

**P2 PLOT FOR SALE?**

Let us know!

**P3 APPLE DAY TO PRUNING**

Association activities

**P7 RENEW TODAY**

Membership form



# The Orchard

THE MAGAZINE OF THE STANDEN FRUIT FARM COMMUNITY ORCHARD ASSOCIATION

DECEMBER 2020



**Winter update**

Crab apples, juicing, pruning and more

## THE ORCHARD | CONTENTS & WELCOME

Welcome to this edition of *The Orchard*, bringing you news and information from the Standen Fruit Farm Community Orchard Association and the volunteer Trustees and supporters.

It's been an extremely busy few months. We've spread the word about the Association and the Orchard. We took a stall at the Hawkhurst Makers at the Moor fair in September. We put on a display of some of the apples that were just coming to ripeness, promoted Apple Day and membership of the Association. There was tremendous interest in the Orchard and our work and we were pleased to receive new membership applications and offers of help in tending the Orchard.

The Apple Day took place as scheduled, with social distancing in force, and a couple of local producers who set up stalls including honey and some great cakes! It was really good to see so many people come and explore the Orchard on what was a truly miserable day (albeit dry). We hope that next year's Apple Day will be blessed with better weather and with less need to enforce social distancing.

I'd like to take this opportunity to encourage you to renew your membership of the Association or, if you are not yet a member, to join. Your membership subscription helps to pay for the work of contractors we need to bring in to prune, mow, and so on. We have to pay for insurance, postage, and other incidentals. And of course none of the Trustees is paid and indeed all Trustees pay their membership subscriptions!

One final note: the Association has just completed the purchase of a plot from an owner who no longer needed it and we're working on the purchase of some additional plots. There is also renewed interest from a number of people who would like to buy a plot, so if you are thinking of selling, please contact our Treasurer, Thai Goulton (contact details in the panel to the right). Plots don't change hands for very much money, so Orchard plots aren't a gilt-edged pension I'm afraid!

In conclusion, I join with all Trustees in wishing you a very Merry Christmas and every good wish for a more normal New Year.

### SIMON SPANSWICK

CHAIRMAN

STANDEN FRUIT FARM COMMUNITY ORCHARD ASSOCIATION



**It's great to see the interest in the Orchard that's been generated over the past few months**



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This year has been one of the busiest at the Orchard and the last few months have seen a mass of activity across the entire Orchard area. Here we provide Association Members with an update on some of our work

In late September, we held the Association's annual general meeting in a new, larger venue to allow for social distancing to be maintained. Benenden Village Hall was the location and with its Internet connectivity, we were able to also provide a Zoom meeting for those unable to attend in person.

The meeting was routine, with no major announcements or decisions, other than the raising of the annual membership fee to £20 – something that had been announced at the 2019 AGM. The retiring Trustees were all re-elected, apart from Rohan Barnett who had said that he

was unable to continue. The meeting thanked Rohan for his work as a Trustee and Chairman.

In the afternoon following the AGM, the traditional Apple Day took place at the Orchard. This was slightly more muted than in the past because of coronavirus restrictions (no live music performances, for example). However, the Day was well attended with over 60 people who came to see the Orchard, pick fruit and sample local produce from a handful of stallholders.

### ARTISAN CIDER

Shortly before Apple Day, we had made contact





**Above left** Apples ready to head to the Bignose and Beardy cider press

**Above right** Some of the crop picked for juice



with Bignose and Beardy, cider makers based in Framfield across the border in East Sussex. They were keen to secure a supply of Standen apples to make cider with and Association members responded with gusto, picking enough fruit to fill a large trailer to its brim! In return, the pickers were rewarded with bottles of Bignose and Beardy's high end cider which went down a storm. The result of all the picking effort won't be able to be sampled until next year when the cider matures – the Association will keep Members updated on when bottles become available and how to order.

We've also been picking apples for juicing and one litre bottles will be available before Christmas, branded with bright, new Standen Orchard labels. Details of how to get hold of the juice – pressed just over the border at Ringden Farm near Flimwell – will be published on the Orchard website and Facebook pages.

### BOUNTIFUL HARVEST

As we have noted before in our 2020 newsletters, this year's crop has been extraordinarily bountiful. This is as a result of two important factors: the considerable winter pruning undertaken at the beginning of the year and the great weather throughout the Spring. Over the past few weeks there

has been more pruning taking place, as well as clearing of brambles and other invasive weeds around some of the older trees. This should lead to another great crop next year, as well as making the Orchard look well cared for and a great place for all Members to visit and our local neighbours to admire.

### GRANTS HELP US ALL

The pruning work doesn't come cheap and we have been extremely lucky to have received two grants for the work from the Sussex Lund (<https://lundtrust.org.uk/sussex-lund/>). The Association Trustees are grateful to Sussex Lund for recognising the merit in funding maintenance work at our heritage Orchard that helps to preserve it for Members and the wider community.

