

Stamford Community Orchard Group

Chair's report 2017 (Annie Hall)

SCOG is now a firm part of Stamford life, both the group itself and the Wassail and Apple Days.

The trees in the main orchard are now well established, although some trees need removing and other ones putting in their place. This year there were a large number of apples, and we decided that in future we need to do more to encourage members of the public to come and collect them from the ground and learn how to pick them.

With the council having removed the diseased trees at the entrance and the hedges being lower now there is also going to be more light there, and this will help to achieve a good harvest in the future.

A few more trees there are now sponsored, however there are still a number that are without sponsorship.

Annie met Aileen Frisby and St Augustine's School Leader Karen Crawford at the site, parents are to build a bug hotel there and have already dropped off the pallets to do so. The children will then fill these and we, the teachers, and the parents involved hope that as a result they will become more interested in the orchard.

The trees in the orchard now have smart labels, pyrographed on wood by John Lapage, and kindly paid for by The Lincolnshire Gardens Trust. These were attached on the pruning morning last spring. This event was a chance for people to hone their pruning skills with supervision from Dennis, and will be repeated on 22nd Feb this year at 10 am.

There is now a list of assets that everyone should have a copy of, and one is on the inside of the shed at the Queen's Road allotment. Everyone should also have a copy of the Lone Worker Protocol, and again one is on the inside of the

shed door. Everyone who needs steel capped boots for their work on the allotment or the orchard now has them. This allotment now has space where we intend to plant a few more trees.

The allotment on Uffington Road is now also well established, and used in the main by the Sure Start children who have the one next door.

We have been sad to lose two committee members, Maria and Stephie, they will both be much missed. However we are also glad to welcome Kia who is to take over our Facebook page, and knows how to tweet, etc. which is great! We have asked if Lincolnshire Council for Voluntary Services are able to find us some more volunteers.

We ran a cider tasting and cheese event in mid summer at the orchard and all agreed that this was great fun and worth repeating.

Apple Day was once more great fun, although as ever we had a last minute problem with volunteers and stall holders. Waitrose have suggested we contact them at Easter to see if they can get some people in the future.

However in spite of these problems, and with the usual attendance of The East of England Orchard Group, we had a grand day. We think the numbers were down, especially that there were less children than in previous years. However we made a profit of £499.

We are to have a market stall in May with a tombola so as to have less tables with this on Apple Day and clear Annie's garage.

In August Rutland Pride and Stamford Living both ran great articles about us and the orchard in their magazines.

Once more we had one of the 20 or so Christmas Trees in St John's church in the run up to Christmas, and had fun decorating this.

The Wassail was as ever a fun event. We had bought some lanterns, a grid for the brazier and an inspection lamp, which helped make it safer and easier and better lit. Sadly Woven Chords were not there, as they had no conductor and were sadly missed. But we were glad to have the Bourne Borderers to help make it a real event. During the proceeding months we had given help and advice to Bourne Community Orchard as for the first time they were to also have a wassail. We will keep trying to persuade them to come to the mid summer social, apple day, etc.

We now not only have a book about Wassails, but also one about Community Orchards.

Our Christmas Fuddle was sadly cancelled due to lack of interest.

Annie attended an event on "How to make the most of your event " and Mark attended a First Aid training course.

There was the opportunity to send off 20 more leaves for DNA testing, and Stamford Town Council kindly gave us £250 towards this. We await the results with much interest.

We have just received £100 from Nationwide Building Society as part of their aim, with tokens in the bank, to share between local charities.

In the autumn we were asked if we should like to take part on The Ferry Meadows Autumn Festival, Adam (helped by Mary) held a free running workshop on Using Apples. This was very popular.

Adam was again the link in arranging a Grafting and Pruning Worskshop at Sacrewell farm this February. This was well attended, and we hope by increasing our email list we shall encourage more people to get involved with the orchard,

and our events. The Landyke Trust have expressed a wish that we hold a similar event there in the future.

Our scrapper and apple press continue to be borrowed by groups during the autumn. And this year have been out on loan 6 times.

Annie once more took scions to the Midshires Orchard Group scion swap in early February, which is a fascinating annual event.

We should all like to thank Nick for so ably taking over and maintaining the web site.

As you are aware this was my third year as chair and I am standing down. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to thank you all for the time and effort and energy you have put in the keep SCOG slowly growing.