weather the sale was well supplied with material and raised a record-breaking £1,200 with a further £100 added from the subsequent sale of left-overs and additional seedlings at the allotment shop.

So thanks to Pete and Carol Jarvis for their brilliant organisation of the sale, to everyone who brought and bought plants and to all the volunteers who helped on the day of the sale and with its setting up the day before. We are incredibly grateful to Carol and Pete who have organised this event – and so boosted the association's finances - for twenty years, from its early beginnings against a wall along Aristotle Lane where the Laing Homes are, to the present comforts and sophistication of St Margaret's Institute. Sadly, Carol and Pete have decided that this will be the last year that they will organise the sale. It will, however, continue in its tried-and-tested form with the help of volunteers and next year's sale will take place on Sunday 25th May 2014.

A successful innovation at the sale this year was the jam and chutney stall so if you are making jam or pickling gluts, please put aside a few jars for the sale next year. And please remember the plant sale if your autumn garden clear-up involves spitting plants and taking cuttings.

Harvest supper

This will take place on the evening of Saturday 9th November 2013 at the St Margaret's Institute. The cost will be £5 a head and people are asked to bring a large portion of a main course and/or a dessert plus their own drinks. As well as dinner, the results of the photo competition on the subject of pests will be announced and there may be a quiz and/or other entertainment. There are four prizes and currently only three entries, so you have quite a good chance of winning something. Details of how to enter are at <http://www.trapgroundallotments.org.uk/photocompetition2013>.

Bees

The year started poorly for the bees – they don't appreciate long cold springs any more than we or our plants do – but things perked up in June and it has ended up quite a successful season. The apiary has grown from 2 hives at the start of the year to six now, shared amongst the six bee keepers. We hope the bees have been good for pollination of your crops. The harvest has been quite reasonable from the two established bee colonies, and if anybody would like some allotment honey, Jonathan Clark (07725 121128) and Howard Cox have some jars available at £3 for a small jar, £4 for a large jar.

The TGAA Committee