

TRAP GROUND ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION

Spring Newsletter 2010.

Site Access.

Network Rail's constant improvements to the local railway lines should speed our progress to London and elsewhere. Chiltern Railway's application for the level crossing to be closed, on the other hand, repeats their perennial attempts to simplify their systems, and TGAA members' responses to our recent survey indicated that most people wished us to object to the closure and, if this should fail, then to modify the proposed alternative ramped access.

We have sent a formal objection to closure to the Department for Transport and applied to speak at any enquiry they may hold. This follows two meetings with Chiltern Railways representatives and separate meetings with city and county councillors who have also voiced support for our position.

At their suggestion we have submitted a case in favour of the continued use of the crossing to Chiltern Railways demonstrating its efficacy and safety.

We have asked everyone who feels moved to support the objection to write to:

Department for Transport, Transport and Works Act Orders Unit, Zone 1/31, Great Minster House, 76 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4DR. Please support our case if you wish to retain the crossing.

As on the two previous occasions when the crossing was threatened with closure, we are arguing that we need level access to the site, something the bridge does not provide, and that the proposed mitigation measures are, in any case, imprecise and inadequate. Visit our website for details.

County council officers have drawn up plans for eleven car parking spaces for us along the southern edge of the land triangle being allocated to Phil & Jim school, and arrangements for this transfer are underway.

The Soil.

The Health Protection Agency have still not pronounced on the results of the soil survey. Interim advice is that there appears to be no evidence of anything to be alarmed about and that we should continue to wash all above-ground produce and peel root vegetables, i.e. no change.

The Fence.

The addition of chicken wire to the perimeter fence to discourage rabbits has been completed and concrete slabs have been fixed under the gates to deter the badgers. The Port Meadow gate now has a key pad and, with regular maintenance over the winter, the two secure gates are working well.

Shared Facilities.

We have bought a small hand tiller for those who find the cultivator too cumbersome. All the machines are regularly serviced in accordance with conditions of guarantee and for insurance purposes.

The composting area is working well and we have acquired a shed to store kit needed to keep it going.

The Old Pond had become overgrown with reeds and reed mace so we hired an excavator to clear it and to level the ground around the Orchard Pond. The latter has been improved since its excavation in the summer, with grass-seeding of the orchard area and pollarding the willows. Three willow trunks now rest on supports to give us three benches around the pond, and a few more apple trees and other plants are to be added this year.

Apart from having removed several tons of rubbish from this neglected and unusable corner, it now looks as if it belongs to the site and should have a new lease of productive life.

The Harvest Supper.

Widespread opinion insists that Stuart and Gillian Skyte out-did all past Harvest Suppers with their organisation of games, quizzes, and prizes this year.

We have come to anticipate a high standard of artistry, of subject matter, mood, and composition in the photographic competition whose entries were projected after supper and adjudications announced.

Table decorations were also especially pretty and, as if in anticipation, cooks delivered dishes of particular delicacy and sufficiency to give us an enjoyable evening of rich fare and entertainment.

Other Artistry.

Jonathan Clark points out that this year's [2010] photographic competition has the theme of "The Seasons" and adds there is still time to capture winter scenes.

Kate Lack and Gillian Skyte plan to build a mosaic date and inscription plaque to mark the formation of the Orchard Pond. They will use fragments of china, glass, etc. from our site and ask us to put useful bits we unearth into the bin next to the shop.

The Plant Sale.

This is to be held on Sunday 16th May at the St Margaret's Institute starting at 10.30am and ends at 2.00 pm.

The event seems to be part of the established local Spring Calendar looked forward to by many and a very valuable source of funds for our various projects.

Please prepare your plants and bring them again this year to repeat the great success this has become.

The Shop.

In addition to the fleece, ecomesh, black plastic, and all the other items Vibeke and her team have had for sale, we now have a supply of blue plastic barrels for use as well-liners. Timber for making well heads safe needs to be bought separately.

The AGM.

This will be held in St Margaret's Institute at 8.0 pm on Wednesday 31st March 2010 and we look forward to having as many people as possible to hear and discuss reports.

A committee group is revising our rules to bring them up-to-date and, among other things, changing the process of giving notice to people who do not cultivate their plots, from a three month period to one of six weeks.

Virginia Wallis kindly agreed to take over the work of TGAA Secretary from Kate Lack last October. Kate has been the author of the friendly messages, the link with the city council, and the source of information for us for the last four years for which we are very grateful.

Only one of our Trustees, Neil MacLennan, is currently active, the others having retired, so we need three new members. Peter Jarvis, Tony Hollander and Jonathan Clark have volunteered to do this and their appointments are to be offered for approval at the AGM.

Tony Hollander, Plot 69.