

Scoping study for the Wye, Severn and Avon Vales IBDA traditional orchard project



Study undertaken and report written by Rebecca Lashley

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Executive summary of opportunities and suggestions

General observations made during the study

1. Much community activity depends on the vision, enthusiasm and leadership of one or two individuals within that community.
2. Much greater emphasis needs to be put on promoting local varieties and supporting owners to think ahead about using and marketing produce when new orchards are planted.

Data, recording and scientific research

3. Individuals and communities should be trained and enabled to access the national orchard inventory and take part in survey work to contribute data.
4. Further DNA analysis should be undertaken to produce definitive lists of Gloucestershire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire varieties.
5. An identification service should be provided to local communities to research local varieties present.
6. A programme of biological recording should be co-ordinated within orchards and training provided to individuals and communities to enable them to take part.

Providing training and learning opportunities

7. Training should be provided for community orchard owners and groups in writing funding bids, building funding relationships, branding and marketing, budgeting and general project management.
8. Partnerships should be established with training centres to offer courses in biodiversity management for old orchards for owners and contractors.
9. Individual orchard owners in target areas, where there is no existing, suitable community group structure, should be provided with management advice, information and contacts.

Promoting the economic use of orchards and the use of local produce

10. The opportunities for owners of small orchards to act as a consortium to achieve fair deals on produce and equipment should be researched.
11. Consumer shopping habits in key towns within the IBDA should be researched and the 'local' message promoted.
12. A mobile bottling plant should be purchased to enable small-scale producers of juice, cider and perry to bottle their products most cost-effectively.

Bringing communities together

13. Training, resources and support should be provided to school communities to undertake a heritage project documenting the changing management and use of traditional orchards in their parish.
14. The development of community orchards should be supported, both to maximise the use of existing sites and develop new ones.
15. Owners no longer able to manage their orchards should be supported to maintain them and preserve their biodiversity value by linking them with local volunteers.

Increasing capacity of existing groups and volunteers

16. Resources should be directed to increase the capacity of existing orchard groups enable them to act as hubs for advice and information and as mentors to new groups.
17. The Tree Warden network could provide a valuable means of locating, contacting and liaising with orchard owners.
18. Volunteers from different orchard groups should be enabled and encouraged to share their knowledge and experience with each other through an occasional exchange programme.
19. Equipment for pressing and juicing fruit should be purchased to allow more of this type of kit to be available to be borrowed by groups for events.

Access to online resources and information

20. Websites for Herefordshire and Worcestershire should be built and populated that bring together advice on orchard management, information on local varieties, advertisement space for contractors, people buying and selling fruit etc.

Effective project delivery

21. Shorter timescales on specific elements of activity should be offered within the life of a larger project that allows communities to maximise engagement and retention of volunteers.
22. A co-ordinated approach between a range of organisations is needed for effective project delivery, aiming to provide a one-stop-shop for advice and information.
23. Project delivery stopping at county borders is a frustration that the IBDA can overcome.

Background to this study

This study forms part of the development work for a proposed traditional orchard project within the Wye, Severn and Avon Vales Integrated Biodiversity Delivery Area (IBDA). The study was funded by Natural England and was undertaken on behalf of a steering group, led by Herefordshire Nature Trust, established to develop a project proposal suitable for submission as a bid for funding. Members of the steering group are listed at the end of this document.

The Wye, Severn and Avon Vales IBDA encompasses parts of Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Warwickshire and Gloucestershire (map below). This proposed orchard project is anticipated to involve communities and organisations from three of those counties: Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Gloucestershire.

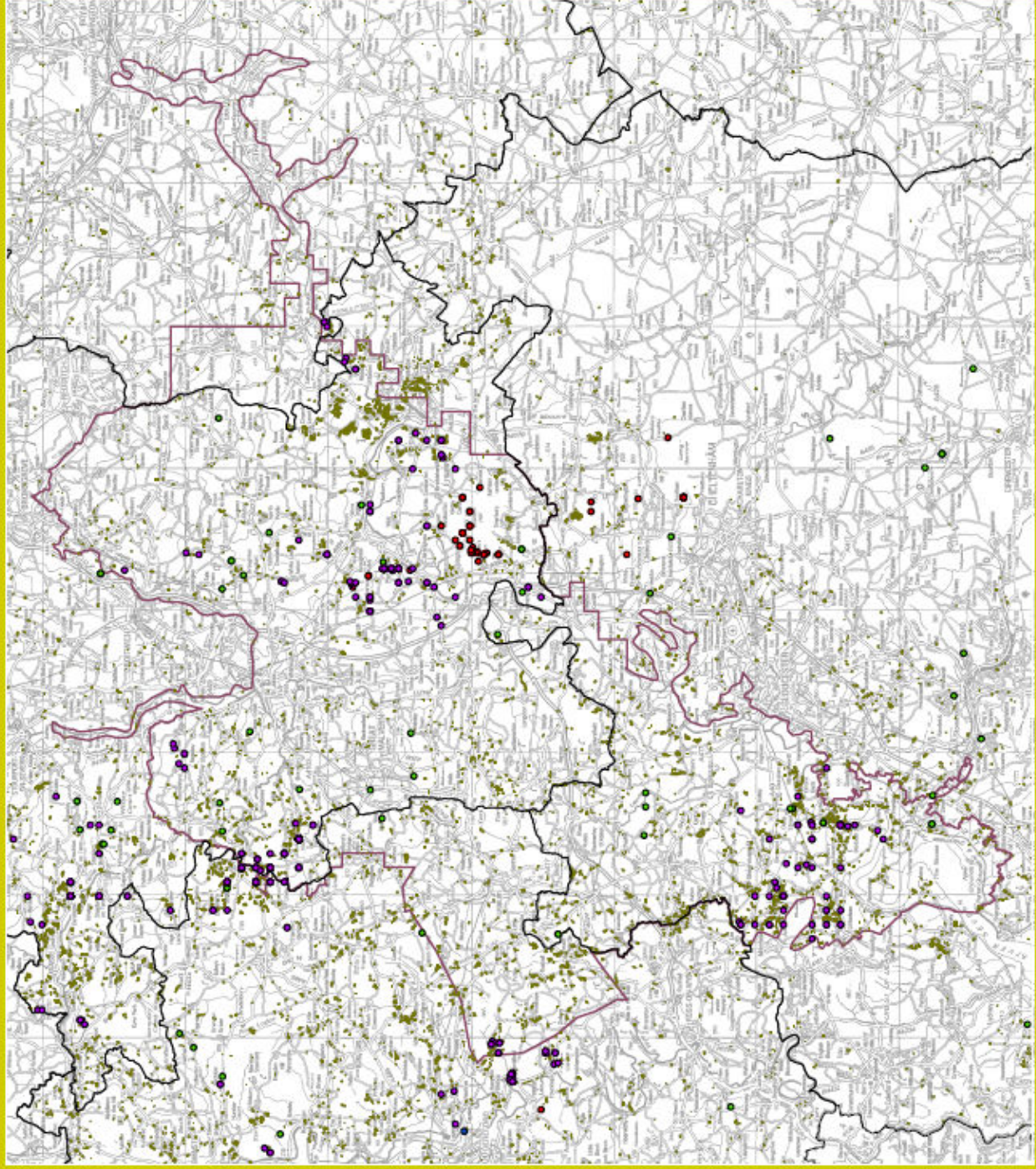
The aim of this study was to explore current and potential community capacity and interest for involvement in a traditional orchard project. The study considered what the scope of the proposed project should be by identifying existing strengths, weaknesses and areas of need amongst communities in the IBDA in relation to the restoration, management and use of traditional orchards. 21 interviews were carried out with a selection of groups and individuals in the three counties during February and March 2011. The discussions that took place centred on a set of questions reproduced in appendix 1. Interviewees comprised the following:

- Established community orchard groups or wildlife/landscape groups
- Private orchard owners/fruit producers or processors
- Parish Councils identified as having a significant concentration of traditional orchard within their parish
- City Councils providing support to or delivering community orchard initiatives
- Parishes who had completed a parish plan and who had identified local orchards as a high priority
- Transition Town groups

The partnership group of the Wye, Severn and Avon Vales IBDA published a delivery strategy in December 2010 containing objectives for project delivery within the area (appendix 2). Delivery of these objectives must be central to the aims of this proposed traditional orchard project.

