

Standen Fruit Farm Community Orchard Association

Chairman's Report 2022-23

The past year has been busy and fulfilling for everyone involved in the Standen Fruit Farm Community Association with much activity.

After the 2022 AGM we held the traditional Apple Day, welcoming members and their guests to the Orchard where there was music, cider, cakes, hot food, children's competitions, archery and more. It was a great day for all the family, and we were delighted to see so many regular faces and newcomers during the afternoon.



At the end of 2022 two new Trustees were welcomed to the board of the Association: Rebecca Cassidy and Charles Reed. In addition, former chairman and long-standing supporter of the Orchard Peter Hawkins joined as a Trustee. Their combined expertise and wisdom are great assets to the Association and its members.

As always, keeping the Orchard in good repair is the Association's major task. We have been fortunate to have sheep helping to keep the grass under control across many parts of the 50+ acres, although this sometimes means we discover holes in fences that need to be repaired rapidly, adding to the list of work we need to do with associated costs, of course.

We have been working to give the opportunity for members of the Association to be involved in our maintenance work, as well as using the wonderful resource of the Orchard for the local community. In January, we hosted three days of pruning with local expert Guy Pullen. These were well attended and provided the chance to learn about the best ways to prune fruit trees as well as helping us to tackle some of the constantly needed pruning of our trees.

Items as mundane but important (and costly) as gate repairs (pictured right before the repair) have been undertaken, and the installation of tree guards to protect the trees from predators (possibly the sheep, but more likely rabbits and deer that enjoy visiting the Orchard!).

The Association received funding for the purchase of new trees to help fill part of the large open areas in fields nine and 10. The trees have been ordered and will be planted in the autumn of 2023. One of the challenges of planting new trees in the Orchard is the lack of water supplies in the different fields to keep the young trees alive. This is an issue that we will have to address.



Our multi-year project to identify the wide range of varieties we have in the Orchard continues under the expert leadership of Richard Wheeler. It's a mammoth task that

demonstrates the need for accurate record keeping of what you plant and where. The challenge is further compounded by the lack of landmarks within the various fields and the disappearance over the years of the original trackways which makes logging which variety is where more complex than we would like. It is hoped that this exercise will provide an accurate register of the tree varieties that we have.

Our fund-raising work continues apace, led by Kristina Edwards and Rebecca Cassidy who have been busily researching grants that might help the work of the Orchard both in maintenance and in ecologically sound development, such as planting new trees and preserving the areas that are havens for wildlife, such as field 12.

We have discovered that many trees in the cherry orchard have died this year, perhaps because of the extremes of weather that we've experienced and the lack of watering. The Trustees are going to consider how best to restore the cherry orchard – the problem of having no water supply exists in the cherry orchard, just as it does in fields three to 12 and we need to bear this in mind when considering the best course of action. The cherry trees have always been plundered by the birds as soon as the fruit starts to ripen, depriving owners of their cherries, so perhaps it is time to consider another fruit type such as plums to add variety to the Orchard and supplement the extensive apple harvest. Suggestions from members, particularly those with plots in the cherry orchard, are most welcome.

I pay tribute to all my fellow Trustees and thank them for the extraordinary amount of time that each of them gives to the Orchard. Without this small band of dedicated volunteers, the Orchard would not be in such good condition as it is today – it is a considerable task to manage 50 or so acres on an entirely voluntary basis and the sterling efforts of Trustees and a small but indefatigable group of supporters who wield chainsaws and scythes must be applauded.

I must conclude my report with two apologies to members of the Association:

Firstly, we have taken the decision not to hold Apple Day in 2023. We discovered that the date we had picked clashed with a range of other events in the locality meaning that we could not get stalls booked. In addition, this year's unpredictable weather means that the crop has ripened earlier than usual so a large proportion of the crop may already have been picked or have fallen by the date we had selected. In 2024, we will be back with a bigger and better Apple Day to make up for this year and we will also try to hold other events during the year to involve owners, members and their friends and families.

Secondly, we have been less than effective than we should at communicating what's been happening at the Orchard. I must accept much of the responsibility for this as I moved house shortly before the 2022 AGM and a great deal of my spare time has been taken up with getting my new home ready and this has meant that the work of keeping members up to date has, regretfully, taken something of a back seat. Now that the work of getting sorted in the new house has been mostly completed, I have more time and will endeavour to get back to providing more regular updates to members.

Despite these two items of less than positive news, I hope that members will appreciate the work that has been undertaken in the past 12 months and will continue to support the Association and its Trustees as we work on everyone's behalf to protect and enhance this wonderful piece of English countryside.

Simon Spanswick

STANDEN FRUIT FARM COMMUNITY ORCHARD ASSOCIATION - ACCOUNTS 1st Sr N ACCOUNTS 1st SEPTEMBER2022 - 31st AUGUST 2023

Income		2023	2022	Expenditure		2023	2022
Grants		10,124.14	10,865.13	Governance costs		760.26	497.12
Membership		788.26	1,208.61	Publicity & promotions			49.32
Donations	.		1,617.59	Travel to meetings			-
Apple & log sales		670.00	25.00	Fuel for orchard work			
Grazing				Equipment & repairs		766.90	850.19
Interest		37.21	3.69	Orchard Manager			-
Extraordinary income		215.00	572.27	Other labour			435.00
				Grass cutting		1,130.00	3,992.75
				Tree pruning and maintenance		4,471.00	6,131.00
				Insurances		157.28	233.41
				Planning fees			-
				Soil Association fees			
				Liming			
				Purchase of assets		700.00	
				Training			
				BCTV fees			
				Bees			
				Other Purchases		1,500.00	
				TOTAL EXPENDITURE		9,485.44	
TOTAL INCOME		11,834.61	11,049.17				12,388.79

Balance

Brought forward from deposit a/c	11,883.02
Brought forward from current a/c	428.59
Income for year 2022/2023	11,834.61
Expenditure for year 2022/2023	- 9,485.44
Current balance	<u>14,660.78</u>
Balance carried forward to deposit a/c	
Balance carried forward to current a/c	
Total carried forward	

10/09/2023

Treasurer:

Date: