



Standen Fruit Farm Community Orchard Association

Annual Report for the year to 31 August 2025

The past year has again been one of hard work and quiet progress in the Orchard, with the Trustees and volunteers contributing several hundred hours both on site and at home to ensure the continued care and development of this remarkable community asset.

We begin with an apology. Our communications with members and supporters have been sparse over the past year, largely because of the need to rebuild and update the membership database. This has taken far longer than expected, but we are pleased to report that the system is now being brought fully up to date. We have a clear plan in place, and members can look forward to more regular and informative updates in the coming year, and Jane Pyne has kindly volunteered to keep membership records up to date.

Orchard Management and Maintenance

The routine care of the Orchard has continued under the experienced supervision of our Orchard Manager, Guy Pullen, who has again worked throughout the seasons with Trustees and volunteers on pruning, mowing, hedging and general site upkeep. The winter pruning programme was completed across the central blocks, with follow-on summer pruning in fields 5 and 6, and selective restoration of veteran trees in fields 3 and 4. Much of this work has been supported by volunteers, as well as the teams of Sam Winter and Paul Haralambie, with guidance from Guy.

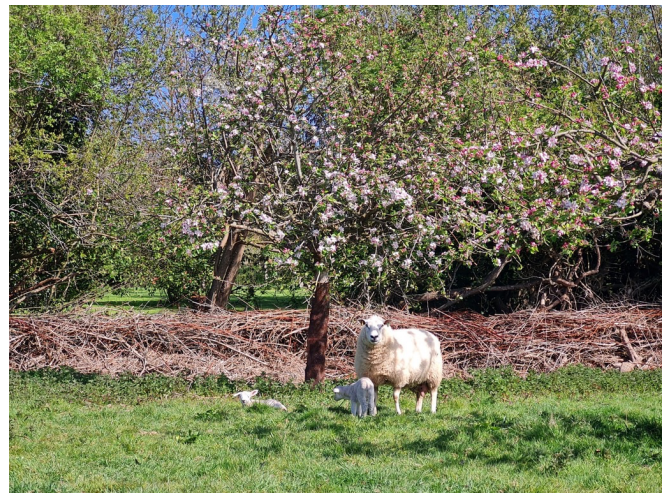
The ongoing creation of deadhedging from pruning debris continues to enhance biodiversity and protect young trees. A trial area of new hedging was established following historic boundary lines, combining hawthorn and other traditional species, with protective fencing and natural screening. New tree planting, supported by grants from Sussex Lund and Countryside Stewardship, will begin in earnest later this year once sites have been finalised in consultation with the Orchard Manager.

The sheep have again played an important role in grass control, while the mechanical mowing by James Barrow ensured access tracks and open areas were kept clear—particularly in preparation for Apple Day.

Recently we have undertaken work on the benches in the orchard which have been deteriorating. Walkers, plot owners and supporters can now rest on the seats without fear of collapse!

Land and Plots

The Association now owns sixteen orchard plots, with one further purchase pending registration at the Land Registry. We continue to facilitate sales between owners wishing to sell and those on our waiting list, and where appropriate to acquire plots to consolidate





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community stewardship of the Orchard. We were grateful to members who donated or sold their plots at favourable rates to the Association during the year.

The Trustees also considered longer-term options for acquiring adjoining plots and other areas, recognising that such purchases would strengthen protection of the Orchard as a whole. While significant funding would be required, possible approaches to benefactors or grant funders are under review.

Grants and Finance

The Association's finances remain in good order, with support continuing from the Countryside Stewardship, Farming in Protected Landscapes and Sussex Lund schemes. These have covered pruning, hedge management, and other conservation works. The Association also opened a new Cambridge and Counties savings account during the year to earn interest on reserve funds, providing a more secure base for future maintenance and renewal.

Partnerships and Community

We again took part in the Hawkhurst and Sandhurst Heritage Project coordinated by The Amelia in Tunbridge Wells, contributing material and expertise about the Orchard's history for the community almanac published in 2024. The Trustees were delighted to see Standen featured in this attractive record of local heritage.

Apple Day

Apple Day 2024 was held immediately following the AGM in September and attracted a lively crowd of around 200 visitors. The new layout worked well, with stalls offering local produce, refreshments and entertainment, including the much-loved ukulele band and vintage tractor display. Particular thanks go to all who helped organise the day and to those who provided equipment and manpower before and after the event. Recommendations from this successful gathering—including improved visitor sign-in and extra straw bales—are being acted upon for Apple Day 2025, scheduled for 12 October 2025.





Standen Fruit Farm Community Orchard Association

For this year's apple day, guests are in for a bumper crop of fruit. 2025 has proved an extraordinarily good year for apples and the orchard is no exception. There's an immense variety still left on the trees as I prepare this report, so I think that everybody is going to enjoy walking and gathering across the orchard.

