

**Croscombe Orchard Working Group
Notes for Meeting
6.00pm
Tuesday, 1 April, Bramble Cottage**

DRAFT

	<p>Attending -</p> <p>Jim Scott (to hand over) Mick Rogers Mary Cadogan Louisa McElhatton Helen Lawson Clair Watson Gill Pettitt Louise Tully</p>	
1	<p>Election of Chairman. After discussion it was decided that we would trial a system of a rotating Chairman/woman. This is largely because of pressures of work in the group. The meeting last night was led by Helen Lawson.</p>	LT to create rota
2	<p>Appoint Treasurer Clair Watson has agreed to take up this role.</p>	
3	<p>Layout for increase in Orchard. See attached from Questionnaire. This was decided and submitted by Tony Hargraves before the Questionnaire was distributed. Tony has been asked by email if there is any further information needed, as yet, nothing has become apparent.</p>	
4	<p>Budget for 2025-2026. See tentative budget attached, this will be subject to revision in due course.</p> <p>Let's write to the Parish Clerk to ask about the £50 donation from people called Chris and Rich and request that it should be listed separately so that if we are refused permission to expand the Orchard the money can be returned.</p> <p>Village Market donation. (Having spoken to Candy this donation will be made at the end of the fundraising period. She is asking what it may be</p>	<p>LT</p> <p>LT</p>

	<p>used for and that it shouldn't just go into PC funds. I have explained that our money whilst kept in the PC account is ring-fenced. I have suggested to both Candy and the OWG that perhaps the money could be used for replacing the picnic benches but that would again be subject to everyone's agreement, including that of the PC, but I cannot see why they would object as they need to be replaced).</p>	
5	<p>Terms of Reference review (in anticipation of a PC review later in the year - see below), A discussion on this prior to the PC discussion. Initial observations were that we have requested a development of the plot and await a response. OWG is now an experienced group in terms of running the Orchard and making it financially viable with little complaint. It has shown that the Orchard is very popular in the community with more people wanting to be part of it. 100 people attended the last event at the Orchard.</p>	
6	<p>Schedule of events 2025 - 2026 (CPC have agreed to have 4-6 events a year - maintenance activities are not classed as events). There are fundraising events currently planned, but timings are weather dependent. Obviously this is all subject to DE giving their consent to OWG fundraising events. The OWG awaits this information.</p> <p>1 June - seedling planting. To encourage children to start planting and gardening for themselves. They will be helped to pot a seedling(s) to take home. It's too late in the season for growing to grow from seed for them to enjoy this year. We will sell tea, coffee, soft drinks, snacks. There may be opportunities to sell plants, wildlife-related items or similar.</p> <p>20 July - Orchard event. We will sell tea, coffee, soft drinks, snacks. There may be opportunities to sell plants, wildlife-related items or similar.</p> <p>Late September - October tbd. Harvesting and fruit pressing event. It's too early in the season to set a specific date for this. We will sell tea, coffee, soft drinks, snacks. There may be opportunities to sell plants, wildlife-related items or similar.</p> <p>Other events that we would like to incorporate into our planning but nothing has been firmed up yet -</p> <p>Nature inspired crafting or making for children, leaf printing, cyanotypes, paint a birdbox.</p>	ALL

	<p>A nature search in the Orchard to look at / for evidence of nature, a bit of talk about life cycles, pollinators, different habitats.</p> <p>A nature trail at the Fun Day. We'd need to talk to the Fun Day Committee and they haven't met yet, so it's another provisional.</p> <p>All current planned events are weather dependent so the dates may change or events may need to be cancelled.</p>	
7	<p>Maintenance Plan - attached. The Parish Council questioned why Ph testing of the land had been included on the plan. This was as part of the research conducted that suggested that it may be a good idea. If approval is given for an increased number of trees it may prove useful.</p>	
8	<p>Noticeboard Design (should mention Queen's Green Canopy, potential to involve the school). LT to discuss with Anna Hay as she has good connection with Crocombe School to ask if they would like to be involved in a design event to help produce a poster showing the layout and type of trees in a plan layout. LT to send potential noticeboard to OWG</p> <p>This would be in addition to a wooden sign reading 'Crocombe Community Orchard. Planted for the Queen's Green Canopy. All Welcome.' which would be placed at the entrance to the Orchard.</p> <p>See link and info below.</p>	LT
9	<p>Requesting use of VH and School playing field for events. LT to discuss with Anna Hay as she has good connections with Crocombe School to ask if they would allow the OWG to use their part of the 'VH field/play area' for parts of our events. For example using it in a nature trail, or for hosting picnickers.</p>	LT
10	<p>Water trough at the Cemetery. The history. To understand why we have arrived at the current position with DE we discussed the situation with the water trough at the location. The water trough is owned by DE. When the Orchard was planted it was already leaking. Jim Scott met a plumber on site who investigated what the problem might be. The mechanism is very complicated and almost completely inaccessible so not repairable currently. It was suggested that a useful option may be to close off that mechanism, install a standpipe for use by Farmer Rabbits to provide for his sheep, and use by those visiting the cemetery. The plumber suggested an approximate cost of £300 at the time (last summer).</p>	