Legend

- Noble Chafer
- Mistletoe Marble Moth
- Red Horned Cardinal Click Beetle
- Lesser Spotted Woodpecker
- County Boundary
- PTES Traditional Orchard
- Wye, Severn & Avon Vales IBDA



Scale 1:250,000

Map Produced by Earth Observations
Natural England
Map ID: 105_10_1401_000017_004

www.naturalengland.org.uk

List of those interviewed during the study

	Notes of interview on page
1. John Clarke, Conservation Advisor to Kemerton Conservation Trust (Kemerton, Worcestershire)	13
2. Andy Davies, Manager, and Colin Grove, Trustee, of the Vale Landscape Heritage Trust (Cleeve Prior, Worcestershire)	16
3. Dave Plummer, committee member, Hanbury in Your Hands parish plan group (Hanbury, Worcestershire)	19
4. Peter Bugg, Chair of Woodward Community Orchard committee (Fladbury, Worcestershire)	21
5. Lesley Harding, Chair, and Michael Bradley, Treasurer, of the Pauntley Parish Plan committee (Pauntley, Gloucestershire)	23
6. Amanda Reade, Councillor, and Margaret Highton, Secretary, Goresly and Kilcot Parish Council (Goresly, Gloucestershire)	25
7. Jim Chapman, Hartpury Heritage Trust (Hartpury, Gloucestershire)	27
8. Derek Bradley, Alfrick Parish Tree Warden (Alfrick, Worcestershire)	29
9. Pam and Barry Ellis, orchard owners (Berrow, Worcestershire)	31
10. David Sharp, Roger Couzins, Andrea Calvesbert and Mary Pettit, Welland Parish Council (Welland, Worcestershire)	33
11. Malcolm Nelson, John Dodge and Alex Dodge, Ashton Open Gardens committee (Ashton-under-Hill, Worcestershire)	34
12. Kate Wollen, Pete Johnson and Sally Booth, Putley Wildlife Action and Advisory Group (Putley, Herefordshire)	36
13. Dave Kaspar and Helen Brent-Smith, orchard owners / training providers, Day's Cottage (Brookthorpe, Gloucestershire)	38
14. Jane Cox, Jennie Sutton and Katie Wren, Gloucester City Council (Gloucester, Gloucestershire)	40
15. Keith Jones, farmer and orchard owner (Arlingham, Gloucestershire)	42
16. Chris Wooldridge, Transition Newent food group (Newent, Gloucestershire)	44
17. Tim Dixon and Helen Stace, Colwall Orchard Group (Colwall, Herefordshire)	46
18. Geoff Newman, cider producer (Kempley, Gloucestershire)	50

19. David Haslam, John Porter and Pat Woodcock, Transition Evesham Vale Food Group (Evesham, Worcestershire)	53
20. Beverley Kinnaird, orchard owner (Ledbury, Herefordshire)	54
21. Ruth Johnson, Worcester City Council, Rod Howell, Transition Worcester food group, and Arthur Rowe, Worcester Orchard Workers (Worcester, Worcestershire)	56

Opportunities and suggestions for project delivery

The opportunities suggested here for delivery of an IBDA orchard project are based on information gathered during the interviews on successes achieved, best practice reported, problems and obstacles encountered and suggestions by the interviewees of how they, their group or people in their local area might get involved. Also included are practical suggestions on how a project should be structured or delivered, based on comments made by interviewees.

Notes taken during the interviews can be seen beginning page 13. At the end of each set of notes is a bulleted list of the successes/lessons learned, problems/obstacles encountered and suggestions for project delivery made by each group or individual interviewed.

- 🍏 Many groups and individuals are finding training on practical orchard management relatively easy to access. What is very lacking is training opportunities to learn about writing funding bids, establishing and maintaining relationships with funders, branding and marketing your produce, budgeting and project management. The costs associated with such courses are generally at rates set for the corporate/professional sector. This is something an IBDA project could address quickly and easily.
- 🍏 Several interviewees expressed a willingness to act as mentors assisting newer, smaller groups with their development, sharing expertise and the lessons they have learnt. An IBDA project should seek to resource these groups to increase their capacity to act as 'hubs' for the support of other groups and individuals starting out. Likely candidates of the groups I spoke to, although there are certain to be others, include the Vale Landscape Heritage Trust, Colwall Orchard Group, Kemerton Conservation Trust, Day's Cottage, and Hartpury Heritage Trust. Several groups also expressed a desire to engage more effectively with local, private orchard owners if they had the time available to do so.
- 🍏 Three of the groups spoken to happened to have volunteers in common. It would be interesting to explore if more volunteers from different groups would be willing to take part in an exchange programme, whereby every so often they went and volunteered for a different group to allow knowledge and experience exchange directly between the volunteers - rather than just between the group committee/leaders.
- 🍏 Many groups identified a lack of skill and knowledge amongst local contractors as an issue exacerbating the decline and loss of old orchards. The messages about managing for biodiversity and reconciling the management of producing a commercial crop and also maintaining biodiversity value need to be strengthened. An IBDA project should look at working in partnership with established training centres to offer courses addressing this.
- 🍏 Many of those spoken to expressed a desire to see a website established for Herefordshire and Worcestershire of a similar content and standard as that

developed by the Gloucestershire Orchard Group. Of particular interest to many would be access to complete local variety lists for each county but also mentioned were: database of skilled labour available in the area; forum to post requests for fruit buying and selling; place for people who can juice/make cider or perry for others to advertise; promotion of training courses; management advice. An IBDA project could secure funding for the development of these resources.

- 🍏 Volunteer community groups often struggle to maintain the engagement and motivation of participants if activity is stretched out over a long period with little happening in-between. It is recommended that a project should be multi-year, for example five years, to ensure that new skills and knowledge can be embedded, but it may be more fruitful to approach communities with a series of shorter timescales within the bigger project that allow something tangible to be delivered/achieved within each shorter time frame.
- 🍏 Many of the groups spoken to were quite reliant on a key person or people with existing skills and expertise who motivated and steered activity. If this person isn't present within the community it may be impossible to generate long-term sustainable activity perpetuated by the group themselves and it may therefore not be a good use of time and resources to try and set up a brand new community group from scratch.
- 🍏 Engaging communities in orchard activity through events tends to be seasonal. There is a scramble during these times for the limited kit that is available for loan to do juicing etc. An IBDA project could look to purchase additional kit, organising the storage of it with key groups who then co-ordinate lending it out to others.
- 🍏 Several groups showed an interest in taking part in data collection for the national orchard inventory. Current data needs to be available along with advice on locating and contacting owners. At the same time, there should be much more effort given to publicising the need for people to simply get out there and look for old orchards and not be reliant on following a map. An IBDA project could act as a central liaison point for people wanting to be involved in orchard survey, co-ordinating training and liaising with PTES.
- 🍏 Several communities visited were keen to develop or maintain the involvement of their local school in a project and were confident that the school would be keen to be involved. The Worcestershire Parish Mapping project in 2006 worked with a primary school on an oral history project, with older residents of the parish visiting to speak to the children about their memories of the area when they were young. The stories were recorded by the children. The IBDA project could do something similar on traditional orchards and their management. Possible target schools from parishes visited include those in Pauntley, Fladbury, Ashton-under-Hill and Alfrick.
- 🍏 Many of the areas rich in traditional orchard within the IBDA seemed to have little in the way of community activity focused on orchards and it was difficult within the timescale of this study to identify any group or individual to

interview. This was most noticeable in Gloucestershire, possibly because in areas with remaining high concentrations of orchard communities have not been motivated by their loss to take action and form a group. It would therefore be more productive to work with individual private orchard owners in these targeted areas rather than attempt to establish a group. For many of these owners small orchards are seen as visually/aesthetically very desirable to own but orchard management knowledge is often very low and advice and information on replanting, local varieties, pruning etc would be very well received. Target parishes for this, from those visited, would seem to be Gorsely and Kilcot and Alfrick. The parish Tree Wardens could be a very useful network to contact and engage with owners.

