

The inaugural meeting of Thrupp Community Orchard took place on 10th December 2007 at Yew Tree Farm.

Present: Mark Russell Yew Tree Farm
 Gwen Grant Yew Tree Farm
 Emily Fishger
 Paul Sheridan
 Gavin & Isa McClafferty
 John Rees & Juliet Hilary
 Jade Bashford
 Martin Whiteside
 Iris van den Brock
 Bill Black
 Charles Scott

The agenda covered:

- Welcomes and Introduction
- The Vision for a Community Orchard (Mark Russell)
- Small working groups –
 - what would you like to see?
 - what could you offer?
- Next Steps

THE VISION SO FAR

Mark outlined his thoughts for the use of a field at Yew Tree Farm for a community orchard. He would like to offer a piece of land, about 100m x 30m for the development of an orchard for community use. The field also includes a stream, a newly-renovated pond and mixed hazel hedging.

Mark would anticipate there being some kind of membership agreement – to be debated.

Mark spoke about the probable need to fence against deer.

SMALL WORKING GROUPS

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE

(taken direct from notes scribed at the meeting):

Planting:

Range of old variety apples, pears, plums, greengages damsons and soft fruit
Donate a walnut (Paul and Isa) (NB would need careful planting so as not to shadow others)
Mulberry (black)
Sweet chestnut
Cider apples; crab apples
Quince (proper ones)
Cherries
Natural grassland (not seeded grass)
Soft fruit under-storey
Spiny hedges – hawthorn? To keep the deer off
Bramley and other cooking apples
Mistletoe

Sharing costs:

Share cost of fencing etc
Everyone pay for a tree or two
Maybe £10 annual membership
Card to prove membership
Launch party – introduce members to one another
How to work out fair distribution of produce?

Other thoughts:

Fully organic
Option for storage
Juicing days if abundant fruit
Bench to sit on among the trees
Chatting, swing, seats
Working class – pruning
Pruning day
Wassailing
Apple Day
Tree Dressing Day
Planting parties/picnics
Trees dedicated to e.g. grandchildren
What size trees – mixture of small and standards
Not too long a season to maintain some privacy for Mark and Gwen
Only mow pathways through land to encourage wild flowers and insects
Contact Gloucestershire Orchard Group for advice (funding, varieties, etc)
Need to think of layout of trees
Pattern of light

Translocation from canal to pond
Let the pond naturalise
Plant in stages, maybe 20 trees per year
Sheep to graze
Lion poo to deter deer?

Other organisations we could contact

Thrupp School
Parish Council
Gloucestershire Orchards Group
Stroud Community Agriculture (surplus)
Transition Stroud
Bulmers, Westons – cider companies might sponsor

WHAT COULD YOU OFFER?

Compost
Time
Equipment
Labour
Enthusiasm
Financial support for trees, fences, etc
Children to help
More experienced members to help less experienced
Advance planning of workdays as designated co-ordinator
Conservation advice (Juliet)
Tree and plant ID (John and Juliet)
Birds and everything else (Juliet)
Work, labour (Jade, Juliet, John)
Communications, school etc (Jade)
E-mail members + local companies (to sponsor) (John)
Organise an event
Provide a market for local fruit (Jade)
Help with Lottery Bids (Jade)
Research on costs etc (Martin)
Possibility of accessing hedging plants (Charlie)

ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN

Write up notes (Gwen)
Circulate (Mark)
Volunteer to take forward these actions (All)
Ascertain when planting needs to take place (?)
Fencing or cut thorn bushes round saplings (?) – time/costs

Source blackthorn to put round trees to deter deer

Book days for planting, fencing ..

Advertise the Community Orchard

Decide when orchard should be accessible and not accessible (Mark and Gwen)

Determine access route – horses etc (Mark)

Check on agreement – legal? Tenancy agreement? Contact NACF&CG

Plan a viewing day and invite more people to attend (Mark with help)