	<p>The OWG has only used this water supply on three or four occasions, so use by the group has been minimal.</p> <p>The OWG agreed to meet this £300 cost if they could reach some accommodation with DE about limited water usage if further trees were planted. DE hasn't agreed and so the OWG have left the situation as it stood.</p> <p>DE has in the past suggested that they provide a bowser to the Cemetery but this would need to be filled from somewhere and no solution is immediately apparent. It would be for the CPC to agree to this. LT to take this up with the PC.</p> <p>The trough belongs to DE and so is their responsibility.</p>	
11	<p>Follow on from conversations with DE. Awaiting feedback. The OWG has heard nothing from the PC about his communication with DE and so to a certain extent we are in limbo in terms of events or development until we hear back.</p>	
12	<p>Any Other Business. Louise raised the possibility of no Mow May at the Orchard. Agreed by all. LT to take to PC.</p>	LT

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Proposed Increase in Orchard - Tony's map taken from the Questionnaire.



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Budgets

Croscombe Community Orchard Cashflow at 02/10/2024

Orchard Group Cashflow

Date	Narrative	Amount	Balance
29 Jun 23	Transfer of balance of funds by J Scott	307.49	307.49
30 Nov 23	Deposit of cash balance of funds by J McGhee	38.03	345.52
06 Mar 24	To B Hancock for orchard maintenance	(150.00)	195.52
21 Jun 24	M Rogers - TEN licence	(21.00)	174.52
27 Jun 24	Transfer of balance of funds by J Scott - Midsummer Picnic	247.09	421.61
01 Jul 24	Donation - R Ganesh	500.00	921.61
03 Jul 24	Deposit of cash balance from Midsummer Picnic funds by J McGhee	437.67	1,359.28
01 Oct 24	Transfer of balance of funds (apple pressing) by J Scott	100.00	1,409.28

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OWG Meeting 1/4/25 - Tentative budget.

Agreed 24/25 Annual Budget

Grass mowing £20 x 10	£200
Replacement of benches	
1 st year @ 2 benches	£600
<i>Thereafter £300 annually</i>	
Equipment hire/maintenance	£100
Trees contingency <i>rolling</i>	£100

Awaiting estimates and outcomes:

Trough ? £300 depending on outcome of letter to Dinder cc Debbie

Signage at gate:

Croscombe Community Orchard for the Queen's Green canopy

All welcome

Second Notice board post and £20 printing per poster

Terms of Reference

CROSCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

ORCHARD MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Aims and Objectives

- 1.1. An Orchard Working Group (OWG) was formed to develop proposals for the better use of the parish-owned field below Croscombe Cemetery. Those proposals were successfully developed and implemented. The OWG is now superseded by the Orchard Management Working Group (OMWG) whose terms of reference are here defined with the overall aim of building on the orchard's success as a Croscombe Parish community facility.
- 1.2. With respect to group activities, the terms of reference have three components:
 - a) **Maintenance**

The group will develop a plan, and update it at least annually, for the routine maintenance of the orchard and immediate area. This will include such activities as watering, pruning, grass cutting. This plan will be developed and implemented by the group members. It should not include any activity which could count as a development or event as described below.
 - b) **Development**

The group may from time to time develop and submit a plan for the development and enhancement of the orchard area. This can include, for example, more trees or outdoor furniture. The development plan should be costed and may be included in the Council's autumn budget development process.
 - c) **Events**

The group can from time to time put forward proposals for community events at the orchard. Each proposal must be in the form of an event plan in sufficient detail and with sufficient notice that a risk assessment can be developed with the help of the Parish Clerk. This is essential for the Council to remain within the terms of its insurance.

2. Membership

- 2.1. At least one Parish Councillor appointed by Full Council
- 2.2. Members of the community are encouraged to join and will be appointed by Full Council

3. Quorum

- 3.1. The quorum of the OMWG is three members.

