

A Community Orchard for Croscombe

November 2021

1. SurveyMonkey Responses

	Raw numbers	%
Yes	39	67%
No	19	33%
<i>Total</i>	<i>58</i>	<i>100%</i>

Nine (16%) of those who voted 'yes', like the idea in principle of an orchard, but not at the proposed location.

51% agree both with the idea in principle of an orchard, and with the proposed location.

2. Paper responses

	Raw numbers	%
Yes	32	64%
No	18	36%
<i>Total</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>100%</i>

Six (12%) of those of those who voted 'yes', like the idea in principle of an orchard, but not at the proposed location.

Grand total (SurveyMonkey and paper versions combined)

	Raw numbers	%
Yes	56	52%
Yes in principle	15	14%
No	37	34%
Grand Total	108	100%

3. Survey comments

3.1 Reasons why not:

The main reason that respondents gave for not wanting an orchard is the proposed location, with the majority of comments citing the steepness of the hill as a barrier to access, particularly for older

residents. Limited parking, distance from the village and unsafe access for pedestrians were also mentioned.

A number of respondents also consider that the land should be kept for its original purpose as a burial ground. Concerns over the orchard upkeep were also mentioned and, linked to this, what will happen to the fruit and who will benefit from the harvest. A few respondents do not consider that an orchard is necessary as the village already has a community area, and does not need another orchard.

Questions were also asked about financing the orchard, and a very small number of respondents feel that the parish council should be focusing their efforts on other matters.

One person has submitted typed comments for what should be considered in a feasibility study.

- Not an ideal location due to steepness of hill, needs to be accessible (14)¹. Particularly for older and disabled residents.

One villager commented that it would be beautiful in Spring but not visible from the village

- No/limited parking (2)
- Too far away (3). The orchard should be in a more central location (by village hall was suggested, or planting trees throughout village)
- Dangerous access for pedestrians
- Should be kept for its original purpose as burial ground; What happens after 70 years; the land is consecrated (11)
- Should be a quiet place and not be invaded by 'party goers with picnics'; Worried about disturbance (2)
- Who will be responsible for upkeep/harvesting/disposal of fruit; Continuation of orchard – how will this work?
(6)
- Who will benefit from the surplus of fruit; Why fruit trees; Choose trees that require less care (eg yews, elm, birches, oaks and holly) (4)

¹ Numbers in brackets refer to the number of times mentioned.

- Not necessary - already have community area next to village hall; not needed as other space in village for recreation; village has enough apple trees; the village doesn't need another orchard (5)
- Finances – who is paying for this? (4)
- There are other things to concentrate on (3) – eg lanes, footpaths and replacing the mirror at the bottom of Fayreway 'before someone gets killed'
- Did Dinder Estate have to be asked? (2)
- The PC are custodians, not owners, of the land. (2)
- Would prefer a wildflower meadow.

Additional comments included:

If it was handled properly from the beginning it wouldn't of stirred up so many feelings but this wasn't done the best way with 70% of a small village being notified through a leaflet drop. There seems to be a very clear idea that a proportion of a village field will be sold to a parishioner for extended use of a bordered property. Please walk before you run.

I would support the planting of interesting trees but not fruit. I feel the field's position away from the village would result in much of the fruit not being harvested. We have fruit trees in the VH field and pound - these are more than enough.

Community projects rarely work long term after the initial enthusiasm wanes. I know from experience that orchards take a deal management and cost. The area was purchased for use as a burial ground and needs to cater for the next 100, 200 years, not just 70.

I support the idea of a community orchard but feel the proposed location suffers from poor access by foot (in terms of both distance and being on a narrow and fairly steep lane that cars travel quite quickly down). I therefore feel the orchard is then unlikely to be well frequented by villagers and not the asset that will meet the mission statement aims that a better positioned orchard could do. I would prefer that the Parish Council defers making a decision, if need be for a number of years, and during that time explores the potential of other locations. I also think that it is very important that the Parish Council include the Village School in the consultation exercise if not already done so.

This was bought and paid for by the village over a number of years so not PC owned. PC are the custodians. Use PC land by the play area. This council needs to spend our precept money better.

How long will this be sustained; Will this fall to the parish council and the precept to maintain?

