

Co-Chair	Phil Baker	St Clements & District	Officer - Disputes	Roy Leach	Kestrel Crescent
Co-Chair	Nick Jackson	Osney, St Thomas & New Botley	Officer - Website	Jane Millar	East Ward
Minutes Secretary	Jenny Wright	Barton Fields	Officer	Leonard Bowora	Court Place Farm
Treasurer	John Lardner	Headington Eden Drive	Officer	Julia Brocklesby	Thompson Terrace

2020 Autumn Newsletter

As circumstances continue to develop, the Committee sends our best wishes to all of our members. For the foreseeable future we will continue to hold committee meetings using videoconferencing but meeting in person is still not possible with the continuing restrictions on social gatherings. We will investigate options for holding an online Allotment Liaison Meeting.



OCC managing allotments:

All Associations should have received an email from Amy Smith at Parks & Open Spaces with a letter attachment from Laura Harlock, Parks & Open Spaces Manager. In case of any omissions the text is as follows: -

“Dear Customer, I am writing to you in regards to your allotment subscription payment.

This is currently payable to Oxford Direct Services (ODS), and we are now transferring this over to Oxford City Council. You will continue to receive invoices as normal, however any existing Direct Debits you have in place will need to be cancelled effective immediately, and will now need to be made to Oxford City Council.

New Direct Debit details will be found on the back of the next invoice you receive.

If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact the contact details that are provided on your next invoice.”

We take this to be a welcome indication that the previous, and unhelpful, linkage of Allotments and ODS is coming to an end; with the direct link re-established with the landlord, OCC. If you pay by means other than direct debit, you can make any change required when the next invoice arrives.

Update on new Leases and Rules:

We have still not heard anything from OCC on the proposed new Lease and Rules. We sent a chasing email a week after their original issue date of 28 September, which elicited a holding reply and then nothing more. Other substantive issues concerning specific sites have also fallen into the same black hole.

The recent confirmation that the actual deadline for renewal is September next year has almost certainly dropped the Lease and Rules to near the bottom of the Council agenda and, with indications of yet more musical chairs in Council departments, expectations are low. We will continue to prompt for action.



Please let us know ASAP if you believe your Association agreement ends before September 2021.

A reminder that the ODFAA website now has a [section devoted to key documents](#) providing background and information on the choices and mechanics of incorporation as either a limited company or cooperative society. We have **recently added** a useful document that has come to light, from Whitemoor Allotments in Nottingham, laying out the reasons why they are recommending to members that they become a Coop.

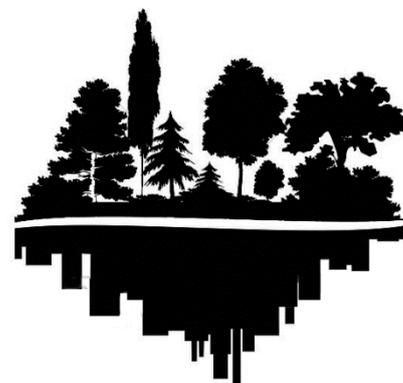
A couple of related questions have been sent in, answers to which might be of wider interest:

- The first was a concern that using NAS as the sponsoring body when registering as a coop might tie Associations into multi-year NAS membership – this has not been mentioned by NAS and does not appear in any of the relevant material they provide, so it is highly unlikely and would be virtually unenforceable.
- The second was about the scheduling/timing of incorporation. If an Association decides to stay unincorporated (with ‘trustees’), that doesn’t prevent it from changing to either company or coop in future. If the decision has been taken to incorporate, it should be completed before the new Lease is signed so that the newly incorporated body becomes the signatory rather than individual Association members.

If there are other questions or concerns not covered in the website materials, please get in touch; just bear in mind we cannot provide actual legal advice.

Urban Forest Strategy:

Most will know that ODFAA attends the Oxford Green & Blue Spaces Network meetings. At the recent meeting we learned that work has just started on drafting a so-called Urban Forest Strategy. ODFAA will make contact and ask for further details. At the same time making the point that allotment sites overall have significant numbers of trees which the Council may or may not have up-to-date records of, and the future management of which might be taken into account in any strategy.



Pennards Potato Fair cancellation:

Sadly, due to the ongoing circumstances surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic, Pennard Plants have taken the decision that they will not be hosting any Potato Fairs in 2021. However, they are offering a **Virtual Online Potato Period**, which will be administered through the Pennard Plants [online web site](#) and are offering a 15% blanket online discount off the price of most items that were available during the past years Potato Days, obviously depending on availability.



Discounts will be valid from 1 November 2020 until the 31 March 2021, and carried out online with a discount code [**oxford77k**] that is entered in the ‘Shopping Cart’ page when ordering. (Postage & Packing and Gift Vouchers, plus a few odd things are not discounted). You can use the code as many times as needed during this period.

A decent alternative, which some may know of, is Charlton Garden Centre in Wantage (if you prefer to collect) – their published 2021 list can be found [here](#).