



ORCHARD
NETWORK

Working together for Traditional Orchards

The St James Village Orchard - a fundraising case study

Visit the [St James Village Orchard Website](http://www.stjamesvillageorchard.org.uk) -
www.stjamesvillageorchard.org.uk

The team tell us about the St James Village Orchard Project; the idea, the fundraising and their hopes for the orchard.

What initiated the St James Village Orchard Project?

An idea, an opportunity and a like-minded, committed team.

The idea for an orchard on the Greshaw Green Enclosure (an acre of land shared by the village since the 1845 Inclosure Act) had existed for several years in the mind of our local tree warden. When the land came up for rental again at the end of its existing tenancy early in 2009 the idea was shared, debated and adopted by half a dozen villagers who, including the warden, formed the initial project team. The team had, we found, a wide variety of backgrounds, experience and interests covering farming, trees and horticulture, project management, community work, and food. The St James Orchard Project Team made an outline proposal to the trustees of the Greshaw Green, a charitable body, for a long lease on the field. This was received with warm support and set the stage for a lot of detailed work.

What was the reaction of community members? How did you build support?

As people in the village got to hear about the initiative, their reaction was very good, varying from supportive comments to donations, contributions of time, and use of large scale machinery. Throughout, we made certain that we could show that we knew what we were about and that the project was demonstrably viable. However, we deliberately did not make a lot of noise

until we were sure that the project could proceed - particularly until the funding and lease of the land were secure. Once this stage had been achieved towards the end of 2009 we broadened the audience, culminating in a high-quality two page news-letter in February this year that went to every household in the village and to friends and supporters wider afield.

Tell us how you went about fundraising for the project.

Fundamental was to have a compelling and clear story of what we wanted to achieve with the orchard and why, of its local and wider importance, and of how we could and would succeed. Armed with this, with a plan and a detailed budget, and with demonstrable local support, we built a portfolio of supportive organisations (The National Trust, Common Ground, local councils and councillors etc.) in parallel with researching potential sources of funds. We also had to agree a long-run lease of the land from the responsible trustees, who also became strong supporters of the project.

Armed with all this (and more) we researched local and national sources of funding. This included commercial, charitable and government bodies and those with National Lottery connections. We tried to make sure that all applications were appropriate to the likely scale of the funding body and their potential contribution and that there were items and activities that they could pick out and identify their specific support with. After about 6 months and much work we had funded not only the initial creation of the orchard but, vitally, had gathered contributions to ongoing care and maintenance. Our funding sources were The Adnams Charity, Local Food/The Big Lottery Fund, The Co-operative Membership, Waveney District Council and Suffolk County Council. Just as pleasing and important were the contributions from local people who just plain liked the idea.

What are your plans for the future of the St James Orchard?

The orchard has always been intended to be more than a source of a wide variety of locally grown fruit available to the village and additional funds for our sponsoring trustees. We will be encouraging wildlife (notwithstanding the rabbit and deer guards), especially birds and insects. Beehives are in the plan, and benches for human visitors to relax in the orchard clearing while enjoying picnics or other village events. We also expect to involve many more people in the practicalities of fruit harvesting, supporting the orchard and its management. As the orchard matures and there is more to see, we expect to involve local groups interested in wildlife, orchard management and fruit varieties (since we have a number of varieties particular to Suffolk), hopefully including young people from local schools.

St James South Elmham, while a small village, is lucky to have a string of places of great interest to wildlife including a SSSI, a fine old church and churchyard, a village wood planted in 2002 and many other areas in and around the village and its surrounding agriculture. We intend to link the orchard into this chain of special places.