I was told by a PC member there was spare monies to help pay for this. If there is extra funds then the village precept has been set to high, costing parishioners.

Approach Pat Bridgeman and see if he can incorporate a small orchard.

3.2 *Reasons why:*

A number of respondents (14%) were in favour of planting an orchard in the village but not at the proposed location due to its inaccessibility. Tied to this were a few comments on access and parking, and one comment that the land should be kept for its original purpose. A few respondents also have concerns about the maintenance and management of the orchard.

Respondents who agreed both in principle to the idea of the orchard and also did not consider the proposed location an issue, also cited additional opportunities such as benefits to wildlife, and as a way to help prevent flooding. In contrast to those who feel that the location is inappropriate, there are several respondents who feel that the location is ideal given the view and, for example, the beauty of the blossom in spring.

- Yes, but needs to be accessible/inappropriate location (13)
- Access and parking – will it be through the cemetery car park which is not felt to be appropriate (3)
- Plan for maintenance, management (including what will happen to the fruit) (4)
- Land should be used for its original purpose and burial needs may increase more quickly than anticipated as the population is growing
- Will reduce flooding (2)
- Important to look at biodiversity; plan for the future and provide a haven for wildlife (2)

Comments included:

Good idea, totally wrong location. Too far up a hill ... Also next to graveyard – not good.

Disruption whilst building/planting the orchard e.g lorries delivering the trees, noise from committee, may be an unpleasant experience for visitors to graves.

An orchard could be nice in principal but not on the proposed site. It's a completely inappropriate location. This should remain as a village burial site & not sold to neighbouring properties. How much would this orchard cost & how much to maintain it? There is already a lack of maintenance in the village and I think money would be better spent on that.

A beautiful place with stunning views. This good idea will boost community spirit.

Signage pointing out the need for behaviour which respects the needs of the adjoining special and sensitive site could be provided.

Despite its rural nature wildlife corridors are poor, biodiversity needs to be looked at for the whole area. We need to help the insects

It will benefit the environment and biodiversity, provide a peaceful and beautiful place for meditation and reflection and use a currently underused parish council asset. In the absence of any other identified site, I fully support this initiative.

In principle it has some merit, but it would need very careful consideration as to the sustainability and governance of it as an asset.

It is a lovely idea for the village and there are no negatives associated with this moving forward. Accessibility can be worked around through villagers helping each other out if some are not able to walk up the steep hill. It is also a positive in terms of preventing flooding!

If a few benches were placed in amongst the tree they would provide a shady spot to sit in the summer if visiting the graveyard or just the orchard.

Having looked at the extent of the proposed area to be devoted to trees, I think a quiet and contemplative place within the cemetery would be lovely...provided it is not the thin end of a wedge and a way to restrict the cemetery land as given by the Dinder Estate.

Who's going to be able to see the blossom?

Have benches for people to enjoy the blossom.

4. Overall points

	Raw numbers	%
Yes	59	70%

No	25	30%
Grand Total	84	100%

- Location of orchard is a concern for both those who said 'yes' and those who said 'no'.
- The majority of participants, 70% (n59), responded positively to the survey.
- However, this figure needs to be caveated by the number of people who did not consider that the proposed site is an appropriate location. 19% of respondents agreed in principle to the idea of a community orchard but not at the cemetery.
- There were concerns from both those who agreed in principle, and those who did not, about maintenance and management of the orchard, and what would happen to the fruit from both respondents who said yes, and those who said no.
- The second most commonly cited reason for a negative response was that the land should be kept as burial ground and there were questions about what happens after 70 years. This possibly highlights a misunderstanding by respondents as the 70 years refers to the currently used space for burials, not the field where the orchard would be planted.

5. Working Group Recommendations

- That the Parish Council agree that the OWG proceed to the next phase of orchard development to conduct a feasibility study and to disseminate findings of this feasibility study through a leaflet circulated to all parishioners. This leaflet will also invite people to a meeting which will discuss the study, address concerns, answer further questions and invite people to join the OWG. For those people who are unable to attend the leaflet will also provide details for how people can get involved in the OWG, as well as details of how they could buy a tree.
- That the Parish Council publish the survey findings on the PC website and let parishioners know the information is there.