



## Guide to setting up a community orchard

### 1. **Getting started**

The history of the Bridport Orchard came about as there was a piece of land near the centre of town that had been earmarked for development, and there had been several attempts at obtaining planning permission, for the likes of a bowling alley, and a car park! However, planning was not able to be granted due to the limited access to the land. Local residents got wind of the fact that the land was potentially available, and there was growing momentum to establish a community orchard on the site. The land was on long-term lease to the Town Council, and as they were enthusiastic about the idea of an orchard, a joint approach was agreed where the land would be converted into an orchard.

Once approval had been given by the appropriate local councils, this required two years of organising, and involved local volunteers (including fruit tree specialists) and Bridport Town Council. A committee was set up to manage the orchard, and was effectively a steering group for its future maintenance and development. Several sources of funding were identified for the initial set up and tree purchases.

When starting a project such as this, it is worth understanding that the initial establishment of the orchard (i.e. the planting of the trees, agreeing the boundaries etc) is the easy bit! What needs careful thought is the long-term support, maintenance and further enhancement and development that need resourcing, planning and funding, with the appropriate skills available.

We suggest a seven stage process to set up:

- Identify a piece of land, and engage with your local Parish, Town or County Council
- Get a group of volunteers organised, these must include the right skills such as horticulture and wildlife management
- Identify and secure sources of funding
- Plant up the orchard
- Arrange for ongoing support and maintenance (this would need to include plans for simple jobs like regular grass cutting, which ideally should be done by the local councils)
- Consider the long-term vision, objectives etc, and arrange for 'one off' projects that enhance the orchard, and ensure it serves the community in the best possible way, with widespread involvement and support
- Look out for grants and potential sponsors for future projects

All of this requires management, organisation, and dedication from reliable and knowledgeable volunteers.

We recommend look at our website where you will find our 'vision' for the Bridport orchard and the management plan <http://www.bridportcommunityorchard.org.uk/resources/Management-Plan-2017.pdf>

You will see that the benefits to the local community, wildlife, the local environment all come into the mix with the apple harvest an almost incidental benefit!

### 2. **Juicing equipment:**

Due to a range of logistical issues, we do not hire out any of our apple juicing equipment.

Options for new orchards

1. Contact Vigo, to see if they can help, either with a purchase from them, or they might know where you could hire equipment from. They are at [vigopresses.co.uk](http://vigopresses.co.uk)
2. There is a website which links orchard across the UK, and in the past they have hired out apple presses. Their address is [orchardlink.org.uk](http://orchardlink.org.uk)

If you publicise your orchard, via the various media outlets, saying that you are interested in obtaining some juicing equipment, you may find there will be offers from people who have equipment they no longer need and are prepared to donate or sell at a reasonable price.

### **3. Purchase of fruit trees**

We have over 40 different varieties of fruit trees in our community orchard, the majority of which are apple. There is a separate document available on our website that lists the Bridport Orchard varieties and their characteristics.

There are a number of specialist garden suppliers and tree nurseries that supply apple and other fruit trees. You can purchase some quite rare varieties from some of these.

If you have a look at our website: <http://www.bridportcommunityorchard.org.uk> and click on the link to "Links to other sites" you find a few suppliers listed there, which include Brogdale Collection, Ashridge Nurseries and Pennard Plants. It would also be worth you looking at Peoples Trust for Endangered Species (PTES), where you could find links to further suppliers.

### **4. Ongoing management**

You can find our 'vision' and Management Plan on the website <http://www.bridportcommunityorchard.org.uk/> by clicking on the "Policies and Management" link on the right hand side of the Home page. On our website you will also find a wealth of other information, plus links to other useful websites.