

Lydney Community Orchard

A growing space

Oakdale Links, March 2014



Figure 1 National Trust Orchard at Moseley Old Hall © Oakdale Links 2014



Figure 2 Orchard sketch © Oakdale Links 2014

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Executive summary

This is a proposal for a Community Orchard for the town of Lydney in the Forest of Dean. It has been prepared by Oakdale Links, a residents' association on a new development to the east of the town. Oakdale Links would like to help set up a friendship group, the Friends of Lydney Orchard, so that people from anywhere in Lydney can participate and learn new skills. We would like to lease the land for a peppercorn rent from the Trust. Land proposed for the Orchard belongs to the Lydney Recreation Trust and was given to the town for the 'healthful recreation' of citizens of Lydney. Known as Cambourne Meadow, the land is predominantly used by dog walkers at present. We would like to create a space within the site for the Orchard, whilst retaining some of the land for walkers with or without dogs. The project is achievable in stages, with the first stage being fencing the area, tackling the Japanese knotweed on site, and planning the planting scheme with consultation from orchard experts and the Recreation Trust. We already have awards of £104 from Barnwood Trust and £250 from Bromford Homes to help with match funding and have contributed over 100 hours so far. Our next port of call for funding is the Orchard Windfall grant from the Tree Council. This has a deadline of 31st March and requires permission from the landowners. Trees bought with this grant would be planted in National Tree Week in November 2014. Future development ideas include a performance space, facilities (wooden structures) for school groups and a gardening and wildlife club. All profits from orchard crops will go to back into funds for the orchard and the community will be able to benefit from free fruit, community celebrations such as Apple Day. This joint endeavour will help the new community of Oakdale to settle in and build a stronger community across the town as a result.

Introduction

“How can villagers be made happier? The answer is land — good land, in the right place, and on reasonable terms — rented land, and owned land, but land on some terms.”

Sir R. Henry Rew (1858-1929)

Proposals for sustainable food and land use to the benefit of the community and environment have been written by residents of the Oakdale development as part of their ongoing quest to build a new community linked in with the existing one here in Lydney. The proposals include a Community Orchard, for the benefit of all Lydney residents with free fruit for all, bee hives as a local enterprise run by Oakdale Links, the Oakdale residents' association, egg production combined with helping to organically manage the orchard as a similar venture, a Community Kitchen Garden combined with a small sports facility such as a five-a-side pitch or basketball hoop and an organically managed meadow to the east of Cambourne Place (the Oakdale Meadow), which is the missing link to creating a green corridor stretching along the whole of southern Lydney.

These projects would give the community, new and old, the chance to use the land in new and creative ways, with the possibility to adapt to new ventures and go forward in manageable stages. The Community Orchard, situated on land

belonging to the Lydney Recreation Trust, is an obvious starting point. Land owned by developers may not be available to the community and until planning permission is sought and rejected, it is impossible to predict the outcome of any alternative plans for using it. Recreation Trust land does not currently include the location of the bee hives, the Oakdale Meadow or the proposed site for the Community Garden. It was given to the town in 1946 by Viscount Bledisloe and John Watts for ‘healthful recreation of the public of Lydney’ (Lydney Town Council website).

At the time of writing, Oakdale Links has received a second Small Sparks grant from the Barnwood Trust for membership of the Dean Forest Beekeepers Association and bee keeping training for one member, Rachel Reeves. The grant is to be for the benefit of the whole community and is a preparatory step to Oakdale Links managing their own bee hives. We have also just received the news that Bromford Homes wishes to support our community work with a further grant of £250, which we are authorised to spend on this or any other community project. As we say here on Oakdale, “Do what you can, with what you have, where you are,” (Theodore Roosevelt) so we will start with asking the Lydney Recreation Trust to support this project for the benefit of the whole town.

Aims of Lydney Community Orchard

The aims of the Community Orchard project are to:

- Provide a free supply of fresh, organically cultivated fruit to residents of Lydney
- Provide Oakdale residents with a small community enterprise with bee keeping, honey and wax production as well as providing a source of pollinators close to growing sites and local gardens
- To provide fresh eggs to sell as a community venture
- To bring together people from all sectors of the community
- To provide space for wildlife education and outdoor events such as outdoor theatre, Apple Days, etc
- To eradicate Japanese knotweed from the site and effectively manage it to the benefit of wildlife and native plant species
- To train residents in orchard and meadow management, bee keeping and raising chickens
- To establish effective partnerships between Oakdale Links, Lydney Recreation Trust, Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, Butterfly Conservation, Dean Forest Beekeepers and other groups to the benefit of the whole community
- To be a potential location for an [Ecominds](#) project
- To be a repository of skills and knowledge in growing citizens, communities and food, transferred from one

generation to the next and cross-pollinating across the Forest of Dean and Gloucestershire



Figure 3 Cambourne Meadow from Cambourne Place looking towards St Mary's Church



Figure 5 Cambourne Meadow from the Boating Lake © Oakdale Links 2013

Adapting the space

Currently, the proposed orchard site, Cambourne Meadow, is used in the main by dog owners and their pets and is unsafe for children to play on due to fouling. Our plan is to section off the central part of the meadow for the orchard, leaving a route on the southern and western sides for walkers to access the Boating Lake through the original gate and a reasonably

sized area for walkers with dogs on the Lakeside Gardens (northern) side of the site.

The orchard should be in an enclosed area with sturdy stock-proof fencing within the existing Cambourne Meadow, so that dogs cannot enter and chickens are able to range freely through the orchard. Gates should be kissing gates with self-closing hinges. but allow access for wheelchair users and parents with buggies. A secure lockable area is included with a chicken run inside it so that the chickens can be separated from the main orchard during school holidays. We would consider clipping wings to prevent our birds from flying far. Following the example of Blakeney Hill Growers' Chicken Portion, we will set up a rota to feed and get the chickens in to shelter at night and let them out to roam in the morning. All fencing will have the recommended depth of chicken wire underground and the recommended height above, with advise from local farmers. Chickens are an integral part of the organic management strategy as they eat the caterpillars of the Codling Moth which attacks fruit trees and also will fertilise the soil without the need for artificial fertiliser.

Wildlife

Paths could be mown through wildflower banks between the trees, with spring bulbs planted throughout. Wildflower mix should be rich in poppies, but also provide a varied source of food for insects and birds. Any valuable plants for wildlife

such as teasels already on the meadow should be left. Teasels are especially good for attracting goldfinch. Encouraging insects will in turn supply nearby bats with food. The orchard is on the flight path of wild geese that fly over Oakdale to the Boating Lake from Slimbridge, just the other side of the river Severn. Although we do not use the meadow often enough to observe wildlife, we live nearby and have seen species from our gardens such as:

Bats: Pipistrelle bats, soprano pipistrelle, greater horseshoe bats were all mentioned in a wildlife survey carried out prior to building work on Oakdale and published on the FoDDC Planning Portal. There is a purpose-built roost on the development.