- 🍏 Hartpury Heritage Trust, as guardians of one of the national perry pear collections, feel a high level of responsibility to be giving out accurate information on variety types and in particular that varieties to be distributed as scion wood are identified correctly. There is further DNA analysis to be done on Gloucestershire varieties and the development of definitive lists for Herefordshire and Worcestershire may well require DNA work. An IBDA project should assist in securing funds for this genetic conservation work.
- 🍏 Many of the community groups and individuals visited had a strong interest in finding out what varieties were present in their area and establishing/locating a source of new trees of these varieties for replanting within old orchards. An IBDA project could co-ordinate in-depth identification studies within specific areas.
- 🍏 Many of the orchard groups and some private owners were very keen that quality species recording was carried out within their orchards. The IBDA project would be in a position to co-ordinate targeted biological recording activities in partnership with the county BRCs and recording groups, both to carry out recording at particular sites and to deliver training events to volunteers/owners in species ID.
- 🍏 Owners of small orchards beginning to market their produce may be able to get better deals if acting as a consortium if they can be put in touch by overarching support groups. The IBDA project could research whether this really would be the case and develop a business model if it is.
- 🍏 There was some interest amongst communities visited for establishing new community orchards if issues such as land, community support, funding and manpower could be overcome. There are also existing community orchards that have unrealised capacity in terms of their use by local people. The IBDA project would need to be able to provide support to these communities and ensure they were signposted to the best possible advice and training.
- 🍏 The loss of ageing traditional orchards was highlighted by many people as a real issue to them in their local area. Similarly, many owners of traditional orchards are also ageing and no longer have the ability or inclination to maintain the site. This puts orchards at greater risk of loss through neglect or through the selling off of land for other uses. It was suggested that there

needs to be a specific support mechanism in place to help owners no longer able to care for their orchard to get assistance in maintaining it for as long as they wish it to remain. One possible solution could be an agreement between the owner and local community that volunteers would help maintain the orchard in return for community access and use of the fruit. This is something that the IBDA project could help to promote and negotiate in each case.

- 🍏 The Transition groups spoken to were very keen to deliver a project targeting consumers within their towns, looking at shopping habitats and promoting the use of local, independent food shops and farm shops. They felt they would need external expertise to carry this out, which an IBDA project could co-ordinate.
- 🍏 For small-scale cider and perry producers the investment required to increase production to a sufficient capacity and set up a home bottling plant is prohibitive. Taking the product off-site to a bottler can be logistically difficult. There are examples abroad of mobile bottling plants that can visit producers at home and it has been suggested that having this facility available here would revolutionise the businesses of small-scale producers. An IBDA project could investigate the feasibility of investing in such equipment.
- 🍏 It became apparent during several interviews that in setting up HLS schemes with orchard options Natural England do not put enough priority on either promoting the use of local varieties or on supporting farmers to make plans for the long-term use and marketing of the produce they will get from their new orchard. Although this is something specific for one organisation to take on board, the IBDA group as a whole has an advocacy role to play not just with Natural England but with all organisations advising farmers on habitat creation, restoration and management.
- 🍏 Many of the interviewees felt strongly that a co-ordinated approach to project delivery was important. To deliver all of these recommendations would require dedicated co-ordination services from a project officer post (or two part-time etc). Several organisations spoken to indicated that they saw this as critical, to the extent that they were already in discussions about jointly employing and sharing such a post.
- 🍏 The tendency of some advisory/information providing groups to stop at the county border was mentioned during the study as a particular frustration for some. The IBDA project is ideally placed to demonstrate how this need not be the case!

Interviews

Kemerton Conservation Trust

www.kemerton.org

Kemerton Conservation Trust (KCT) was established in 1989 with the express purpose of undertaking research and demonstrating habitat management to address the declines in farmland biodiversity. It is funded entirely by grants and donations, including occasional one-off grants from the founder when finances are tight. KCT employ John Clarke as conservation advisor contracted to do 10 hours per week: in reality he puts in many more hours than this and is very stretched for time to achieve all that needs doing. A part-time warden is also employed for 15 hours per week. KCT recently purchased a small steel container to provide John with office space.

KCT has a sponsorship scheme involving three local companies and one private individual which contributes to the core funding of the Trust. Grants are applied for elsewhere when time and resources allow, but John is aware that budgeting, financial management and managing the admin that goes with grant funding are not his strongest skills. KCT have several grants currently running or just coming to an end - Aggregates Levy (restoring the gravel pit), Countdown 2010 (restoring orchards) and Buglife (crayfish project) but finding money for core staff time rather than projects has proved extremely difficult. KCT owns all of its own equipment used for habitat management as capital funds for this are easy to come by. The Countdown 2010 grant was secured for KCT by the Worcestershire LBAP co-ordinator.

KCT advise on the management of around 1500 acres of land on the southern side of Bredon Hill. This incorporates the Kemerton Estate owned by Adrian Darby (founder of the Trust), which comprises a number of different farming units, land under a management agreement with neighbouring owners and a number of sites directly owned by KCT or rented from neighbouring owners and managed purely for conservation purposes as opposed to farming. Habitats managed include woodland, limestone grassland, orchard, gravel pit (open to the public as a nature reserve), wetland and river meadows in addition to agricultural land important for its arable flora. John has a very good relationship with neighbouring landowners and is frequently contracted by them to provide advice and habitat management or survey work outside of his role with KCT.

There is a volunteer webmaster maintaining the website and a volunteer co-ordinator who runs a 'Friends Of' scheme with a small membership. Friends receive a regular newsletter and are invited to friends-only events (guided walks, talks etc). Most of the active volunteers are recruited from amongst the Friends and articles are also put in the parish magazine asking for support. The Friends undertake fundraising activities supported by the volunteer co-ordinator. A local Scout group are currently helping make bird boxes. KCT's profile is very high within the local area and its activities have also attracted national publicity - BBC News and Countryfile have both filmed on KCT sites. Altogether there are approximately 50 people volunteering their time for KCT in some way, a number that has increased quickly

over the last 5-10 years. John feels it is important to maintain an up to date website and to have inspirational people fronting/guiding activity taking place.

A separate Kemerton Orchard Workers charity has also been set up, run separate to but under the banner of the wider KCT activities. This has a committee/wider membership of 15 or 20 people who work specifically on the orchard sites owned or managed by KCT, including looking after Daffurn's Community Orchard where they organise an annual Apple Day event. The orchard workers also charge out their orchard management services to other local owners at £100-200 per day depending on the management required and how many people are needed to do it.

KCT manages nine orchards altogether within and around the Kemerton Estate and undertakes a range of activities including planting, pruning, grafting, grazing, wildlife surveys and grassland assessment. One orchard site is the community orchard purchased with money raised by the Kemerton Orchard Workers and managed by the KOW themselves, one is rented from a neighbouring landowner and the other seven are owned outright and managed by KCT using their core funds and volunteer support from KOW and other work party volunteers. Four of the orchards have organic status. There is no formal agreement with the owner of the rented orchard for how the site should be managed - KCT looks after the trees, grazes the site with Kemerton Estate stock and takes the produce. The owner has, over time, become more interested in the management of the site and has also had conversations with John about establishing another community orchard in the area. KCT has over 200 varieties of apple and around 30 pears within the orchards and all have been mapped with the Countdown 2010 project funding.

Orchards make a big contribution to 'sense of place' in this part of the county and biodiversity and landscape are the major considerations for KCT when managing them. The community orchard has full public access, with around 20-30 people regularly visiting to enjoy it, and one other has a footpath running through it. John feels higher levels of unsupervised access is impractical when most of the sites have stock on them but groups are welcome to book guided tours. The community orchard has several memorial gates, benches and a few dustings of ashes in memory of local people. Lack of access to the other orchards hasn't been raised as an issue by locals.

KCT doesn't generally consult the local community on any of the activities undertaken within the orchards but John feels they have a good level of support for what they are doing. He is producing a single A4 'job sheet' for each orchard rather than a bigger management plan but struggles to find the time to maintain these. He has input from the warden when writing them but feels he has all the expertise needed to decide on the work that needs doing.

The Kemerton Estate was entered into Countryside Stewardship in 1994 and this was then replaced by an HLS agreement. KCT is also hoping to get its most recent purchase, three strips of lammis meadow, into HLS under a partnership agreement with the other strip owners. The hay and grazing rights would then be optioned to

other landowners each year. KCT have recently entered into a partnership with Buglife to establish a white-clawed crayfish ARK site and John would like to get KCT more involved in promoting Campaign for the Farmed Environment activities on Bredon Hill.

Three regular work parties are held to manage the various habitats - two weekend groups and one weekday group. All are older, retired people who want to do something useful with their free time. Within this there is a pool of 5 or 6 volunteers that John knows he can call on at any time when extra work needs to be done. KCT's part-time warden leads the work parties and supports any other activities being undertaken. KCT also pays for the Gloucester Vale Conservation Volunteers to spend two days a year helping with habitat management. They charge £5/person/day which John considers excellent value for money as it is very skilled labour.

Biological recording and monitoring of species on KCT land is a high priority and John is very keen to increase this. Several local people volunteer their time for ongoing surveys of glow worms and arable flora. The county recorders/naturalists also regularly record on KCT land, either individually or as part of organised field days on specific sites. KCT have a good relationship with Worcestershire Biological Records Centre and keep their own copy of the Recorder database. They work closely with WWT, Pershore College and the relationship with NE is improving. They have occasional contact with Gloucestershire Apple Group but generally groups over the border seem reluctant to form a relationship.

Making good use of all of the produce from the orchards is a problem. Fruit from two of the orchards goes to a local veg box scheme: this works very well logistically but doesn't cover the fruit production costs. Cider apples are occasionally taken for processing into branded Kemerton Cider but the man who does this has proved to be very unreliable. An estimated 12 local people take fruit from the community orchard but there is always lots left over and much of it goes to feed the fieldfares. KCT don't currently have an outlet for selling the perry pears or damsons. John is aware that they are not marketing their produce as well as they could be and thinks that this is a skills gap KCT urgently need to address. It is very difficult to make money purely from the produce and all the orchards need to make extra income from grants to survive.

Successes, best practice or lessons learned

- 🍏 KCT have had a very good experience with the Countdown 2010 grant funding, now in its last year. This scheme is managed by National Trust and the main contact there (Kate Merry) has been a huge support and very flexible in accommodating all the work that KCT wanted to do in the timetable in which they wished to do it.
- 🍏 Very good volunteer input and general support for KCTs activities amongst the local community.
- 🍏 Development of the community nature reserve (restored gravel pit).
- 🍏 John has become knowledgeable enough about many aspects of habitat management to be able to give advice to other groups e.g. WWT on arable flora.

- 🍏 KCT has become well known locally for the work they are doing restoring and managing orchards and undertaking ongoing monitoring of species.

Problems and obstacles

- 🍏 It can be hugely difficult to reconcile the financial year that many funders work to with the timescale of carrying out orchard management, survey or restoration work. KCT often finds itself out of sync and misses deadlines or can't spend a grant within the strict time constraints because of factors outside of its control e.g. the weather.
- 🍏 The level of expertise needed to identify fruit varieties is few and far between.
- 🍏 The health and safety considerations required when managing orchards and harvesting produce using volunteers causes a headache.
- 🍏 Maintaining and servicing machinery is a time-consuming job.
- 🍏 Crucial to maintain high standards in biological recording and finding sufficiently skilled experts year on year can be difficult - results in varying standards of data collection and identification.
- 🍏 Almost impossible to find core funding for conservation advisor and warden posts except where these are linked to project delivery. Basic admin, machinery maintenance, volunteer supervision time etc very difficult to fund.
- 🍏 Need more expertise for marketing produce.
- 🍏 Grazing sites can be logistically difficult with managing livestock movements.

Suggestions for inclusion within an IBDA orchard project, including ways in which communities/existing orchard groups could contribute

- 🍏 KCT have a lot of expertise to share in orchard restoration and management. If the core funding is there for staff time then much more liaison, advice, training etc could be done.
- 🍏 John would also be very happy to share his knowledge and expertise with other groups on a private consultancy basis.
- 🍏 KCT sites could be used for training events.
- 🍏 KCT have already done a lot of work on identifying local varieties and this could be used as the basis for developing a Worcestershire list.

Vale Landscape Heritage Trust

www.valetrust.com

The Vale Landscape Heritage Trust (VLHT) became a registered charity in 2000 with seven trustees. The Trust employs one full-time manager and relies on a further 15 regular volunteers. It also works in partnership with local landowners and graziers to help with the management of eight sites in the Evesham vale. VLHT own or manage 200 acres of orchard, meadow, woodland and ridge & furrow pasture, including owning outright one 76 acre orchard and renting a further 2.5 acre community orchard. The Trust rent office space in a converted barn belonging to another local conservation charity - the Cleeve Prior Heritage Trust. They are fairly happy with their current landholdings but would like to add an ancient woodland site if one became available.

Biodiversity, landscape and in particular raising awareness of the biodiversity value of orchards are the main motivation for the Trust's work, but they are conscious of getting an economic return from their landholdings. Explaining their management aims and objectives to contractors can be difficult, for example the timing of grazing needed to deliver biodiversity objectives. Even volunteers sometimes question the appropriateness of large-scale physical works when these are needed. The Trust is aware that education and awareness-raising amongst local farmers and contractors is an ongoing challenge. Each site has aims and objectives for its management but the larger of the orchards, Hipton Hill, is the only site with a more comprehensive, written management plan (produced with some support from NE). The Trust is currently applying for funding to get full management plans written for all the sites.

Volunteers are mostly male and retired who provide a weekly midweek work party at various sites and a monthly work party at the community orchard: these are maintained all year round except in really bad weather. VLHT also has a 'Friends of' membership, run by one of the trustees, of mostly local people who are motivated by a desire to see the character of the vale landscape preserved. Volunteers put in an estimated 30 hours per week, more at picking time. Trust accounts are also done by a volunteer. VLHT is proud of its record in recruiting and keeping volunteers, considering the small geographical area covered by the Trust. They feel that social connections and word of mouth have been very important in raising awareness of the Trust and its activities and attracting volunteers. Displays at local events can also occasionally be fruitful and the Trust website has resulted in some new volunteers. Several volunteers are also active with other orchard/wildlife/heritage groups nearby and the organisations involved have developed a good working relationship as a consequence.

Most of the land purchases made by the Trust have been funded through Welcome to our Future or directly by Severn Waste Services. The Trust has built up a close, very positive relationship with this local landfill funder over the last decade. They have also received grants from various charitable trusts, Awards for All (Lottery) and donations from the Friends and from guided walks and talks held for the public. They have a funding relationship with Landrover, who have given them a very good deal on a vehicle, and with a local renewable energy company. The Trust doesn't hold financial reserves sufficient for making land purchases. Single Farm Payment, Countryside Stewardship payments and rent from graziers all provides a core source of income. They are hoping to enter seven sites into HLS this year but have not yet had final confirmation that the application made it through the assessment process. The community orchard is ineligible for HLS: it is rented under the Evesham Custom (a good explanation can be found at <http://www.badsey.net/past/custom.htm>!) and NE wouldn't accept this within the ES agreement. The HLS agreement would cover all of the running costs of the Trust as they are currently.

VLHT own all of their own smaller pieces of equipment and local farmers currently carry out work needing bigger pieces of kit under contract as needed. The Trust would very much like to purchase its own tractor and flail etc but secure storage is a huge issue. They are currently looking to buy somewhere but nothing suitable has

come on the market. This situation is frustrating as they know that they can secure capital funding for the storage and the equipment and would then save money on rents and contract fees.

There is little actual use of the community orchard rented by VLHT. Its profile is low and there is no proper signage or demarcation of the site from surrounding farmland (no fences). Management by grazing is therefore currently impossible. The Friends and other VLHT volunteers are really the only people who go there. The Trust is concerned that the site would be used anti-socially if it had higher visitor use. The other orchard at Hipton has a much higher profile. A permissive path has been marked and signed which links with surrounding rights of way. Interpretation boards have been installed and guided walks and talks are held each year, including PYO and other events organised to link in to local festivals such as the Blossom Trail.

Hipton has been fenced into smaller sections so that different grassland management can be trialled to see what best benefits the ground flora (the site is very important for orchids). Grazing is happening sporadically but the grazier had livestock stolen off the site recently and is reluctant to put more on for long periods of time. Better security is needed for stock. The Trust is diversifying the fruit available at Hipton and would like to get involved in local cider and perry markets in the future. Fruit is currently taken by volunteers and Friends, sold at PYO events and at the Pershore Plum Festival. Other produce is taken by local jam and juice makers. One of the volunteers also makes jam and the profits from this go to the Trust.

VLHT has a good relationship with WWT, who have provided specialist habitat management advice, PTES and they are partner in the delivery of the Worcestershire Traditional Orchard HAP. They are members of LEAF and FWAG. Biological survey work on Trust sites is carried out with the support of the Worcestershire Recorders. The Trust is also very aware that volunteers, graziers and contractors have expertise to give and are careful to value this when it is offered. They are conscious to maintain their relationship with regular funders and have also benefitted in the media from local celebrity endorsement (Alistair McGowen is a supporter!) which has raised the profile of the Trust.

The Trust is often approached for advice on orchard varieties and identification and signposts these enquiries to John Edgeley. Andy has also helped with the development plans of several other smaller community orchard groups nearby.

Successes, best practice or lessons learned

- 🍏 VLHT have developed a very close and fruitful relationship with the local landfill tax distributor and through this have found land purchases relatively simple to organise.
- 🍏 They have a good pool of committed, regular volunteers.
- 🍏 They have gained a lot of experience, which could be shared with others, in working in partnership with other local landowners and graziers.

