



BECKLEY COMMUNITY ORCHARD

Dear Beckley Villager,

We are nearing the end of one of the hottest summers we have experienced for many a year. It has been a challenge to ensure that all of our trees survive, but a number of us have spent many 'happy' hours labouring in the sun and I am pleased to share with you that all have survived and continue to thrive.

One of our major aims has been to increase the number of wild flowers and to this end we did not mow much of the grass until the flowers had seeded. In early August John Ovens 'topped' the grass and the following Saturday a number of friends joined us in raking as soon as the grass had dried.

It is so pleasing to hear from a number of villagers that they regularly visit our community orchard to enjoy the quiet. One lady told me that she enjoys sitting on a bench and reading. Apart from the trees we have our 'bug hotel' and there has been a proliferation of butterflies and dragonflies. To date we have not seen an occupation of the bird boxes, but hopefully next year will encourage some birds to use them for breeding. Last, but not least, we have our own bee hives.

You will be aware that we hold monthly 'orchard maintenance' parties on the first Saturday of the month. We have a hardcore of helpers but I fear that some of you think that it entails heavy labouring. I assure you that this is not the case and that there are jobs for all, including children, which helps us to maintain what after all is a community orchard for the benefit of all. We hope that you will be able to join us at some date in the future.

For those who have not been able to visit recently we have two new boards to highlight where each of the trees are positioned. One is near the entrance and the other is in the shelter. The excellent carpentry has been produced by John Fisher and the coloured illustrations by Julie Ross. We are considering a number of proposals to use the illustration on postcards or tea towels which could be used as Christmas gifts. If you have any other ideas please let me know.

For those of you who are new to Beckley Village our annual subscription to become a Friend of Beckley Orchard is £10 per household, please take the time to visit our orchard in Otmoor Lane and hopefully you will wish to join us.

Best wishes

Colin Day (Chairman)

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