

COMMUNITY ORCHARD

Proposal for a Community Orchard in Stoke Mandeville

I am a local resident and I have been awarded a Churchill Fellowship 2020. This involves research and projects in the UK and overseas and while I am unable to travel, I am focusing on the local elements.

My fellowship focuses on Care Farming and Green Care for community benefits and locally I have been working with The Chiltern's Conservative Board and their funded community orchard project.

I would like to see if it is possible to set up a community orchard in Stoke Mandeville.

Would this be something that the Parish Council might be interested in?

The Chiltern Conservation Board has received a large grant through the Heritage Lottery for a 3-year Chalk, Cherries and Chairs project.

One element is orchards - setting up new orchards or bringing old orchards back to life, specifically 8 across the Chilterns. I have become involved through my Churchill Fellowship work. I believe they have 4 spaces left at present.

If a parish or local landowner can offer land for the community then the Chalk, Cherries and Chair project has money to prepare the land and purchase the fruit trees. It also has money to train local volunteers in relevant orchard horticulture skills in order to manage the site going forwards.

In order to proceed as well as securing the land I would also hope to set up a local group of volunteers to maintain the orchard going forwards and following training.

Ideally, the land would need to be prepared September / October 2020 ready for planting.