Birds: Swallows, house martins, swifts, a tawny owl, fieldfare, coal tits, great tits, blue tits, long tailed tits, yellow wagtails, pied wagtails (observed on Oakdale Green and in our gardens.) Swans, Canadian geese, mallard ducks, coots, herons, cormorants and moorhens (Boating Lake)

Butterflies: Holly blue, common blue, marbled white, peacock, gatekeeper, meadow brown, red admiral (2013 survey of Oakdale Meadow for Butterfly Conservation)

Bees: solitary bees (these like the small pipes left in the brick work of our houses, honey bees, bumble bees, buff tailed bumble bee, red tailed bumble bee and common carder bee. (These were all visitors to

lavender in the Reeves' organically managed garden last year.)

Planting

Lavender could be planted between rows as the spacing has to allow for growth of trees and trees will take 10-15 years to achieve full height. Beyond this, lavender becomes scrubby in any case, so could be taken out once it starts to be shaded by trees. Lavender would be an appealing plant for humans, bees and butterflies, but heritage varieties should be chosen, not sterile modern plants. It can also be used as a crop to sell. When we looked into inter-cropping, we found that traditionally, corn was grown when trees were young to provide shade from the sun. Other suggestions, from 'The Apple, King of Fruitsⁱⁱ' by George T Powell (1843-1927) are soft fruit, potatoes (but would need fertiliser so as not to deplete the soil), and green manures such as red clover, which puts nitrogen back into the soil. We could also plant daffodils and sell cut flowers to help fund the orchard or sow wild flower seed between the trees as well as at the edges of the meadow as shown in the design sketch.

Trees should be staked and have guards around the base as well as mulching such as bark chipping. It may be possible to produce bark chipping from management of other areas of Recreation Trust land.

The Woodland Trust are offering free hedgerow trees plentiful in food for wildlife and including tree guards for community

projects to provide up to 120m of hedging. They are particularly interested in projects set up with elements commemorating the centenary of World War One this year.

Historical value of the land

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Figure 6 Charles Bathurst, 1st Viscount Bledisloe; Alina Kate Elaine (née Jenkins), Viscountess Bledisloe. © National Portrait Gallery, London. Reproduced with kind permission.

During World War One, Charles Bathurst, who later gifted the Recreation Trust land to the town, was the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Food from 1916 to 1917 and played a key part in encouraging home grown food production to aid the war effortⁱⁱⁱ. He advocated school gardens and encouraged children to grow food for their families^{iv}. In fact, his education work still aids citizens of Lydney today as he set up the [Bledisloe Trust](#) in 1935, enabling young people to access education in or emigrate to New Zealand. There is a window in the Bathurst Chapel at St Mary's Church in Lydney commemorating Lord Bledisloe's time as Governor General of New Zealand He was invited back to New Zealand in 1947 and gave a speech at the Young Farmers' Club which you can listen to online ([The Encyclopedia of New Zealand](#).) He was noted for his diplomatic work and non-patronising approach to the Maori

King and was renowned for supporting rural community events:

“Another feature of Bledisloe's stewardship was his promotion of various causes and events by the presentation of trophies: among these were awards for landscape painting, for gardens featuring New Zealand plants, and for Maori excellence in farming^v.”

Lord Bledisloe was an expert agriculturalist, specialising in Red Poll cattle, orchards, potatoes and pigs^{viii}. We know of families on Oakdale where parents have gone without food to feed their children. We would like to involve these families and others in small scale food production and help to pass on them the skills and values of that war time generation. Those of us from Generation X may have learned them from our grandparents, but have spent our lives in a consumerist culture. It is good to know that the benefactor who gave Cambourne Meadow to the town was so actively engaged in rural education, protection of pollinators^{viii} and an advocate for home grown produce in a time of national emergency.

To create a unique orchard reflecting both the history of Lydney and the Forest of Dean, we would like local children to help in the design of sculptural gates. We are also suggesting a sculpture as a centrepiece.

To make the space as adaptable as possible and add value for Lydney as a town, we have introduced the concept of a natural amphitheatre with turf banks. These could be created in part by scraping turf and topsoil from the areas to be sown with wildflower seed rich in poppies (as a tribute to WWI veterans), either within the orchard site or whilst creating the path. This could be used for free play by children, for education of visiting groups of children, for picnics and as an outdoor performance space.

Benches carved with poems by local poets under the shade of trees would create a space for relaxation and reflection, with views of the Boating Lake and St Mary's Church amidst wild flowers and apple blossom. Poppies in the wildflower mix would be a poignant, living tribute to local war heroes and their families.



Figure 7 Cambourne Meadow, summer 2013 © Oakdale Links

Engaging a younger generation

Norfolk County Council *Early Years Outdoor Learning Toolkit* states:

“The outdoor environment gives a real context for purposeful communication. Children can discuss problems, negotiate turns, explain ideas, ask questions, learn specific vocabulary and share thoughts and feelings with adults and peers. Providing communal spaces can facilitate communication if it is laid out carefully and comfortably.”

Children’s work has been at the forefront of Oakdale Links’ community engagement strategy from the outset and we have worked hard to demonstrate our commitment to the younger members of our community. Using the area currently infested with Japanese Knotweed without disturbing the ground, the children’s gardening/ wildlife club could have their own space including:

- Raised beds with a ledge for children to perch on
- A story telling circle with a hand-crafted chair, perhaps with shelter from the elements
- A secure storage space for children’s gardening tools and protective equipment such as gloves, kneelers, spare wellies and waterproofs
- A sheltered space to gather

- Children’s involvement in design of willow structures, sculptural features and benches

Bark chippings can be used on the surrounding area to help control weeds, though after clearance, we will continue constant vigilance for the re-emergence of knotweed.

As key participants in the scheme, children could also have their own raised beds for flowers and a patch to grow sunflowers in (an idea from our four year old junior member, Tommy.)

Schools are already involved in the planning stages of the project, with plans for a site visit by Severnbanks school. We are producing lesson plans with this school that we can roll out via our website to other schools in the area.

Training and development

Training and development opportunities will be offered to volunteers enabling them to gain life skills and enhance career prospects as well as building a skilled team to manage the Community Orchard. In the long term, we would like to appoint a Project Sustainability Manager to oversee this and other projects such as taking on the management of the open spaces on Oakdale.

Anyone working on a regular basis with children and/or vulnerable adults will be offered the appropriate child

protection and vulnerable adult training, in collaboration with Forest of Dean District Council Community Engagement team and the Diocese of Gloucestershire (Lydney Parish). We would like all those working with children or vulnerable adults to undertake DRB clearance, but rules have changed recently meaning only those working with them on a weekly basis may be cleared. One Oakdale Links member, Gary Reeves, is a volunteer youth leader and so is already cleared to work with children. Child Protection training will be renewed on a regular basis, following Child Protection guidelines from FoDDC and the Diocese of Gloucester.

We will add value into the local economy by applying for grant funding to train our volunteers in additional training such as:

- First Aid
- Food Hygiene
- Power tools
- Pruning
- Grafting
- Chicken husbandry
- Bee keeping (with the Dean Forest Bee Keepers Association)
- Organic orchard management
- Asset based community development (with the Barnwood Trust who are currently offering free courses)

- Marketing and brand development skills (with local enterprise clubs)
- Conservation skills (with the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers)

Training is available locally from Day's Cottage Orchard Skills Centre^{ix} in skills such as pruning, grafting and coppicing. Two Oakdale Links members have recently helped to plant an orchard for Oaklands, a Camphill Community and consequently were offered reciprocal volunteering to plant trees and training in their organic garden, working with those producing food for the community. We also met members of Transition Forest there, who highlighted events like seed swapping and their Spring Fair.

Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust run their own wildlife clubs and we could ask to become affiliated to them, giving us an umbrella body to apply for Child Protection training with. Alternatively, the Diocese of Gloucester might fulfil this role as two members and two of the Friends of Oakdale Links are leaders of St Mary's Church.

Barnwood Trust have supported Oakdale Links with Small Sparks grants and also have invited us to participate and help to run Asset Based Community Development events. They are currently running a series of free training sessions that we have attended. Our local bee keepers association is affiliated to the Gloucestershire division and the national association and also

provide insurance with membership. Oakdale Links have a nominated member of Dean Forest Bee Keepers Association now as Rachel Reeves is attending the current course and membership was sponsored by the Barnwood Trust. There is going to be a new Asda store if approval is given by the Secretary of State, so we could approach the management team there to see if our members could benefit from their Food Hygiene training.

The Forest of Dean is a very entrepreneurial area and we are sure that many local businesses would be pleased to help us with brand development for honey, wax products and fruit products such as juice and dried apple rings.

In addition, amongst the people that we already know on Oakdale (without the benefit of a community centre of any kind or the resources to do a full survey of residents), we have project managers, electricians, a retired mechanic, web designers, a manager from the foundry, teachers, nurses, artists, engineers, people who grew up on farms or small holdings, allotment holders, people with small animal qualifications and experience...in short, we are a talented and diverse group of people who have a lot to offer and are keen to do so. Some will want to be involved in planning, others will be happy to come and dig and plant trees. We can recruit ourselves, but

also through Job Clubs, the Job Centre and Forest Volunteers Action Forum. Once gathered, we will be able to share skills and pass them on from one generation to the next.

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Figure 8 Brambles by George Henry R.A., 1920. Photo credit: © Royal Academy of Arts, London; Photographer: John Hammond. Reproduced with kind permission.

Features

On a Saturday morning early in March, a group of us gathered to have a look at the Meadow and take stock of the possibilities, the pitfalls and the lay of the land. These ideas for integral features to the Community Orchard are a result of that visit and have come from the Oakdale Links team, our neighbours and their children and our own children. We envision a project that can be tackled in stages and have multiple community uses with key areas in:

- Early years, primary and secondary school children's groups
- Continuing education
- Wildlife conservation
- Local enterprise
- Community building
- Celebration of local history and culture

Sunflowers

We are arranging to go into a local primary school and ask the children for assistance with the additional features of the orchard. Prior to this, six children, Tommy included, came and helped us plant daffodil bulbs on the Oakdale Green and are, we hope, the nucleus of a future gardening and wildlife club called the Oakdale Diggers. Children on Oakdale disperse to different schools during the week due to lack of spaces, so a club to bring them all together with directed, fun activities

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Figure 9 Oakdale Links members in Cambourne Meadow. © Gary Reeves 2014

would be very good. We could have raised beds to grow vegetables and other flowers, making good use of the space that is unfortunately infested with Japanese knotweed without disturbing the earth. Of course, part of our plan is to clear the knotweed before planting of any kind but we do not want to aid its spread. Raised beds are ideal for children, could provide a perch to sit on and would mean we could use the area without the risk.

Tree of Life

As a way to give back to those who decide to pledge money or time to the project, we could have a carved tree with leaves on for sponsoring businesses to add their name to, for people to make dedications so that they can contribute to the orchard, name or initials in memory of a loved-one, as a wedding gift, or to celebrate a birth. We will involve schoolchildren in the design.

Areas retained for walking and exercising dogs

We would like to consult with local householders in Lakeside Gardens in particular, with the help of Lydney Recreation Trust, to see what they think of our ideas. We observed the

site whilst conducting a survey and noticed that most dog walkers were sticking to a narrow stretch of land near Lakeside Gardens. If the orchard was fenced within the meadow, leaving room on the Lakeside Gardens side for dog walkers and room on the other for the new footpath proposed by Lydney Town Council and Recreation Trust, the meadow could be used in a variety of ways. Currently, local residents with children do not allow their children to roam freely on the meadow because of the amount of dog waste that is not picked up on the site. We would suggest therefore pro-active management of this issue in collaboration with the FoDDC Street Wardens and a ban of dogs inside the orchard fencing, allowing parents of young children to relax whilst enjoying the space more easily.

Pergola with grape vines

Grapes have been grown in this area since Roman times. Roman remains were found during archaeological excavations on the Oakdale site before development and it was also the Romans who imported the first apple and pear trees to this country. A pergola with grape vines in an orchard with seating would be an ideal place to display some local history and provide semi-shade for shelter before trees reach full height. If it were situated next to the amphitheatre, which is based on the shape of the amphitheatre at Caerleon, just along the Severn Estuary near Newport, it would be a great place to teach children some of their heritage.

<http://www.imageplaygrounds.com/playground-equipment/arbours/pergola-seating.html>

Inter-cropping

To make the best use of the land, we could have an inter-crop between the trees. This could be lavender, which would create a very pleasant garden-like space, while being available for cropping and selling as a secondary product. This would also work well for making honey and attract honey bees to the orchard.

Willow maze

An Oakdale Links committee member, suggested planting a willow maze or willow structure. Due to the nearby brook and the sewer, which has a couple of man holes on the site, we have to make sure that these are in the right place, far enough away not to be a problem as willow is an invasive species. However, a willow archway at the Boating Lake entrance on the western side of the orchard has great potential, especially for involving children in its creation.

Natural amphitheatre

There is huge potential for a traditional orchard bordering on an area abundant in wildlife, including wildfowl on the Boating Lake, to be used in teaching the younger generation. Such a space could also be used for training workshops in pruning, juicing apples etc and for performance art on Apple Days and other community activities such as sports days. The

site is flat, so any raised areas would have to be created. To create swathes of wildflowers, we would scrape off turf and topsoil with a mini digger. This could provide enough material for creating a natural, turfed amphitheatre. Alternatively, logs can be used as seating, as shown in the link below.

<http://www.imageplaygrounds.com/playground-design/natural-amphitheatre.html>

Musical playground equipment



Figure 10 Drum circle at Cannock Chase sculpture trail © Rachel Reeves 2011

This idea comes from visits to woodland near Cannock in the West Midlands, managed as an interactive sculpture park by the Forestry Commission. One artist created a giant set of drums out of plastic beer kegs, using branches as drum sticks. On a smaller scale, this could add interest, particularly whilst fruit trees are being established. Outdoor Musical Play supply equipment on a ‘Try before you buy’ basis, with 100% of the cost redeemable if you decide to carry on and purchase the equipment.

