

Greener Futures

Orchard Sub-Committee

Presentation to Warboys Parish Council 13th July 2009

Who Are We?

- **We are a small group of people who have been set up as a sub-group of the Greener Futures Group. The project leader is Bob Hayne and other members include, Simon Davies, Michael James, Evan Tringham and David Ball. We are not exclusive and welcome new members**

What have we done so far?

- **Met on a regular basis**
- **Had a Greener Futures talk by a member of the Little Downham Orchard Project**
- **One member has attended a Tree and Orchards Seminar organised by Farming & Countryside Education (FACE)**
- **Canvassed opinion at the School Fete to make a sounding of local opinion. Simon Davies is continuing this work in the Newsagents.**
- **Made an outline draft of a business plan based on the Little Downham model.**

What would be the objectives of a Community Orchard?

- **The first thing to emphasise that the fruit would only be one aspect of the project.**
- **Perhaps the most important objective would be the provision of an area of biodiversity in an increasingly urbanised village (orchards do this much more rapidly than a conventional wood)**
- **To help in the conservation of local fruit varieties**
- **To provide a focus for local efforts for growing and using fruit**
- **To provide a place for children to learn about the natural environment**
- **To provide fruit for local people.**

What would we need to start?

- **LAND!** We recognize that land is the vital first step and we are researching the possibilities locally
- **How much?** At least half an acre and preferably more. It would not be sensible to have anything without at least a 20 year lease or equivalent.
- **Trees.** There is a very useful organisation called the East of England Apples and Orchards Project
www.applesandorchards.org.uk
We can purchase trees from them (m106 rootstock) at about £12 each with a range of varieties including local ones. They would also give advice.
- **Labour.** It would be initially labour intensive but we believe that we could get support from local people including farmers. The labour in subsequent years would not be great compared to an allotment
- **Money.** This is very dependant on the land and its cost. Other costs would be quite small

Why Now?

- **The role of orchards and their importance is becoming recognised as many have disappeared**
- **There are a number of organisations available who would probably grant aid such a project. This may not always be so.**
- **The village is becoming a dormitory suburb and we should try to maintain its rural character while we can.**
- **Climate change. In a Defra guide aimed at Parish Councils called “Ways to Tackle Climate Change”, which The Clerk summarised on 12th February 2008, one action suggested is planting trees and community woodlands or orchards.**

Next Steps?

- **We believe it is vital that the Parish Council is a partner in the project.**

- **To actively seek land that will become available within the next year (at a peppercorn or small rental)**
- **To seek grants**
- **To continue to develop the knowledge of the group**
- **Greener Futures has worked with Warboys Primary School on a number of environmental projects and the orchard would become part of this cooperative work. The school have shown an initial interest in being involved**
- **We will ask Evan Tringham to put a copy of this presentation on the FOWL website and also to put other relevant Community Orchard information**