Problems and obstacles

- 🍏 They still feel they have more to do in raising the profile of the Trust and its activities in local media.
- 🍏 The Trust has grown very quickly since its formation and both its aims and its landholdings are bigger than were originally envisaged. They feel they need to gain more expertise in the farming side of land management to help steer the development of the Trust towards being more successful commercially.

Suggestions for inclusion within an IBDA orchard project, including ways in which communities/existing orchard groups could contribute

- 🍏 A local co-ordinated grazing animal project set-up with forum for sharing expertise and advertising/finding services would be good. Need to link conservation and farming with access/availability of local resources and expertise. A one-stop shop for orchard knowledge.
- 🍏 The Trust may be willing to act in a support and advice role for other community orchard or similar groups that are just establishing. Andy has done a little of this but with more resources (so that it didn't detract from core activities) could do more as this would fit within the Trust's remit for education.
- 🍏 The experimental management underway at Hipton would be of national interest to those involved in orchard or grassland management.

Hanbury in Your Hands

Hanbury in Your Hands was established in 2002 for the purpose of producing and delivering the Parish Plan 'Hanbury 2010'. A questionnaire was sent to all 400 households asking residents' opinions for how to improve the environment of Hanbury. A good response was received with many people stating that tree planting was a high priority. Hanbury in Your Hands organised a parish meeting to clarify how parishioners saw this being delivered. Three objectives were identified: replanting disease-resistant elms within the hedgerows; increasing the general abundance of deciduous trees within the parish; and replanting old orchards that had been lost or neglected. An environment sub-group of the parish plan was set up with a volunteer committee of six people and all three of these objectives were subsequently achieved with the help of a £2,000 Community Planning Grant from Wychavon District Council.

To deliver the orchard replanting project an advert was placed in the parish newsletter and three local owners came forward to be involved. All were smallholders rather than commercial farmers. The publicity also recruited 6 additional volunteers who assisted with the planting between 2005-2007. Since then Dave Plummer, who led the orchard replanting project, has been approached by other local farmers looking for advice on orchard replanting or identification of varieties and he was able to signpost them to appropriate sources of advice.

Hanbury have also researched and produced a Parish Design Statement. Volunteers were recruited to walk every 1km square in the parish to identify important features

of local distinctiveness and landscape and ecological value. Hanbury in Your Hands received assistance in this from the Vision Mapping project being run by the Worcestershire Biodiversity Partnership. The project officer was able to spend time helping with events to engage the parishioners and providing basic training to volunteers in carrying out the survey. The finished Parish Design Statement was subsequently adopted by Wychavon District Council as part of the Local Development Framework.

The actions within the Hanbury 2010 plan have now all been delivered, with the only activity continuing beyond the life of the plan being the work of the road safety sub-group. Hanbury are now in the process of writing a Community Plan, which will focus purely on the needs of residents (rather than the wider natural environment). They have recently (Jan 2011) been awarded a £10,000 grant from Awards for All (Lottery) to increase levels of engagement with the community activities available in the parish, look at gaps in service delivery and produce the Community Plan to address identified needs. The funding bid was written by the same two members of the original parish plan group who had produced the successful Community Planning Grant application. The grant has a one-year spend deadline.

A parish meeting has just been held, attended by 20 people. From this a committee of nine has been formed to deliver the Community Plan project and a questionnaire is shortly to be sent to residents. Many of those volunteering for the committee have local business or church interests that they are representing.

Successes, best practice or lessons learned

- 🍏 The tree planting projects received very positive feedback from parishioners.
- 🍏 Two successful grant applications were submitted (no outside assistance to write these).
- 🍏 Parish Plan group worked well with Worcestershire County Council to implement various road safety measures/features.
- 🍏 The parish survey was a huge success and volunteers found for virtually every 1km square.
- 🍏 Involvement with the Vision Mapping project and the support of the project officer raised levels of interest within the parish, provided expertise and was a good way of engaging people in something tangible.
- 🍏 The Parish Design Statement was adopted by Wychavon District Council as part of the Local Development Framework.
- 🍏 Parish Council remained engaged and supportive throughout the delivery of the Parish Plan and production of the Parish Design Statement.

Problems and obstacles

- 🍏 There was confusion between the Parish Council, District Council and County Council over exactly what was whose responsibility when delivering parish improvements.
- 🍏 There is still work outstanding from the production of the Parish Design Statement. A professional landscape architect and a buildings architect were

(informally - no contract) engaged to assist with delivering elements of the survey work. These have yet to be completed three years later.

- 🍏 It was difficult to keep even committee volunteers engaged over the lifetime of the Parish Plan delivery as activity dragged on beyond anticipated timescales. Ideally delivery of the Plan should have happened quicker to keep people motivated and engaged. Several short-term consecutive deadlines to deliver something specific may be better than one long deadline.
- 🍏 There is work to be done to engage parishioners outside of the 40/50 who regularly attend parish events. Communication and confidence of those people in believing they have something to offer is currently a barrier. Many key people in the community are involved in several different groups/events.

Suggestions for inclusion within an IBDA orchard project, including ways in which communities/existing orchard groups could contribute

- 🍏 Believe involvement in an orchard project would be of interest to people in the parish and confident that volunteers could be recruited from within the parish to take part in orchard planting and management. Would be happy to work with us to organise recruiting and training events etc although grant support would be needed to cover any costs of this.
- 🍏 Aware of several more landowners who may be interested in replanting neglected orchards.
- 🍏 One local parish landowner (Terry's at Upper Hollowfields) is in HLS and they hold a lot of community and farming events in partnership with FWAG and WWT already. National Trust and Jinny Ring centre also involved in orchard management and hold apple days, so a lot of support in the parish for orchards, and from some locally high profile people/organisations.

Woodward Community Orchard

The community orchard group first came together in April 2010 when a group of local residents decided to take on the restoration and management of a small, neglected orchard on the outskirts of the village and turn it into a community resource. The site is small (1/3 acre) and had previously been planted in espalier style with approximately 30 varieties of apple by a local enthusiast for his own interest. He had then passed away and the site was left abandoned for a short while. The land is owned by the Diocese of Worcester who now rent it to the group for £80/year. The group became formally constituted with bank account etc early in 2011 with a voluntary committee of 6.

The orchard group advertised their plans and the site to families living in close proximity to the orchard and to others throughout the village who they felt would have an interest. 21 families now pay £20 per year membership of the community orchard group and in return can help themselves to produce. Members receive an email newsletter reporting on activity in the orchard approximately once a month and articles have been written for the parish magazine. In addition, the orchard group has a small number of honorary members: local experts (including John

Edgeley) who are helping develop the site and manage the trees, training the members in management techniques etc. The membership scheme has not yet been formally offered more widely within the community but the site has a well-used public footpath through it. The group are aware of the risk of the membership scheme being abused by non-members taking fruit but feel this would be quickly noticed (the site is overlooked) and they would then find a way of dealing with it.

Management work parties are not held on a regular basis - emails are sent round to members as and when a job needs doing. The premise was that local families joining the group should be prepared to help with the physical management. So far this hasn't been successful in all cases. Depending on the job 2-8 people tend to turn up to help. Currently, management is focused on strimming vegetation, clearing the ground around the trees and preparing new beds between the espalier rows to plant soft fruit. The group are keen to manage the site organically. The first pruning training day has been organised for mid-March and students from Pershore College will also be attending this. There is no written management plan and the group are currently focused just on clearing the existing site and opening it all up for growing. In the near future they plan to approach the Diocese to rent an additional bit of land at the back of the orchard. They would need to grub up some young Christmas trees and then want to expand the available fruit by planting pears and plums.

The group have found the Common Ground Community Orchard Handbook invaluable and used the template in this for their constitution. They have been offered a small amount of funding by the Fladbury Walkabout Committee but have not yet identified a use for it and so declined the offer for the present.

The group would like the orchard to be used for more training events for other local people and landowners interested in orchards. The village school has visited once and the group would like to get them more involved. An Apple Day was held in October 2010 and this was very successful with over 100 people turning up from the local area but also from slightly further afield. Apples were pressed for juice and fruit picked by visitors to take away. Apple Day will be held again this year and hopefully a wassailing event too. Produce has also been picked and sent to Pershore College for juicing and bottling. 60 bottles were made and sold on to members and non-members for a small profit. None of the fruit from the orchard went to waste in their first year.