<http://www.imageplaygrounds.com/playground-equipment/musical>

Features to celebrate local Forest poets and artists

There is a strong tradition of talented musicians, poets and artists who have been inspired by the natural beauty of the Forest of Dean. They could be celebrated in sculpture or in the form of carved benches, with lines from poems on them. Children could gain from learning about their local culture in this way and be involved in performance arts and storytelling. A story telling circle is incorporated in the long-term vision for the orchard and the amphitheatre would be a delightful venue for children and adults alike.

Water and electricity supply

For irrigation, there is a stream next to the site that we could use in the first stages of the project with a bucket and rope. If we had a shed for storage of tools and equipment, we could run guttering along the roof and harvest rainwater. This does not circumvent the need for fresh running water for the gardening club children, school groups and working parties however.

Although it is an important consideration and we have tried to share our vision for the future development of the project, we feel that new facilities should be undertaken by the Town Council, District Council and County Council. If we allow space for a facility in the design and plan access for a sewer to Lakeside Gardens, we have left the way forward for the local

authorities to plan and build them. For community events and school visits in the mean time, we could hire a Portaloo. For the gardening club, we can make sure that enough volunteers (three) are on hand to escort a child home to Oakdale if necessary. If we follow Child Protection Guidelines, this should really be two volunteers or one volunteer and two or more children. We would have to then limit the club to houses on Oakdale or very near by. This poses difficulties and we would much rather be able to wash hands after garden on site, but we are used to working with the resources we have to hand.

There is limited scope for solar power, but this could be investigated as a source of electricity – for example for a CCTV camera.

Timeframe and volunteer input

	Start	Finish	Volunteers' time	Child/ youth involvement
Development of project proposal	February 2014	March 25 th 2014	200 hours	Yes
Unlocking sources of match funding including pledges of volunteer hours	February 2014	March 25 th 2014	50 hours	No
Submission of Orchard Windfall grant application	February 2014	On or before March 31 st deadline	1 hour	No
Professional landscape architect design work	February 2014	May 2014	3 hours	No
Applying to FoDDC to limit area available for exercising dogs	April 2014	Not known	2 hours	No
Submit design to planners for change of use with performance space	Once Rec. Trust approval is given		2 hours	No
Risk assessments	In planning stage		10 hours	No

Japanese Knotweed clearance (removing rhizomes, drying and burning on site)			30 hours	No
Putting in fencing, including around bee hives and chicken shed	May 2014	June 2014	20 hours	Yes
Putting up Herras fencing to secure area whilst using digger	June 2014	July 2014	2 hours	No
Mini digger to take off existing turf and topsoil along wildflower areas and use it to create amphitheatre	July 2014	July 2014	24 hours	No
Sowing wildflower seed after consultation with environmental groups	July 2014	July 2014	10 hours	Yes
Planning and ordering trees from a nursery with local/ native stock	April 2014	May 2014	4 hours	Yes
Gate design out to	April 2014		5 hours	Yes – include ideas

tender				from local school children
Sculpture design brief	April 2014		5 hours	No
Putting up signage to prevent dog owners taking dogs into orchard	October 2014	November 2014	2 hours	Yes
Preparation of planting areas with soil conditioner or topsoil	September 2014	November 2014	60 hours	Yes
Planting trees in National Tree Week	29 th November 2014	7 th December 2014	60 hours	Yes
Installing bee hives with lockable gate and fencing	2015		24 hours	Yes
Building bat, bird and insect boxes with children	2015		10 hours	Yes
Installing chicken shed/ run and purchasing chickens	2015		10 hours	Yes

Estimate of volunteer hours to set up the project: **534 hours**

Volunteers will be recruited through publicity on the Oakdale Links website, fliers, posters through the town, with the aid of Forest Volunteer Action Forum and BBC Radio Gloucestershire, who recorded interviews with Oakdale Links members about the Oakdale Green Corridor Project in 2013. A nearby community education hub, the TLC Welcome Project has offered to help recruit volunteers and we have a reciprocal offer from working with the Camphill Community at Oaklands near Blakeney.

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Figure 4 Oakdale Community Day Poetry Competition winners with Deputy Mayor Brian Thomas

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Figure 11 Children playing on the Green, Bledisloe Way, Oakdale
© Oakdale Links 2013

Tree species, rootstock and varieties



Figure 12 Planting trees with Oaklands and Transition Forest
© Oakdale Links 2014

The Orchard Windfall grant has some recommendations about the type of trees that can be planted. It does not prohibit planting other varieties but suggests getting expert local advice

for regional and heritage varieties. They suggest planting the right proportion of crab apples to aid pollination.

As we want to manage the orchard without the use of chemical pesticides, we would want to choose varieties that have strong disease resistance and do not easily succumb to canker.

As there are two mature and productive apple trees nearby on land just north of the foundry, we contacted the People's Trust for Endangered Species, who have offered to identify the apples for us from samples and come and show us how to graft from those trees to create new ones and preserve the variety. They also tried to ascertain if there was an orchard there historically, but it was not clear from records. We asked the National Archives for a tithe map from the 1800's showing land use, but it isn't currently possible for them to copy it.

Highlighted trees are included in our plan, which is a starting point for discussion rather than a final list.

Recommended apple trees

Charles Ross

Fiesta

Adam's Pearmain

Early Windsor

Bramley

Saturn

Discovery

Bountiful

Falstaff

Greensleeves

Katy

Egremont Russet

Red Devil

Spartan

James Grieve

Recommended pear trees

Conference

Beth

Onward

Concorde

Shipover

Invincible

Rootstock

The apple trees will be grafted onto rootstock and the type of rootstock affects the height and vigour of the plant. If we are planting a community orchard, accessible to children as well as adults, including some different height trees would be beneficial. Dwarf rootstock cannot be used with this grant however.

Name of rootstock: MM106 (semi-dwarfing)

Suitable for: half standards

Start fruiting: After three or four years

Ultimate height: 3-4m (10-13ft) x 4m (13ft)

Growing conditions: Tolerant of a range of soils including grassed orchards and poor soils. The most widely used rootstock; unsuitable for small spaces.

Staking: 5 years; longer in exposed locations

Spacing: 3.6 (12ft) with 4.5m (15ft) between the rows

Name of rootstock: MM111 (vigorous)

Suitable for: standards and half standards

Start fruiting: After four or five years

Ultimate height: 4-4.5 (13-15ft) x 4.5 (15ft) less on light soils

Growing conditions: Suitable for most soils including orchards in grass and on poor soils

Staking: Staking is not necessary if planted as a one year old, but those planted as 2-3 year old trees need staking for the first 3 years

Spacing: 4.5m (15ft) apart with 6m (20ft) between rows

Name of rootstock: M25 (very vigorous)

Suitable for: Standards

Start fruiting: After five or six years

Ultimate height: +4.5 (15ft) x 6m (20ft)

Growing conditions: Most soils including orchards in grass and on poor soils. They are too vigorous for most gardens except where the soil is poor

Staking: Staking is not necessary if planted as a one year old but those planted as two- or three-year-old trees need staking for the first 3 years

Spacing: 6m (20ft)

Name of rootstock: Quince A (semi-vigorous)

Suitable for: Half-standard

Start fruiting: After four years

Ultimate height: 3-4.5m (10-15ft)

Growing conditions: Most medium to heavy fertile soils

Staking: Retain for five years

Spacing: 3-4.5m (10-15ft)

We suggest using M106 for apples and Quince A for pears and G5 (semi-dwarfing) for the cherries. This should produce trees with a final height and width of between 3m and 5m.