Acknowledgements

As chair, I wish to place on record my sincere thanks to Susie Armstrong, Michael Brown, Rebecca Cassidy, Karen Christopherson, Kristina Edwards, Thai Goulton, Peter Hawkins and Charles Reed for their many hours of voluntary work throughout the year, and to Guy Pullen for his continued dedication as Orchard Manager. Together they have spent countless hours—often unseen—ensuring that the Orchard remains a healthy, beautiful and secure landscape for all who value it.

Looking Ahead

In the year ahead, our priorities are to:

- Complete planting of the new heritage apple trees;
- Continue the rolling hedge-management programme;
- Expand ecological surveying and mapping of the Orchard;
- Re-establish regular newsletters and digital updates to members; and
- Strengthen the Association's ownership and protection of the land.

Despite the inevitable challenges of maintaining such a large and historic site, the past year has shown once again what a committed volunteer team can achieve. The Orchard continues to flourish—an enduring example of shared community responsibility and the quiet rewards of stewardship.

Simon Spanswick
Chairman of the Trustees
September 2025

Charity Registration No. 1152055

STANDEN FRUIT FARM COMMUNITY ORCHARD ASSOCIATION - ACCOUNTS 1st Sept 2024 - 31st August 2025

| Income | | |
|----------------------|------------------|------------------|
| | 2025 | 2024 |
| Grants | 66,372.83 | 8,166.62 |
| Membership | 1,168.88 | 1,329.16 |
| Donations | 625.00 | 5,199.50 |
| Apple & log sales | 268.00 | 492.00 |
| Grazing | - | - |
| Interest | 304.20 | 104.92 |
| Extraordinary income | - | - |
| Governance costs | - | - |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| TOTAL INCOME | 68,738.91 | 15,292.20 |

| Expenditure | | |
|------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| | 2025 | 2024 |
| Governance costs | 826.50 | 2,331.76 |
| Publicity & promotions | - | - |
| Travel to meetings | - | - |
| Fuel for orchard work | - | - |
| Equipment & repairs | 1,000.00 | 1,693.61 |
| Orchard Manager | 8,961.25 | 4,120.00 |
| Other labour | - | - |
| Grass cutting | 2,160.00 | 2,280.00 |
| Tree pruning and maintenance | 6,379.00 | 6,780.00 |
| Insurances | 160.54 | - |
| Planning fees | - | - |
| Soil Association fees | - | - |
| Liming | - | - |
| Purchase of plots | 1,888.64 | - |
| Purchase of assets | - | - |
| Training | - | - |
| BCTV fees | - | - |
| Bees | - | - |
| Other Purchases | - | 529.28 |
| TOTAL EXPENDITURE | 21,375.93 | 17,734.64 |

Balance

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Brought forward from deposit a/c | 8,773.37 |
| Brought forward from current a/c | 500.59 |
| Income for year 2024-25 | 68,738.91 |
| Expenditure for year 2024-25 | 21,375.93 |
| Current balance | 56,636.94 |
| | |
| Balance carried forward to deposit a/c | 56,271.35 |
| Balance carried forward to current a/c | 365.59 |
| Total carried forward | 56,636.94 |

| | |
|------------|--|
| Treasurer: | |
| Date: | |

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Standen Fruit Farm Community Orchard Association

Charity Name: Standen Fruit Farm Community Orchard Association

Charity Registration Number: 1152055

Financial Period Ended: 31 August 2025

Respective Responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner

The trustees of Standen Fruit Farm Community Orchard Association are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the Charities Act and for ensuring that they give a true and fair view of the charity's financial activities.

I have been appointed under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 to carry out an independent examination of the accounts.

My responsibility is to examine the accounts and to state whether any matters have come to my attention which give me reasonable cause to believe that:

1. Accounting records were not kept in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act;
2. The accounts do not accord with those records;
3. The accounts do not comply with relevant statutory requirements;
4. There is any other matter to which attention should be drawn to ensure a proper understanding of the accounts.

Basis of Independent Examiner's Report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act 2011.

An independent examination includes reviewing the accounting records maintained by the charity, comparing the accounts presented with those records, and considering any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts. It does not constitute an audit and therefore I do not express an audit opinion.

Independent Examiner's Statement

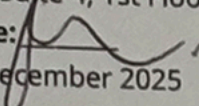
In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the requirements to
- keep accounting records in accordance with the Charities Act, and
- prepare accounts that are consistent with those records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Act have not been met; or
- to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Examiner's Details

Name: Nick Ditton FIFA

Address: Suite 4, 1st Floor Unit 2, Crown Yard, Bedgebury Estate, Goudhurst TN17 2QZ

Signature: 

Date: 4 December 2025