The main motivation for the group is the establishment of a valued community resource and to let people experience growing and eating their own local produce. Local fruit is moving up the agenda and it is important to give people the opportunity to find out about and taste local varieties - the Pershore Plum Festival has been hugely successful in doing this. The group are also keen to train more people to manage orchards in the local area.

Successes, best practice or lessons learned

- 🍏 Apple Day was a huge success and this will be built on with an Apple Day and wassailing event this year.

- 🍏 Newsletter working well for keeping members informed and raising awareness of what is happening and why.
- 🍏 Several local people and farmers who make their own cider have got involved in advising the group in how to do this.
- 🍏 Peter is also a volunteer for the Vale Landscape Heritage Trust and so the group have access to advice and expertise from this source. They also found the apple event at the Three Counties Show very useful for meeting like-minded people.

Problems and obstacles

- 🍏 Very early days for the group and no major problems experienced so far, they are working within their limitations!
- 🍏 The group have looked into sending committee members on professional training courses in orchard management and cider making but the cost of these is currently prohibitive.

Suggestions for inclusion within an IBDA orchard project, including ways in which communities/existing orchard groups could contribute

- 🍏 The group see the renting of an additional bit of land as key to the next stage in developing their activities as this would allow them to diversify the produce on offer.
- 🍏 Peter feels that being part of a bigger network of orchard interest groups with joint events, training and opportunities to share experiences would be very beneficial.
- 🍏 Many orchards are neglected and a local register of these would be useful so that groups can start to tackle the problem by approaching owners.
- 🍏 Peter has approached local supermarkets to discuss local orchard owners supplying them with produce direct. He has had a positive response but the orchard owners themselves are wary of getting involved and ending up with a raw deal. He would like to find a way to address this.

Pauntley Parish Plan group

Had a lot of encouragement and support from Gloucestershire Rural Community Council to produce the parish plan when grants were available from Defra for their production: Pauntley received a £2000 grant in 2006. The parish is small with scattered housing, low population and few services and the residents felt the needs of the parish had a very low priority with the district council. There was a feeling that piecemeal development was slowly having an impact on the landscape character of the parish and that having a parish plan adopted and recognised by the local authority would allow them to influence future growth and funding.

The parish plan group was initially big as there was lots of early interest. However, the group leaders failed to pin down properly the actions that needed to be taken and people began to drift away. Eventually a new, core group formed who re-invigorated the process with a public display in the village hall and a questionnaire asking residents what they valued. Members of the parish plan group went round

the parish chasing up responses to the questionnaire and they ended up with over a 90% response rate. The village school were engaged very early on and the children produced their own mini version of the parish plan.

Results showed that residents valued the peace and quiet of the parish, its rural nature and the wildlife. Mapping of the habitats in the parish and protection of trees and orchards became actions within the parish plan. A high priority was also the refurbishment of the village hall and this project then dominated the work of the parish council for the next few years.

The parish plan group had tried hard to keep actions realistic and deliverable but it became difficult to maintain engagement from all the participants and support was difficult to find for delivery of other actions as refurbishment of the village hall was such a big project. People were found to be nervous of taking on liability for delivery of actions as committee members and were put off by the admin and budgeting involved with getting grant funding for projects.

Eventually the parish council took back responsibility for delivery of the plan. One councillor took responsibility for writing grant applications with support and signposting from the district council and Rural Community Council. Volunteers could be found for physical work but paperwork often left to the same few individuals. Another grant was successfully applied for to restore a small area of common land with the schoolchildren designing a leaflet for a circular walk around the parish. A wild daffodil bank is now being managed in partnership with Glos Wildlife Trust.

Now working on producing a parish design statement and a character appraisal has been done. Struggling to engage people to get involved as they aren't motivated when there isn't an immediate threat - future benefits message difficult to communicate, hard to get people to be proactive and give up their time for meetings.

The general interest in orchards was sparked many years ago when several local sites were grubbed up and lost. Old remnant cherries, perry pears and cider apples are very common in the gardens of what were once smallholdings. A few local landowners have done a bit of replanting and the school is interested in having a small orchard of local varieties. There have been discussions in the past about organising events such as wassailing but nothing has yet come of this. Hartpury and Jim Chapman are well known by reputation.

Parish plan group determined that school should be closely involved in delivery of the orchard/trees action within the plan as they believe this is the best way of trying to engage a wider audience (getting the parents involved etc). Think a habitat survey of the parish would be very good project for school to get involved in. Not sure there will be interest from many landowners from planting large new areas of orchard. There are some commercial but un-intensively managed fruit farms within the parish who are interested in local wildlife. If land for a community orchard was offered and

they could be confident of support for using and managing it they would be interested.

Successes, best practice or lessons learned

- 🍏 Experience has proved that in such a rural parish strong leadership is needed to keep people focused and projects moving forward.
- 🍏 Built up a very good relationship with the school and the children proved to be one group of residents whose engagement was easy to maintain. Want to continue to build on this.

Problems and obstacles

- 🍏 Very difficult to motivate and maintain engagement amongst the adult population - particularly if the problem/issue being addressed is not yet visibly apparent or directly relevant to everyone.
- 🍏 Now that the village hall refurbishment is complete the group are starting to think about what projects could be implemented next, but are very aware that the same key people as before will be the ones having to galvanise the rest of the parish.

Suggestions for inclusion within an IBDA orchard project, including ways in which communities/existing orchard groups could contribute

- 🍏 Would certainly be interested in making next project one with a wildlife/landscape theme and it would be good to have support from local experts to develop an idea and to help engage interest.
- 🍏 Think a heritage project exploring the importance of orchards to the history of the parish, raising awareness of their ecological and landscape value and recording the stories of older residents would be quite exciting and think there would be more opportunities for this than trying to deliver a physical habitat project. The school would be able to play a big part and this is important.
- 🍏 Would like to develop the idea of themed events or walks - perhaps linked to apple day or wassailing.

Goresly and Kilcot Parish Council

The settlements within the parish are small and houses very scattered. There are lots of small, remnant orchards still in existence, now incorporated into gardens and paddocks. Many residents are new to the area and have moved to the parish to enjoy a more rural life. A bit of orchard is seen as a desirable thing to have included within your landholding as there is a high level of awareness of the importance of orchards to local landscape character etc. There are also a few larger, more commercial orchards owned by a local fruit farm.

Many of the remnant orchards are quite ancient and owners are concerned about the ageing trees being lost. Few have the skills or knowledge to manage an orchard themselves. Advice is urgently needed along with encouragement to replant in the gaps where this isn't already happening. Also keen to find out more about the

varieties present in the parish and to re-stock using these. Amanda and Margaret know a lot of the orchard owners within the parish and think that there would definitely be interest amongst them for a project involving restoration and replanting. Hartpury and Jim Chapman are known by reputation again.

The parish council would certainly be supportive of the parish getting involved in an orchard project and would give all the help they could to publicise activities to residents through the parish newsletter and encourage their involvement. Also happy to use their local knowledge to give contact details for orchard owners so they can be contacted direct.

Advice would probably be much more valuable than funding to enable people to take part - advice on local varieties, where new trees can be sourced from, spacing of trees when replanting etc. Some people might be interested in recording condition of local orchards using PTES survey forms.

Although there is a good community spirit and neighbourliness, the parish isn't traditionally very active when it comes to involvement in 'community projects'. This isn't something that has ever been tried. Many residents are busy professionals and it is difficult to get people along to organised events. It may be that advice has to be given one-to-one or in very small groups - much more scope for working with individual landowners rather than trying to create a community group feel to any project.

Lots of the orchard owners make their own cider at home so produce is generally used. Cider-making may be another way to engage people. The bigger growers in the parish sell to Westons - could explore if there is scope for increasing the number of owners involved in this.

Successes, best practice or lessons learned

- 🍏 Orchards, and their significance in the local landscape, are valued by people living in the parish.

Problems and obstacles

- 🍏 Very difficult to get people to attend community events and activities.

Suggestions for inclusion within an IBDA orchard project, including ways in which communities/existing orchard groups could contribute

- 🍏 Think there would definitely be interest in learning about local varieties, getting advice on re-stocking orchards and managing trees.
- 🍏 Lots of people making their own cider and using fruit - could be another way to engage people.
- 🍏 Parish Council would be very supportive and help us to get information and messages across.

Hartpury Heritage Trust

www.hartpuryhistoric.org

A group of residents of the village of Hartpury set up the Hartpury Historic Land and Buildings Trust (now Hartpury Heritage Trust) in 1998 as a registered charity. The Trust undertaken restoration works on a number of historic buildings and features of the parish and surrounding area, including the restoration of a disused chapel as a community hall.