Varieties

These varieties and position in the orchard have been chosen to ensure that:

- The trees will be pollinated if not self-fertile by pollination partner trees
- They are in the main disease resistant and easy to manage organically
- There are twelve interesting historical trees, both pears and apples including the oldest, Black Worcester, which dates back to the 16th century
- There is one apple (Ashmead's Kernal) and one pear (Blakeney Red Perry) originating from Gloucestershire
- The Ashmead's Kernal is the tallest tree and the centrepiece under which the sculpture of a local poet is situated
- Cooking, eating, juicing of fruit is all possible
- There is a range across the growing season from early through to very late
- There are some varieties especially good for making fruit juice
- There are some varieties from those recommended by the Orchard Windfall grant information
- There are some varieties that have won a Royal Horticultural Society award.
- There are two cherries, six pear trees and 19 apple trees

Apple	Pear	Cherry	Name	Height
Early season				
	P11		Beth	4m
	P12		Moonglow	
A5			Katy	4m
A6			Discovery (AGM)	4m
A21			Beauty of Bath	4m
A22			Rosette	4m

Apple	Pear	Cherry	Name	Height
Mid season				
A3			Greensleeves	4m
A4			Charles Ross	4m
A20			James Grieve (AGM)	4m
A13			Bardsey	4m
A3			Greensleeves	4m
A4			Charles Ross	4m
A14			Red Windsor	4m
A16			Saturn	4m
A17			Peasgood Nonsuch	4m
A24			Lord Lambourne	4m
	P1		Onward	
	P2		Invincible	
		C15	Merton Glory	
		C23	Mumford Black	
Late season				
A7			Nonpareil	4m
A8			Egremont Russet	4m
A19			Spartan	4m
A20			Annie Elizabeth	4m
A15			Adam's Pearmain	4m
A26			Beauty of Bath	4m
A27			Ashmead's Kernal (Nov, Dec)	5m
	P9		Black Worcester	
	P10		Blakeney Red Perry	

Table 2: Planting scheme and tree variety

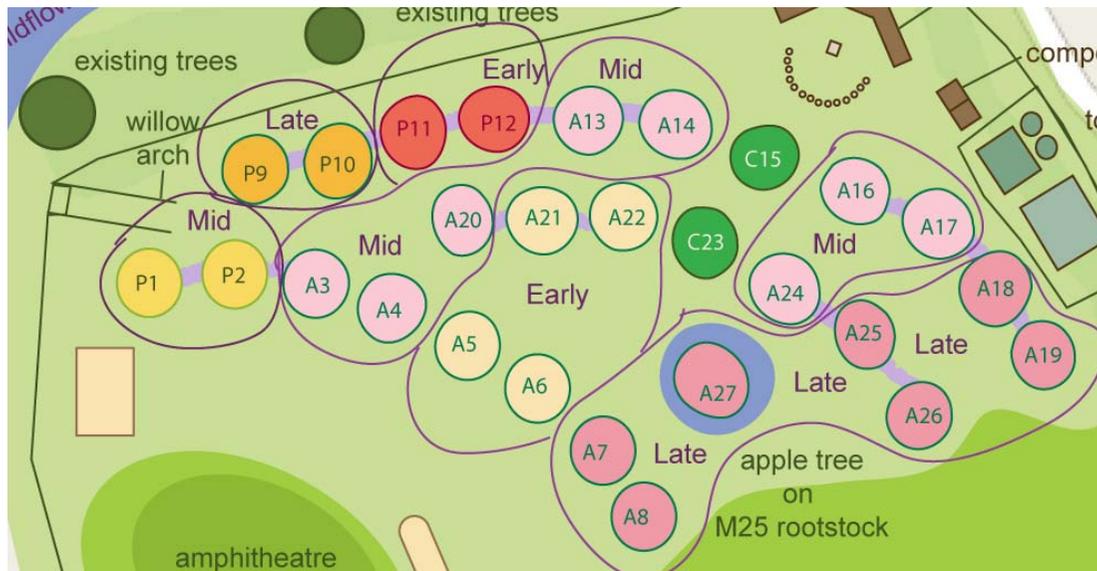


Figure 13: Layout of tree variety with blossom seasons P=Pear; A=Apple; C=Cherry

Heritage Trees of note:

Blakeney Red Perry

- Named after Blakeney Village in the Forest of Dean
- Known to have existed since 1600
- Some trees are over 300 years old
- Considered one of the best perry varieties

Ashmead's Kernal

Possibly originating from the gardening skills of William Ashmead from Gloucester, who died in 1782 (Gloucestershire Orchard Group)

Maintenance

Oakdale Links would undertake to co-ordinate the maintenance of the Orchard, with inclusivity at the forefront and hopefully in partnership with other groups such as the Brandon Trust and Mind. This would then become a joint community venture, building trust between neighbours and breaking down barriers to full participation in community events.

Maintenance includes:

- Working parties to control brambles
- Mowing between trees
- Managing the wildflower areas as you would a meadow
- Pruning trees yearly
- Mulching
- Continually monitoring for Japanese knotweed and taking appropriate action with Lydney Recreation Trust
- Maintaining fencing and signage
- Picking up windfalls
- Organising a rota of volunteers to look after chickens and collect eggs
- Organising training days in tree pruning
- Investing in community activities and producing an annual program of events
- Pressing apples for fruit juice several weekends a year

- Weeding around base of trees on semi-dwarf stock (if planted)
- Maintaining funding and applying for grants



Figure 14 Apple tree by Oakdale in need of pruning © Oakdale Links 2014

Grant funding

The Tree Council

Website: <http://www.treecouncil.org.uk/grants/orchard-windfalls>

Grant available: £700 for trees and tree guards

Main terms and conditions:

- Youth involvement (children under age 16 to be actively involved)
- Match funding (can be through volunteer hours) to 25%

The Woodland Trust

- <http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/in-your-community/>
- http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/mediafile/100096051/tree_pack_application_guidance.pdf

The Woodland Trust provide free hedgerow trees for schools and communities in three different size packs, going up to 120m. This could be used to create an edible (for wildlife) hedge along one boundary, or enclose a smaller area, e.g. the chicken run, shed and compost area. Closing date: 4th September 2014. Delivery of trees: November. “We’d like to know how relevant the 100-year anniversary of World War 1 was to your decision to apply for a 2014 tree pack.”

Heritage Lottery Fund

We could approach the Heritage Lottery Fund for the creation of a sculpture, carved benches with extracts from poems and the project in general as we are creating a venue for living history and art. <http://www.hlf.org.uk/Pages/Home.aspx>

Lydney Town Council and Lydney Recreation Trust

Sewer works on the land and further along Recreation Trust land are to be offset with money from the developers to put in a new footpath and plant trees. Our suggestion is to plant fruit trees and to plant some of them in the new orchard, releasing match funding.

