

From Mark Thomas, chair, Ide Community Orchard Management Group

Since the last Parish Council Meeting, Ide Community Orchard Management Group has met once. It was agreed to proceed with plans for a website which Ben Ervine has kindly agreed to host free of charge. He has produced a dummy version of what it might look like - some stills of which are attached. The Group thought it looked terrific.

We will also be purchasing a nest box with a wildlife camera, using money from an RHS grant. We'll share any images on our new website - and with other interested parties.

A Management Plan is also being put together by Julian Perrett. Hopefully we may be able to discuss this at our PC meeting.

It's been a busy time in the Orchard. On 22nd July, Mark, James Romain and Guy Richardson spent the day levelling the ground beneath the tables. The following weekend a group of volunteers spread chippings beneath them.

Last week James cut the grass on the paths and around the benches and Paula and Mark have also made a start of oiling the seats ahead of the winter - 4 out of seven are done.

We have also purchased a brushcutter to make clearing the undergrowth beneath trees and around benches etc easier. Thanks to Nick B for sorting this.

The coming months will see an Apple Day on Saturday 21st October which we will hold in David and Dee Howe's backyard. It was felt that the flat location, access to water, power etc made it a more suitable venue than the orchard. We'll also look to organise some other activities around the day that are family friendly.

We also hope to have a couple of talks between now and Christmas themed around the Orchard; one from the RSPB about birdlife and another from Sandford Cider about orchards. The latter would take place in St Ida's and the former either in the Orchard or the Village Hall.

Thank you to everyone who has worked so hard on the Management Group over the last few months.

MT 10 September 2023