A decision was later made by the eight trustees to bring a natural environment element into the remit of the Trust and the collection and conservation of local varieties of fruit tree became a core part of the Trust's work and the development of a second National Collection of perry pears began. The Trust is motivated primarily by a desire to secure the genetic conservation of the collection, being disappointed with how other collections are managing this resource, but also by the value that traditional orchards have for biodiversity. The Trust currently has over 100 varieties of perry pears in the collection, plus apple and damson varieties, and these are starting to outgrow the original site.

The Trust were gifted a 25 acre arable field in 2005 on which they secured agri-environment funding to restore the grassland, establish an orchard and create an area of wetland. Grants were also successfully applied for: the largest being £250k from the Heritage Lottery and £100k from the Regional Development Agency. This funding enabled the building of the Orchard Centre on the site, including a training room and equipment for juicing and cider and perry-making. The buildings were completed and opened in September 2009. A permissive path and bird hide have been installed making the site accessible all year round.

The training courses held at the Orchard Centre are run by a local cider and perry-making expert who hires the facilities whenever he needs them. This provides a small, regular income. A planning constraint currently restricts the number of days per year on which the Trust can use the building for training courses and events. They are in the process of applying to have this restriction lifted and increase use of the building as there is currently more demand for the facilities than they can accept.

The running of the Centre is all done by the Trustees as volunteers (two in particular) and this can be a lot of work. The Trust don't believe they will ever be able to secure a steady enough income to employ a centre manager themselves, but have discussed with Gloucestershire Orchard Group (with whom they have a close relationship) the possibility of contributing to a project officer post whose time the Trust could then benefit from. The Trust is, however, considering contracting a part time orchard manager to carry out the physical management of the orchard - the income received under the HLS agreement will cover this.

Jim Chapman has made all of the funding applications relating to the Orchard Centre to date and has recently approached HLF for further support to develop the site. They are waiting for feedback on this next phase - construction of a meeting room, purchase of an additional 17 acres of land to extend the orchard and further DNA analysis to correctly identify varieties in the Hartpury and Malvern National

Collections. These are the Trust's three main priorities for their orchard work over the next few years.

Once mature all of the fruit from the orchard will go for cider and perry and the dessert apples marketed locally. They currently buy in all of the fruit needed during the training courses. The HLS agreement has another five years left to run and the Trust hope that by then they will be generating an income from the fruit.

In terms of involvement in the IBDA project, Jim feels that the DNA analysis and development of the National Collections are the most important things for the group to consider as these have relevance for all three counties. The meeting room and land purchase he will continue to pursue funding for anyway. A project officer shared between several groups (initially GOG and Hartpury?) but potentially working across the whole of the IBDA area would also be hugely valuable and take a great deal of pressure off the committees of existing orchard groups who are doing a massive amount of work voluntarily.

The Trust's charitable activities are currently limited to within the village and they are still also engaged in various building restoration projects. They have been unsuccessful in attracting local financial support through a membership scheme, finding that having a diverse remit (historic buildings and orchards) seems to work against them. They are currently looking to set up two Friends Of groups, one for the historic buildings work and one for the Orchard Centre, so that people can support whichever interests them. The Trust is also struggling to engage the village school in the Orchard Centre and would like to encourage them to visit and use the site. Local villagers are beginning to use the footpaths across the orchard more and more and the traditional breeds of livestock used to graze the site have proved popular.

The Trust often gets approached by residents in other parishes or has people signposted to them for advice on historic building restoration projects so they do have a fairly high profile in the local area. They have instigated an orchard festival each September, which last year attracted around 500 people and this year hope to add a May wildlife festival and winter wassailing event to the calendar to raise their profile further within the local area.

Successes, best practice or lessons learned

- 🍏 Grateful for the good relationship they have established with Natural England during setting up of the HLS agreement and the support of Esther Collis for getting this area of Gloucestershire, and its orchards, on the map with regards the IBDA etc.
- 🍏 Good success with some large grant applications, thanks to Jim being comfortable with the admin and budgeting that this entails.
- 🍏 Becoming known now within England and also Europe for supplying scion wood for perry pear varieties.
- 🍏 Feel a strong sense of responsibility to supply accurate information regarding the identification of different varieties.

Problems and obstacles

- 🍏 Time to do everything! Orchard Centre currently an underused resource, partly because of the 28-day planning restriction but also because volunteers can only do so much. Lots more scope for increasing the events, training opportunities etc held at the Centre.

Suggestions for inclusion within an IBDA orchard project, including ways in which communities/existing orchard groups could contribute

- 🍏 Priority must be to undertake further genetic analysis of varieties and work to get the various national collections in sync with regards to identification and the genetic information held.
- 🍏 A project officer, possibly employed jointly by Gloucestershire Orchard Group and Hartpury Heritage Trust (and others?), who can drive forward community engagement, cider and perry making and general orchard conservation within the three counties.

Alfrick parish

Several community groups are active in the village and have a good membership - WI, gardening club, lunch club for elderly residents - but nothing focused specifically on wildlife/landscape. WWT own and manage an orchard at the Knapp and Papermill a mile down the road. Only one of the volunteers in the work party there is local to the village (Derek himself) but lots of locals visit the site to walk round. Another local resident (Garth Lowe, the parish path warden) organises and leads a monthly walk around Alfrick and neighbouring parishes and these are popular. Garth is an active and enthusiastic recorder and well known in the area.

Derek knows several local landowners who are replanting orchards under ES agreements. He isn't sure how aware the non-farming community is of the significance of orchards within the local landscape. He has generally found the farmers who are in ES to be open and approachable and more willing to engage with other residents in the village than those not involved in the scheme.

There are lots of bits of orchard remaining around the parish but most are old and unused. Lots of trees are being lost and not replaced and the fruit they produce seems generally to go to waste. Many of the old orchards are now used as sheep paddocks. Owners not interested in maintaining them as orchards anymore and they are falling into disrepair. Derek has gathered together, for his own interest, copies of the RAF aerial photographs from the 60's and old ordnance survey maps and the loss of orchards over the years is very obvious since they began to proliferate in the 1850s.

Alfrick is a very small, rural parish with few services. No pub or school and in danger of losing its shop. Does have a village hall, refurbished with a lottery grant in recent years, and also holds the annual Alfrick Show at the beginning of September - would be a good opportunity to meet local people and promote a project and local orchard

produce. Derek is aware of the orchard group in Colwall as he has seen publicity in local papers.

Would be quite interested in researching and mapping the fruit varieties that are present in the parish but expertise to do this hard to come by. Derek has promoted WCCs Fruit Trees for Worcestershire scheme within the parish but doesn't know how many people have acted on this information. He has involved local children's clubs - Scouts and Watch group at nearby Ravenshill - in tree planting projects. The nearest primary school is in Suckley a few miles away and thinks teachers likely to be interested in getting engaged in a project in the local area.

Biological recording within orchards is probably another good way to engage people. Would need to find a key person within the parish to help engagement and local publicity and be a key contact for residents. Lots of mistletoe in the parish as well and this might be something people are interested in. Would certainly be worth speaking to Garth Lowe about building on the events he already organises.

There is a parish newsletter and a separate short circular produced by the parish council. Derek often has items in this and would be happy to organise inclusion of something to promote an orchard project. Lots of the people who sit on the various parish groups and committees are involved in several things and might be too busy to get extra commitment for establishing a new community group. Might have the most success working with individual orchard owners and by organising one-off events - walks, recording days and a presence at Alfrick show.

Successes, best practice or lessons learned

- 🍏 Several people within the parish have a lot of experience organising walks and talks as one-off events.
- 🍏 The Alfrick Show is hugely successful, now attracting several thousand people each year.

Problems and obstacles

- 🍏 No previous experience of getting the community together to deliver a project - would be totally new and need a great deal of external support.

Suggestions for inclusion within an IBDA orchard project, including ways in which communities/existing orchard groups could contribute

- 🍏 Raising the profile of local orchards and their importance to wildlife and landscape is needed as awareness is currently low. Attending key events such as the Alfrick Show with juicing kit etc and a display would be a very quick and easy way to reach a lot of people.
- 🍏 Mapping the remaining orchards in the parish would need to be done - Derek was interested in the accuracy of the PTES data and the need for orchard presence and condition to be ground-truthed.
- 🍏 Identifying local varieties and mapping where these occur was felt to be important

Pam and Barry Ellis

Pam and Barry bought their property in Berrow four years ago with a 2 ½ acre orchard. All of the original trees are very old but replanting has now taken the total to a mix of 74 old and young trees. The site had been abandoned for around 15 years when they moved in and was thick with bramble. It took two years to clear the orchard to a point where they could access all of the trees. Several are at the point of falling over or splitting open and have been propped up to try and keep them going for a little longer. There is a lot of dead and hollowing wood. The deeds with the house indicate there has been an orchard on the site for at least 150 years.