Western Power Distribution

Western Power Distribution has worked with TCV Gloucestershire to plant trees. They have a community and environmental focus and could contribute to wild flower seed, trees and any work to enhance wildlife habitat. <http://www.westernpower.co.uk/Social-Responsibility/Environment/Keen-to-be-Green.aspx>

Community Spaces

Organised by Groundwork on behalf of the Big Lottery fund. <http://www.community-spaces.org.uk/>

Big Lottery

Reaching Communities Fund

Reaching Communities Fund Building Strand

Asda Foundation

Asda Foundation projects have to come from members of the community who work at Asda stores, so the initial stages of the project and match funding are not going to be aided by grants from this source. If an Asda store is built, there will be further opportunities to gain funding

The Co-op

Oakdale Links has a bank account with the Co-op, which might aid grant applications. The Co-op has a comprehensive environmental remit.

O2

The Lydney Community Centre recently received funding from O2 for a bulb planting project.

Gloucestershire County Council

External grant funding

Community Cashback Initiative

Purpose: The Community Cashback initiative gives support for tenant groups

who want to help improve their area by being paid for managing local services

that the landlord would usually buy in. This could include

- cutting grass
- cleaning and looking after shared spaces
- repairs of empty properties, etc.

By providing the service cheaper, any savings made by the landlord are kept by the tenants to spend on local improvements or community benefits. The Starter grants can be used to pay for essential items to get the Community Cashback scheme set up. This may include

- advice for the group
- training on things like managing money and contracts
- set-up costs for the tenant group in order to run the agreement
- visits to other groups and projects
- equipment and materials for the tenant group.

Who can apply: Tenant groups and Landlords.

Level of Funding: Up to £3,000.

Deadline: Applications can be submitted at any time.

More information:

<http://www.nftmo.com/cashback/index.html>

Galaxy Hot Chocolate Fund

Purpose: Food manufacturer, Mars has announced that they are looking to

help small, local community based projects and community minded people

through the GALAXY Hot Chocolate Fund. From the 4th November 2013 for

16 weeks they are seeking to donate eighty £300 awards to help people or groups with their community programmes.

Who can apply: The Fund is open to individuals aged 18 or over who are resident, and organisations and clubs

Level of Funding: £300. Mars will make 5 awards every week
Deadline: 11.59pm on Sunday 23 February 2014.
More information: <http://www.marismilk.com/fund/register>

Gloucestershire Community Foundation

Purpose: Support for charities and charitable groups in Gloucestershire with the aim of helping to overcome disadvantage. The Foundation has a regular programme of grant giving: Main and Sustainability Grants, Comic/Sport relief and Freemasons.

Who can apply: Charities, Social Enterprises or groups constituted for charitable purposes.

Level of Funding: Varies from £1,000 to £10,000.
Deadline:
- Main Grants: 6 June and 3 October 2014

- Comic / Sport relief: 3 October 2014
- Freemasons: 14 March and 19 September 2014

More information:

<http://www.gloucestershirecommunityfoundation.co.uk/pages/home.htm> Gail
Mattocks (Grants Development Manager): gail.mattocks@edf-energy.com,
Tel: 01452 656386.

South West & Esmee Fairbairn Small Grants

Purpose: The main focus of the programme is on organisations supporting any 'marginalised' group including people with mental health issues, physical disabilities, learning disabilities, on low incomes or from BME communities.

Who can apply: Small organisations with an annual income of less than £15,000 per annum who are working in the rural areas, coastal and market towns.

Funding: Up to £1,000

Deadline: For more information please contact South West Foundation on 01275 333666 or info@southwestfoundation.org.uk.

Further Information: For more information please contact South West Foundation on 01761 471104 or info@southwestfoundation.org.uk and <http://www.the-foundation.org.uk/grant-programmes/>

The Truemark Trust

Purpose: The Trust makes donations to mostly small local charities dealing with all kinds of disadvantage, with preference to neighbourhood-based community projects and for innovatory work with less popular groups.

Who can apply: Small charities and voluntary organisations.
External Funding Opportunities – Issue 128 – 10 February 2014
23

Funding: In 2010, the Trust made 126 grants ranging from £1,000 to £3,500.

Deadline: Applications can be made at any time; the Trustees meet quarterly.

Further Information: <http://opencharities.org/charities/265855>.
The Trust

does not have a website but for more information contact Mrs Clare Pegden,
PO Box 2, Liss, Hampshire, GU33 6YP. Tel: 01730 894120.

Community Fund

Purpose: The Community Fund awards grants to community, voluntary, or self-help groups to run projects that meet the following criteria:

- address a community issue
- provide a good long-term benefit to the community
- support co-operative values and principles
- ideally be innovative in its approach

Who can apply: Community, voluntary, or self-help group.

Level of Funding: Between £100 and £2,000.

Deadline: Applications can be made at any time.

<http://www.co-operative.coop/membership/local-communities/community-fund/>

Online advice and information

Natural England

- [Community Orchards: How-to guide](#)
- [Potential funding for Community Green Spaces](#)
- [Community Orchards a case study](#)

DEFRA

- [Study of orchard fruit 2009](#)
- [Study of orchard fruit 2012](#)

Gloucestershire Rural Communities Council

- [Food for Thought](#)

Community Food and Health (Scotland)

- [Community Garden Starter Pack](#)
- [Start up Community Orchards and Food Gardens](#)
- [A Share in the Harvest](#)
- [Good Practise Guide for Community Food Initiatives](#)

Swansea's Food Connections

- [Guide to Community Food Activities](#)

People's Trust for Endangered Species

- [Survey of traditional orchards on Google Maps](#). There is a surprising gap in orchards in Lydney and the

surrounding area, as there are orchards along all the rest of the northern bank of the Severn, especially around Blakeney.

- [People's Trust for Endangered Species surveys](#)

Royal Horticultural Society

- [Pollination groups for apple trees](#)

Gloucestershire Orchard Trust

- www.gloucestershireorchardtrust.org.uk

Federation of City Farms and Gardens

- <http://www.farmgarden.org.uk/>

Other Community Orchards in the Forest of Dean

- Clearwell Community Orchard at Tudor Farmhouse Hotel
www.tudorfarmhousehotel.co.uk
- Berry Hill Community Orchard: Westdean Parish Council (Neighbourhood Development Plan) and the Forestry Commission are developing a community orchard near Nine Wells in Berry Hill.
Councillor Tim Gwilliam (timgwilliam@yahoo.co.uk)

Societies

- FW Harvey Society <http://www.fwharveysociety.co.uk>
- Ivor Gurney Society <http://www.ivorgurney.org.uk/>
- Herbert Howells Society
<http://herberthowellssociety.weebly.com/>
- Friends of Dymock Poets
<http://www.dymockpoets.org.uk/index.html> (The Dymock Poets were Lascelles Abercrombie, Rupert Brooke, John Drinkwater, Robert Frost, Wilfrid Gibson and Edward Thomas.)