As part of the pruning work funded by Sussex Lund, we will be tackling fields one and two – the cherry orchard – which have become thoroughly overgrown. While Members may not be able to harvest their fruit in advance of the birds devouring it, the Association is keen to restore this part of the Orchard and make it fully accessible once again.

### RESEARCH PROJECT

Other new and positive angles have been to



**Above left** Winter pruning has been carried out throughout the orchard  
**Above right** Crab apple harvesting in field 11

establish contact with full-time researcher Prof Rebecca Cassidy, who is undertaking a three-year project about apples and their value to and impact on society. We look forward to working with Rebecca and to receiving her insights on anything orchard related. We have also started looking at identifying and locating different apple varieties in the Orchard, a task which has been done intermittently we are aware.

This year there has also been a large crop of crab apples and the Trustees have been harvesting them for Members and to sell to local retailers. The Orchard's crab apples seem to be a winter variety and have a wonderful rich red colour that's ideal for Christmas decorations

### **MAINTAIN YOUR SUPPORT**

As you can tell, the work of the Association has gone up a gear or two over the past few months. Many people have commented that the Orchard is looking better than it has for many years. And it's worth remembering that the Trustees give their time entirely voluntarily to look after the Orchard – all to ensure that it is productive and to protect Members' and owners' plots for the future.

So now is the time to renew your Membership of the Association. Your annual membership subscription contributes to the running costs of

the Orchard, from insurance to mowing to drain clearance and rebuilding. The annual subscription is just £20, equivalent to under 6p a day.

Please do take a few moments to send us your membership subscription and make sure that we have your up-to-date contact details so that we can keep you updated on developments throughout the year. You can use the form enclosed or to speed things up and save a stamp, why not renew online at <https://www.sffc.org.uk/membership-application/>. It's very simple and you can pay online. Please do remember to tell us if you own one or more plots, and which they are!

### **CHRISTMAS GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING**

You might like to consider giving a membership as a Christmas gift – it's a great idea for nieces, nephews, grandchildren, sisters, brothers, parents or friends. Your gift to them will help us to maintain this historic piece of Kent countryside.

Drop us a line at [membership@sffc.org.uk](mailto:membership@sffc.org.uk) if you'd like to give a Christmas or birthday gift. We will send out a gift card with details of the Orchard to the lucky recipient.

Every one of the Trustees thanks you for your support of the Orchard and we wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. ■



**Above** A novel approach to picking at Apple Day

**Below** Pruned trees photographed in November





# SUPPORT THIS REMARKABLE ORCHARD

The annual membership **subscription** to belong to the Association is just £20. This small sum helps us to maintain the orchard for the benefit of plot owners and those who use the footpaths that cross the orchard. In addition, **members receive** regular updates on what's happening at the Orchard, opportunities to join activity days at the Orchard and early intelligence on any plots that come up for sale.

As the Association is a charity we are registered with HM Revenue and Customs for **Gift Aid**. This means that if you pay tax, and are willing to gift-aid your membership fee and any donation, we are able to

claim an additional 25 pence on every pound. It will not cost you any extra - you simply need to complete the Gift Aid portion of the form.

Please complete the form below and send it with your cheque (payable to Standen Fruit Farm Community Orchard Association) or card payment details, to:  
**Mrs H-M Goulton, Hon Treasurer, SFFCOA, Tarifa, Fairglen Road, Wadhurst, TN5 6JL, United Kingdom**

Prefer to enrol or renew online? Visit [sffco.org.uk](http://sffco.org.uk) and follow the link to **Getting involved**. Or send your subscription via PayPal to [membership@sffco.org.uk](mailto:membership@sffco.org.uk).

Join or renew online at [www.sffco.org.uk](http://www.sffco.org.uk)

## STANDEN FRUIT FARM COMMUNITY ORCHARD ASSOCIATION

### Membership form

Please renew my membership/enrol me as a member of the Association at a rate of £20.

Please accept my donation of £ \_\_\_\_\_

I enclose my cheque for £ \_\_\_\_\_

Please charge my credit/debit card £ \_\_\_\_\_

Card no \_\_\_\_\_

Security code (three digits on signature strip) \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry date \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_ First name \_\_\_\_\_ Surname \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Field(s) and plot number(s) if known \_\_\_\_\_

### ARE YOU A UK TAXPAYER?

If so, you can make your subscription and donation worth 25% at no extra cost.

Simply tick the box below.

I wish Standen Fruit Farm Community Orchard Association to treat all subscriptions and donations in the last 4 years, this subscription or donation and all future subscriptions and donations as Gift Aid donations. I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay the difference.

*giftaid it*

Charity number 1152055



The entrance to the Orchard on Apple Day, ensuring that everyone who wanted to come could find us with ease!

### **ACTION POINTS from this edition of *The Orchard***

Please renew your membership - go online to [www.sffco.org.uk](http://www.sffco.org.uk) or use the form on page 7 of this edition of *The Orchard*.

Thinking of selling your plot? The Association has a list of people who might be interested in buying it from you. See page 2.

**Standen Fruit Farm Community Orchard Association**  
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