**IDE COMMUNITY ORCHARD**

**PROPOSAL FOR THE SETTING UP OF A “FRIENDS” GROUP FOR FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS THE UPKEEP OF THE ORCHARD**

The Parish Council and the Orchard sub-Committee have worked extremely hard over the last six years, raising the funds to purchase the orchard from the Church Commissioners, and planting the many varieties of trees that are now in place,

Ide now has an accessible open green space, its own ”area of natural beauty”. There are many of us using and enjoying the orchard, whether walking the dog or just taking in the view and appreciating nature.

There will obviously be ongoing expenses involved in maintaining the hedges and paths, caring for the trees, and generally keeping the grass under control. This is expected to cost in the region of £2,000 per year and unlike that planned for Weir Meadow, there is no regular source of income – there may be fund-raising events in the future, such as apple juicing, and wassailing.

My proposal is to ask villagers if they would consider paying an annual subscription of say £30, by bank standing order, into the existing Parish Council Community Orchard account. This could be sold to them as becoming “Friends of Ide Community Orchard”.

I suggest promoting the idea in August’s Ide Times, and on Facebook, and details could be picked up from the Community Shop. I would ask that the standing order forms be returned to me, either at 4 St Ida’s Close, or at the shop, and I will liaise with Mel accordingly, as I don’t want to burden her with extra work.

If we make the date of the first payments to be 1st October 2022 and annually thereafter, there is plenty of time to deal with the paperwork before the first payments are due.

Please contact me if you require any further information

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5th July 2022