Education

- [Early Years Outdoor Learning – a toolkit for developing Early Years outdoor provision](#)
- <http://www.letthechildrenplay.net/2011/01/seating-in-preschool-outdoor.html>

Outdoor musical play

- Acoustic Arts
http://www.acousticarts.org.uk/sound_sculpture.php
<http://vimeo.com/album/2063986/video/48653116>

Amphitheatre

- Play Force <http://www.playforce.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/PPER008-A-NA-Spec.pdf>

- Pendlewood http://www.pendlewood.com/childrens-playground-equipment/learning-outside-the-classroom/amphitheatres-and-stages_14299.html
- Cookson-McNally <http://www.cookson-mcnally.co.uk/ravamph.htm>
- <http://friendsofsdarch.photoshelter.com/image/I0000u7HJSHO5RxE>

Poppy seeds

- Project to support Northlew
http://www.suttons.co.uk/Gardening/Flower+Seeds/Popular+Flower+Seeds/Poppy+Seeds/Poppy+Seeds++++The+WW1+Northlew+Poppy_128721.htm
- The 2014 Real Poppy Campaign
<http://realpoppy.co.uk/>
- B and Q (official retail partners to the Royal British Legion)
http://www.diy.com/diy/jsp/content/marketing/poppy_campaign/index.jsp?noCookies=false
- The Royal British Legion
<http://counties.britishlegion.org.uk/counties/greater-london/remembrance-in-london/wwi-poppy-seed-campaign>

Thank you

We would like to thank the following organisations for kind permission to reproduce photographs of paintings from their collections:

The Fergusson Gallery, Perth, Scotland:

Page 2: Summer 1914 by Margaret Morris © The Fergusson Gallery

The National Portrait Gallery: Asset reference number: x151368 Charles Bathurst, 1st Viscount Bledisloe; Alina Kate Elaine (née Jenkins), Viscountess Bledisloe © National Portrait Gallery, London. Artist: Bassano Ltd

The Royal Academy of Arts: Brambles by George Henry, R.A. (1920). Diploma Work given by George Henry, R.A. in 1921. Oil on canvas. 76.20 x 76.20 cm. Photo credit: © Royal Academy of Arts, London; Photographer: John Hammond

We would like to thank the Friends of Oakdale Links, Gloucestershire County Archives, Barnwood Trust, FoDDC Community Engagement Officer Kate Wyatt, Bromford Homes, Kate Newell and Pam Howells (Severnbanks School) for their ongoing support of Oakdale Links and help in writing this report.

We would also like to thank Councillor Derek Biddle for his time, thoughts and ideas, and Dave Street and Rosie Kelsall (Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust) for walking round the site with us and all those in our town who have shown concern and consideration for the residents of Oakdale.



Figure 15 Strawberries by Rachel Reeves © 2000

Bibliography

Common Ground

Apple Source Book by Sue Clifford and Angela King with Philippa Davenport. Hodder and Stoughton 2007, London ISBN 978 0 340 95189 7

The Community Orchard Handbook by Common Ground. Hodder and Stoughton 2007, London ISBN 1 870364 26 0

Historic Hansard

Historic verbatim debates from the House of Commons are archived online and accessible to the public at <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/>

Gloucestershire County Archives

Report of the conference of agriculture 1904 by Charles Bathurst and John C. Medd published by Gloucester Education Committee; Chance and Bland (Gloucester) (finding ref. N16.29GS)

Lecture notes from a lecture supported by and dedicated to Earl Bathurst on education of farmers by Charles Daubeny (finding ref. (Hyett) C21.4GS) 1844

Typescript copy of Charity Commissioners' order approving bye-laws for Bathurst Park and Recreation Ground, Lydney (1893) (Finding ref. D5627/7/2)

Diversion of footpaths, Lydney Recreation Ground (1951) (Finding ref. DA28/132/9)

Lydney Recreation Trust accounts and related papers, including plan of revised layout of recreation ground (1967-1971) (Finding ref. D5627/1/3)

Lloyd George succeeded Askwith (sic) as P.M. Account of Lloyd George's career. Government dealings with Greece. Daughter Geraldine's brother-in-law Charles Bathurst to be speaker for Lord Devonport's Charles Bathurst to be speaker for Lord Devonport's department dealing with Food provision in House of Commons. 13.12.1916 (Finding ref. D37/1/137)

Speech to the Central Landowner's Association by Charles Bathurst (1919) (Finding ref. VA3.28GS)

To avoid national starvation by Charles Bathurst (1915?)
(Finding ref. VA3.27GS)

Once they lived in Gloucestershire A Dymock Poets Anthology by Linda Hart, Green Branch Press, Gloucestershire (1995), ISBN 0 952603101

The Story of the Agriculture Club by R. Henry Rew with a Foreword by the Lord Bledisloe K.B.E., page 18. P.S. King and Son, London, 1922. Copy available online from Cornell University Library

The Apple: King of Fruits. Practical Facts and Suggestions for its Culture by George Townsend Powell (1843-1927) from an old catalogue, Boston, New York, Munson-Whitaker Co., 1919?

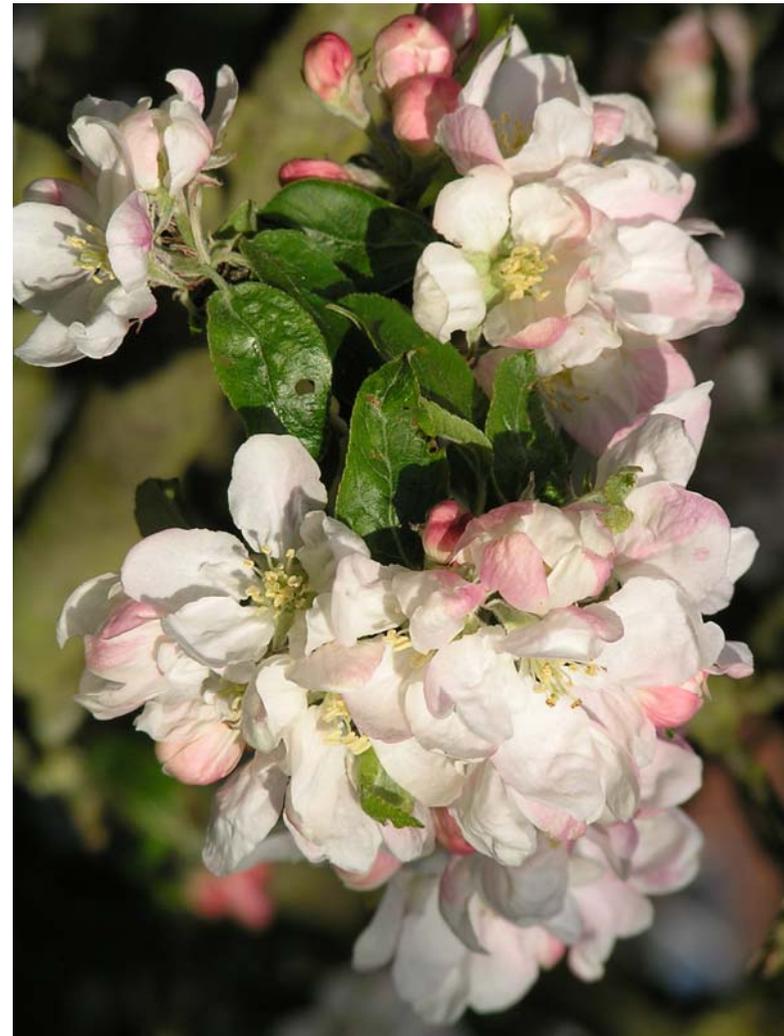


Figure 16 Apple Blossom by Rachel Reeves © 2000

Appendix 1 Sample Policies

[Child and Vulnerable Persons Protection Policy](#) from the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens. (We could become members of this organisation.) This is a .pdf document available to download free online.