4. Decision-making and Voting

4. The OMWG is non-decision-making, except in respect of routine maintenance. Any development plan or event plan must be presented to the next scheduled council meeting for approval. A given plan may be submitted to Full Council if a simple majority of the group are in favour.

5. Finances

- 5.1. The OMWG must nominate one of its members, at least annually, as treasurer who is responsible for tracking any income and expenditure related to development or events. That person must work with the Clerk/RFO to ensure that such income and expenditure

To be presented to Full Council for approval on 29 August 2023

appears appropriately within the Council's financial records, within the terms defined in the Financial Regulations under which the Council must work, to satisfy its statutory requirement for governance and accountability.

6. **Cemetery**

Since the orchard is adjacent to Croscombe Cemetery, care must be taken at all times of maintenance, development and events, to ensure that the dignity and integrity of the cemetery is safeguarded, and to show appropriate consideration to those who may attend the cemetery to pay respects to loved ones.

7. **Chair**

7.1. The OMWG Chair will be elected at its inaugural meeting and annually thereafter.

8. **Reports**

8.1. Minutes are not required, however notes or a report should be made available as soon as is practicable to the Clerk after each meeting.

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Maintenance Plan

CROSCOMBE COMMUNITY ORCHARD MAINTENANCE PLAN

This plan has been created to ensure the health, productivity and longevity of the trees at Croscombe's Community Orchard.

Soil Testing: Test soil pH and nutrient levels annually. Amend soil with compost or fertilizers as needed.

Mulching: Annually apply mulch around trees to retain moisture, suppress weeds, and regulate soil temperature.

Irrigation: Ensure trees receive adequate water, especially during dry spells.

Pruning and Training - Winter Pruning: Prune deciduous trees during dormancy to remove dead or diseased wood and shape the canopy. - **Summer Pruning:** Light pruning in summer to manage growth and improve air circulation. Engage the Croscombe community by organising events to learn and educate about pruning trees.

Training Young Trees: Use stakes or ties to guide young trees into a strong structure.

Pest and Disease Management - Monitoring: Regularly inspect trees for signs of pests or diseases. - **Organic Solutions:** Use organic methods like neem oil, insecticidal soap, or beneficial insects to manage pests. **Prevention:** Apply dormant sprays in winter to prevent fungal diseases and overwintering pests.

Fertilization - Timing: Fertilize in early spring and late fall to support growth and fruit production. - **Method:** Use organic fertilizers like compost, manure, or balanced granular fertilizers. - **Avoid Over-Fertilization:** Excessive fertilizer can harm trees and the environment.

Weed Control - Manual Removal and grass cutting: Regularly remove weeds by hand or with tools to reduce competition for nutrients. Regular grass cutting around the trees (already in place), and strimming if and where necessary of the surrounding area, mindful of possible disturbance to natural wildlife.

Harvesting - Timing: Harvest fruit when ripe to prevent overloading branches and attracting pests. Organize harvest events to engage the Croscombe community and share the produce.

CPC OWG: Create a schedule for regular maintenance tasks and assign roles.

Maintenance Log: Document all activities, including pruning, fertilization, pest control, and harvests. - **Tree Health Records:** Track the health and growth of each tree over time. - **Feedback:** Collect input from OWG and community members to improve the plan.

Long-term Planning - Tree Replacement: Plan for replacing old or diseased trees to maintain orchard productivity.

Diversity: Locally introduce new fruit varieties to diversify the orchard and reduce disease risks.

Infrastructure: regular checks and upkeep of orchard gate, seating and any signage installed.

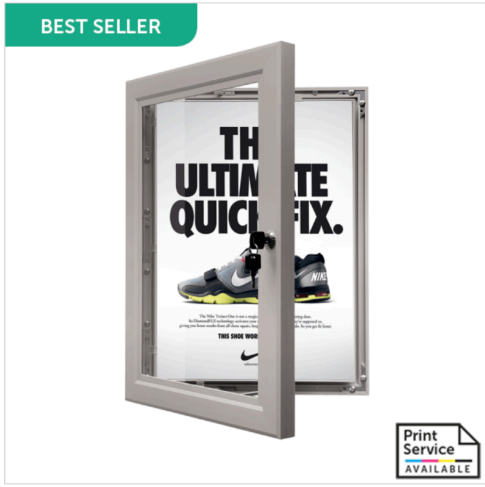
By following this plan, the community orchard can thrive, providing a well maintained and beautiful space for the benefit of the whole Croscombe community, and a sense of shared purpose for years to come.

Potential Noticeboard

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DESCRIPTION

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