

Ide Parish Council

Ide Community Orchard Management Group

Draft Terms of Reference

To be put before Ide Parish Council on 18 May 2022

1. Background

1.1 Ide Parish Council's five year project to buy Pynes Victorian Orchard from the Church Commissioners, for the village community, came to a successful conclusion on 29 April 2022 when the freehold of the land was transferred to the Parish Council. Set up by the Parish Council in October 2017, the Ide Community Orchard Working Group worked, and raised funds, to negotiate the purchase, enter into an option agreement with the Church Commissioners, cover professional fees, buy the land and pay the associated VAT. Assisted by the Parish Council Joint Projects Fund Raising Group, it won grants from Viridor Environmental Credits and the Royal Horticultural Society.

1.2 The group has also tended the Orchard for the last two and a half years while Andy Bragg rented it on the Council's behalf. In that time, the group planted 72 bare root fruit tree saplings, pruned and restored mature apple trees, managed the grass and hedges, protected young trees with wire mesh guards, and put up three owl and 10 dormice nesting boxes. Since acquiring the Orchard, the group has fitted three new wooden five-bar gates, installed a dog waste bin, and set up seven heavy duty picnic tables around the site.

1.3 Over the five years the group's membership was strengthened to include representation from the PC Climate Emergency group and Ide school. It has benefitted especially from the involvement of David Howe who has provided pro bono legal advice and service of the highest quality.

1.4 The Orchard is now fully open to the public from dawn till dusk; and will be a major green space asset to the village in perpetuity.

1.5 It is now time for the Group to assume a management role for the Orchard. Many of its functions remain; and there will be additional tasks and responsibilities. These are set out below.

2. The proposed functions of Ide Community Orchard Management Group (ICOMG).

There are over fifty community orchards in Devon. They have become popular as places for the community to come together for seasonal events such as apple pressing and wassailing, and they provide unique spaces for recreation, productive activity and relaxation - something we have until now lacked in Ide.

The management group will

- monitor orchard use with particular reference to damage, litter and dog waste
- implement a grass and hedge cutting regime
- carry out seasonal pruning of trees
- communicate regularly to the wider community
- promote use of the orchard with community groups and Ide School
- Run open and event days such as the Wassail and Apple Day
- convene working groups for specific seasonal jobs
- commission hedge and grass cutting as required.
- gather ideas for the community use of the Orchard which meet the recreational needs and environmental aspirations of the village
- Decide how the apple crop should be harvested and used, and manage the harvest accordingly
- review and report on good practice in the development of community orchards elsewhere
- identify potential sources of local and national funding to generate income to sustain the project in the longer term

3. Reporting

The group will report to every Parish Council meeting. These are held six times a year on the third Wednesday of each uneven month, in Ide Village Hall.

4. Status and responsibilities

- (i) ICOMG is a working group of Ide Parish Council. It will act in an advisory capacity to the Parish Council. It has no powers to commit the PC to spending and does not hold decision making powers. The ICOMG may liaise with other Parish Councils and consult with other organisations.
- (ii) The final version of the Terms of Reference shall be subject to approval by the Parish Council at a full PC meeting

5. Time

The ICOMG will be constituted for an initial period of two years from adoption of its Terms of Reference by the Parish Council, when its role and functions shall be reviewed. This period may be extended by the Parish Council at a full PC meeting.

6. Membership

- (i) The Parish Council will convene a management group to curate, run and develop the use of the Orchard. This will initially be based on the current working group members. The chair of the group and parish council may wish to suggest inviting new members with additional expertise.
- (ii) The Management Group will need around 10 members to function well, two of whom will be members of the PC.
- (iii) Criteria for serving on the group will include:
 - Horticultural and fruit tree knowledge and experience
 - Experience in managing community projects
 - A willingness to commit significant time to the project
 - Local agricultural knowledge and networking

7. Meetings

- (i) Meetings need not be open to the public or publish agendas, as this is not a formal committee. The group will publish the approved minutes of its meetings on the village website.
- (ii) Meetings will be held at least every two months, after 6.30pm, at a location to be agreed, or by remote conferencing.

8. Conflicts of interest

Members of the group who have a prejudicial interest in a matter on the agenda must declare that interest at the start of the meeting. If the interest is of significant pecuniary value to themselves or the organisation they represent, they must absent themselves from the room for discussion of that item and not vote on that matter.

9. Expenses

The group has no budget, and reimbursement of members' time will not be made. Food and drink expenses will not be reimbursed. The group may however apply to the PC for reasonable out of pocket expenses incurred in the course of its work.

Nick Bradley
Peter Cloke

11 May 2022