[Model Health and Safety Policy](#) from the Health and Safety Executive available to download free online. (NB Oakdale Links already has a Health and Safety Policy, a Child Protection Policy, an Environmental Policy and an Equality and Diversity Policy that we could review and adapt for the Community Orchard.)

Sample Tenancy Agreement based on one by **Common Ground** (from the Community Orchards Handbook). NB This is for illustrative purposes only.

For the land known as Lydney Community Orchard on Cambourne Meadow, Lydney

1. Particulars:

Date: _____

The Landlord: Lydney Recreation Trust
Lydney Town Council Chambers
Claremont House
High Street
Lydney
Gloucestershire GL15 5DX

The Tenant: Friends of Lydney Community Orchard
Address

The Holding: The land known as Lydney Community Orchard shown for identification purposes on the attached plan

Rent: A peppercorn e.g. apples on Apple Day (21st October)

Term: 99 years

Permitted purpose: A Community Orchard for the benefit of local people, visitors and wild life celebrating local art, history and culture

2. Landlord's Obligations:

The Landlord will continue to meet its statutory obligations as site owner under relevant legislation and will provide a duty of care and wishes to inform the tenant that:

- a. Ownership of the site remains in the hands of the Landlord.
- b. Ownership of any fixtures on the site will transfer to the Landlord at the end of c. The lease upon satisfactory inspection and agreement in writing from the Landlord;
- d. The Landlord will maintain all boundaries and fences in its ownership;
- e. The Landlord will maintain footpaths as Rights of Way;
- f. The Landlord will consult with the Tenant before so doing and will agree appropriate timings for the work that recognise the tenant's plans and schedules;
- g. The Landlord will not take vehicles onto the land without prior permission from the Tenant;
- h. The Landlord will reimburse the Tenant for the costs of Public Liability and Personal Accident Insurance through a grant on receipt of an invoice.

3. Tenant's Obligations:

In addition to any legal, health and safety, duty of care and other legislative requirements of the operations of the Community Orchard, the Tenant shall;

- a. Provide a copy of their Constitution and a copy of any subsequently amended Constitution within thirty (30) days of such amendments;
- b. Take out Public Liability Insurance and Personal Accident Insurance and provide evidence of certificates of insurance to the Landlord;
- c. Manage the land using their best endeavours and in accordance with the Community Orchard Management Plan at no additional cost to the Landlord except where items are maintained or agreed to be maintained by the Landlord;
- d. Keep the said land and any fixtures and fittings there, whether above or below ground, in good condition and to use the said land hereby leased for the purposes of a Community Orchard only;
- e. Allow the Landlord's staff, agents, or contractors and other statutory agencies access to the site to carry out emergency or specific works as may be agreed between two parties and at agreed times;
- f. Inform the Landlord in writing at the tenant's earliest convenience of any damage, wilful or accidental, to the site, its fixtures or its boundaries;

- g. Refrain from the use of motorised or powered tools other than strimmers, refrain from applying chemicals (including pesticides, herbicides, fertiliser) of any kind unless suitably qualified to do so and then only using chemicals or motorised or powered tools (other than the strimmers) whilst wearing the correct protective equipment, using the equipment correctly and safely in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations and being adequately covered by the relevant insurance;
- h. Providing appropriate adult supervision when young people or youth groups are performing work in the Community Orchard. Participants under 18 years of age must be accompanied by adults when engaged in such activities;
- i. Ensure that work is only carried out on site in daylight hours;
- j. Ensure that any proceeds received from the sale of any part of the whole orchard crop including fruit and nuts and lavender shall be invested back into the Community Orchard;
- k. Ensure that no monies shall be collected for personal gain from the Community Orchard.

4. Arbitration

Any dispute arising from or in connection with this agreement shall be submitted to an arbiter jointly agreed for arbitration purposes and that this and any subsequent arbitration shall be conducted in accordance with statute in effect at the time of applying for arbitration. The arbitral award is final and binding upon both parties.

5. Assignment and Sub-Letting:

The Tenant agrees that the rights under this agreement are not assignable either in whole or in part, and that the right of occupancy of this site may not be granted by the Tenant to any other person without the prior written consent of the Landlord.

6. Notices:

All notices to the parties required by this agreement shall be delivered by hand or by first class post to the addresses listed in the Particulars in article 1 above.

7. Law:

All issues relating to this project shall be governed by and construed according to the law of England and Wales. Each party shall bear its own legal and other fees in the preparation and submission of this agreement and from any formal agreement on subsequent renewal of this agreement.

8. Signed by and for:

The Landlord.....

Designation of signatory.....

Date.....

The Tenant: Friends of Lydney Community Orchard (3 officers):

Signed.....Designation.....

Signed.....Designation.....

Signed.....Designation.....

Appendix 2

Extracts from *The History of the Agricultural Club 1918-1921*

Foreword by Viscount Bledisloe, Lydney Park, 1922, pages xiii to ix.

On many a chill winter's evening, illuminated and warmed by two great fire-places, and the often unvarnished rhetoric and scathing sallies of bucolic operators of very varying political views and social experience, the owner of many broad acres, the tenant farmer of wide agricultural experience and renown, and the industrious and independent farm worker, living in and loving (as only an English farm worker can), his humble, creeper-clad cottage home, could be seen filling their pipes from the same tobacco pouch and enjoying each other's company in an unaffectedly congenial atmosphere. To me, as to many others, these monthly meetings were a monthly tonic and a valuable education. All alike were *ascripti glebæ* and felt that inspiration which present or past contact with our *alma mater*, the English country-side so potently evokes in the breasts of her own children. If the great defects of modern rural Britain are (as indeed they are) the prevalence of suspicion between classes and creeds, and a general lack of vocal expression of thought and aspiration, no one could suggest that such defects vitiated the atmosphere of the Agriculture Club. All listened with respect and generally with sympathy, if not agreement, to conventional speeches, free from all conventional veneer and artificiality, which they felt to be candid and sincere, and prompted by the conviction that their translation into everyday experience would redound to the happiness, contentment and prosperity of the whole village community. Never have I heard the voice of the son of the soil ring truer than at these historic gatherings. The Press was unrepresented. The farmer, the land-owner, and the worker alike spoke their true minds to each other fearlessly and honestly. Notably so the worker. What we always listened to was the authentic voice of rural labour, tinged oftentimes with a touch of true poetic sentiment which carried its earnest appeal straight to the heart of its audience.

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- ⁱ The Story of the Agriculture Club by R. Henry Rew with a Foreword by the Lord Bledisloe K.B.E., page 18. P.S. King and Son, London, 1922. Copy available online from Cornell University Library
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- ^{iv} Hansard HC Deb 08 February 1917 vol 90 cc109-233
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