



Standen Fruit Farm Community Orchard Association

Chairman's report 2021-22

I am pleased to report that the Association has enjoyed another year filled with positive developments at Standen Fruit Farm.

After last year's AGM, we held an immensely successful Apple Day. Toffee apples, apple rings, wood carvings, music and good food were among the delights on offer on an occasionally damp autumn day - which made up for the somewhat paltry apple harvest of 2021.

We had a thoroughly impressive number of visitors. We ensured that word about the Orchard was spread far and wide, firstly by Association members, then by the Trustees and finally by harnessing for the first time the power of social media advertising. For a modest investment of less than £40, we reached Facebook users across Kent and into Sussex and Surrey. As a result, large numbers of first-time visitors joined the Apple Day festivities. One of the children who came and took part in the colouring competition and biggest apple competition said that it was the "best day out ever". She had travelled from the Chatham area with her family for their first visit to the Orchard!



The 2022 Apple Day will be as splendid, we hope - and the apple crop is so much better than in 2021 so the event will live up to its name.



Maintaining the Orchard

A great deal of pruning was undertaken in Autumn 2021, with Sam Winter concentrating on looking after about 40 of the veteran trees, and a team of Romanian pruners with chainsaws doing the less delicate pruning of younger, more vigorous trees. This left us with vast amounts of branch debris to deal with, but perhaps also resulted in this year's bumper crop of huge apples.

Volunteer days were held on the second weekend of every month and moved from a Saturday to a Sunday morning. Plastic guards which were strangling trees were removed, brambles and other weeds were cut away from around the bases of trees, a disused and rotting eco-toilette in the cherry orchards was torn down, and some of the branch debris from pruning was piled into stacks.



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These monthly volunteer meetings have been successful as they bring together true orchard enthusiasts and there's a great deal of fun alongside the hard work of keeping the orchard under control. I think I should pay particular tribute to Wendy and Tony Tremenheere who have wielded scythes with greater style and success than Poldark can manage.

Keeping the grass across the entire 50-acre site under control has been one of the Trustees' greatest worries. With escalating fuel prices, the cost of mowing with a tractor has, naturally, increased. For this reason, we are extremely pleased that sheep are now grazing in larger parts of the Orchard, and we are confident that their number will be even greater in the coming year, enabling us to save mowing costs while at the same time reducing the Orchard's reliance on fossil fuel. Watching the sheep grazing contentedly among the trees is a wonderful sight that's enjoyed by all plot owners and their friends who visit the Orchard, as well as by walkers using the paths that cross the Orchard.

Other work by the Trustees has included further fund-raising by the indomitable Kristina Edwards whose skill at seeking out and then unlocking grants helps the Association to keep the Orchard in good condition. There are further details of grants in the Trustees' report.

We have an increasing number of people who are putting their names down to acquire one or more plots in the Orchard. We are working to trace as many of the absent owners as possible, to see whether they are interested in selling their plot or plots either to those on the waiting list or to the Association itself. Where we successfully trace an owner, we are sometimes surprised that in spite of not visiting the Orchard for years (and in some cases decades), they are reluctant to sell, even after they have initially suggested they are interested in disposing of a piece of land they don't use. It's a shame, as we'd like greater numbers of active plot holders who will contribute to life across the Orchard.

Funding and membership

A perennial concern for the Trustees is income for the Association to support the work of maintaining the entire Orchard for the benefit of plot owners and the local community. As the average age of members increases, membership subscriptions become less regular and in a good many cases cease. The Trustees are endeavouring to grow the number of members through new activities such as this Spring's inaugural Blossom Day. However, we need to be able to offer potential Association members who are not plot owners something that delivers return on their annual subscription. There are ideas that the Trustees have, and of course we welcome suggestions from plot owners and members. Between us, we can devise a worthwhile package.

The Orchard at Standen Street remains a wonderful place to spend time. It's peaceful, full of wildlife and produces some remarkable and often unusual varieties of apples. The Trustees are committed to the continued successful management of the Orchard for all – whether plot owners or those who walk the paths, or our local neighbours.

In conclusion, I must thank all my fellow Trustees for devoting so much time to the Orchard. Without their efforts, it's difficult to imagine how the Orchard would look. I'd also like to pay tribute to Rebecca Cassidy, Charles Reed, Peter Christopherson and his boys, Lisa Wheeler, Peter Hawkins and Kent Barker for their unstinting work and helpful advice and historical knowledge.

Simon Spanswick
Chairman
October 2022



STANDEN FRUIT FARM COMMUNITY ORCHARD ASSOCIATION
ACCOUNTS 1 September 2020 - 31 August 2021

Income	2022	2021
Grants	£10,865.13	£6,900.00
Membership	£1,208.61	£1,313.00
Donations	£1,555.67	£1,700.69
Apple & log sales	£25.00	£894.70
Grazing		
Interest	£3.69	£0.83
Extraordinary income	£572.27	£237.95
TOTAL INCOME	£14,230.37	£11,047.17

Balance

Brought forward from deposit a/c	£7,858.53
Brought forward from current a/c	£420.87
Income for year 2020/2021	£11,049.17
Expenditure for year 2020/2021	£12,258.54
Current balance	£7,070.03
Balance carried forward to deposit a/c	£7,853.53
Balance carried forward to current a/c	£420.87
Total carried forward	£8,274.40

Treasurer

Date

Expenditure	2022	2021
Governance costs	£567.12	£2,146.40
Publicity & promotions	£49.32	£154.35
Travel to meetins		
Fuel for orchard work		
Equipment & repairs	£850.19	£41.45
Orchard Manager		
Other labour	£435.00	£2,160.00
Grass cutting	£3,992.50	£557.50
Tree pruning & maintenance	£6,131.00	£5,300.50
Insurances	£233.41	£201.60
Planning fees		
Soil Association fees		
Liming		
Purchase of assets		£400.00
Training		
BCTV fees		
Bees		
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£12,258.54	£10,961.80