Pam and Barry are new to orchard management and learning as they go. Soon after moving in they saw a Country Living article about Dave Kaspar and Helen Brent-Smith at Day's Cottage and got in touch with them. They became members of GOG and the advice, support and access to training in pruning and replanting has been invaluable. Have also looked into joining the Worcester Orchard Workers but group doesn't seem to be particularly active. They see the orchard as a lifestyle and do it for the love of owning and enjoying it and not to create a commercial venture. They have looked for support from small grants to help with new trees and management but haven't found anything suitable or that they are eligible for.

They have a mix of perry pears, cider apples, desert apples and damsons and are using GOG contacts to get all the varieties identified. The trees are mostly all labelled now and Pam would like to draw up a proper plan to locate all of the trees accurately. The people who originally planted the orchard planned the varieties to stagger the fruiting so they have cropping over a long period. Management had been abandoned for so long that some of the trees are double-stemmed with both the stock fruit and graft variety coming through - this has caused ID headaches! They have done some replanting, with more planned, and have moved many of the suckering damsons to other locations in the orchard. Another GOG member is visiting soon to advise them on their replanting plans and to do some pruning. They aim to plant a couple of new trees every year and are determined to ensure trees are replaced as they die to keep the orchard going.

They currently do all of the picking by themselves which is hard work and not ideal. The staggered fruiting would make buying in help tricky to co-ordinate but if the amount of crop produced keeps increasing they will need assistance. Managing the orchard is a year-round job. They are also now more aware of the biodiversity value of orchards and of leaving some of the dead wood in-situ. They replied to the PTES survey form and would like to find out if noble chafers are present. Great spotted woodpecker is a regular visitor.

For the first few years they had the fruit juiced and used it themselves but last year began to research the local markets. Two of the varieties in particular are very prolific and so they have been concentrating on bottling these as single-variety juice - done for them by Dave Kaspar. They advertised in the parish magazine and sold a very small amount but only make 40p profit! Dave Kaspar bought some of their perry pears and Peter Mitchell purchases some fruit for use during his courses at the

Orchard Centre in Hartpury. They also supplied their cider apples to Weaver's in Castlemorton after being referred to him by a neighbour so are slowly building up their market. Tried to market the damsons in 2010 but no interest. They aren't reliant on making a big profit but would like to be confident that the sales will enable them to cover their costs, rather than having a lot of produce or juice left over.

They have just had a new garage constructed and deliberately made it big enough to take juicing equipment. They don't feel they have the time and expertise just yet but it is something they want to think about in the future.

The orchard is currently mown which is costly in petrol. They are talking to local farmers to find one who will put sheep in there. Eventually Pam would like to have a few sheep of their own, probably a rare breed, but that isn't practical at the moment.

There are lots of other orchards in the wider area but not in the immediate vicinity of the village although a few people have odd trees in their gardens. Berrow is a very small hamlet and although local people seem pleased that the orchard is being restored they make a small market.

Interest in orchards seems to be undergoing a revival and this enthusiasm urgently needs to be built on: currently lots of enthusiasm in Gloucestershire to tap into. Groups like GOG are instrumental in getting publicity and galvanising support for orchards and local produce. The recent boost in the cider and perry markets needs to continue! Small orchard owners who make contact through groups like GOG should be able to take advantage of more marketing opportunities as a consortium.

Successes, best practice or lessons learned

- 🍏 Were very lucky to find GOG and to become a part of that support network. Without the advice and training available they would definitely be struggling both to manage the orchard and use the produce.
- 🍏 Feel that having varieties correctly identified is very important when starting to process and market produce.

Problems and obstacles

- 🍏 The orchard was in such a neglected state when they took it on and the huge trees are difficult to manage.

Suggestions for inclusion within an IBDA orchard project, including ways in which communities/existing orchard groups could contribute

- 🍏 Practical training was the most important thing for them when they took on the orchard - in pruning, replanting etc. Having a support network through which people can easily access these things is essential.
- 🍏 Assisting small orchard owners to access markets, possibly as a group to make better deals easier to find and negotiate.

Welland Parish Council

There are many old, neglected orchards and odd, remnant trees within the parish and it seems as if the produce from these is generally wasted, a lot of fallen fruit left. The largest orchard remaining in Welland is owned by an elderly couple who used to have a contract with Bulmers. This lapsed a few years ago as age and illness meant that they could no longer manage the upkeep of the orchard and since then the fruit here has gone to waste too and trees are starting to be lost and not replaced. There may be scope for organising community access to help manage the orchard and harvest the fruit. More likely to accept an approach in partnership with the village school and arranging visits for the children, or holding one-off events, rather than unrestricted access.

David remembers seeing an advert in Malvern Gazette a few years ago asking for surplus fruit - can't recall who was asking but would definitely like to tap into a network where produce can be used. Think the marketing of local produce is being suppressed by foreign imports.

The parish council are very conscious of the risk of losing orchards through development and a few sites have been lost this way in recent years which is seen as a shame. They would be happy to help liaise with orchard owners in the parish. The council own a small piece of land by the playing field and would consider planting fruit trees here - although not sure the management of trees or grass would be easy to organise and are concerned about attracting wasps to the play area.

Mary owns a small orchard, just under 2 acres, which is managed by her daughter and son-in-law. They would definitely value advice on restoring and replanting it and know of other owners who would too. The school have visited the orchard and she would be happy to make that a more regular thing.

PC think there would be interest from community in getting involved. There is a village fete each year and this would be a good opportunity to promote the project and gain interest. There is quite a bit going on in the parish, various clubs, but nothing wildlife/natural environment related. Think publicity at the fete will be more successful than trying to get people along to a separate meeting. People in the parish have proved to be good at coming up with ideas for projects/improvements and supporting fundraising events but not to get stuck in when physical work is required - contractors have always had to be brought in.

Successes, best practice or lessons learned

- 🍏 School are keen to get out into local orchards and would probably be easily persuaded to take part in activities.
- 🍏 Village events are always popular and well-supported.

Problems and obstacles

- 🍏 Lot of fruit going to waste across the parish.

Suggestions for inclusion within an IBDA orchard project, including ways in which communities/existing orchard groups could contribute

- 🍏 As owners age and are no longer able to manage their orchards, there needs to be a support mechanism in place to help them to maintain the site as long as they wish to keep it. This is the moment when orchards are most at risk of loss as land is sold off for other uses, including housing development, or the site becomes so neglected that restoring it would be just too much work for new owners.

Ashton Open Gardens

www.ashtonopengardens.co.uk

The open gardens event has been running in the village for 34 years, starting as a fundraiser for the church with other donations now made to the community hall, school and local groups such as the guides and WI. There has been an official, constituted organising committee (currently of 5) for 10 years.

The annual weekend event attracts over 1000 people into Ashton-under-Hill so the committee are conscious of the need to maintain the goodwill of residents as the disruption is significant. The event is aimed at garden enthusiasts, strictly focused on gardens and garden produce and provides an opportunity for local businesses to market plants and other garden wares. Local charities also have stands to publicise themselves. The donation to village afterwards is important to demonstrate the positive impact of the event.

The event has a website which gets a large amount of traffic and a database of enquiries is kept for publicity mailings. Visitors are charged £5 and come from all over the world. Coaches bring people from towns all over the UK. Event contributes significantly to the local economy, attracting and keeping people in the local area. Situated on the southern edge of Bredon Hill, Ashton is excellently located in the landscape and near to towns such as Evesham for attracting gardening people.

Garden owners work hard during the event welcoming visitors and talking to them about their gardens. There is a big focus on the whole visitor experience. The committee always hold a meeting to analyse the success of an event before starting to plan the next. They have found it relatively easy to get people helping on the day, with car parking etc, but difficult to get organisational support all year round for planning. They are competing with the other village organisations for people's time and resources and it is often the same people you see on each committee.

Group were interested in the idea of an orchard project and immediately saw the relevance to their own area of work in wanting to promote growing and use of local produce. They were aware of many old orchards that have been lost around the village in the last 100 years leaving few large orchards remaining. Those that still exist are generally attached to a local farm shop, of which there are quite a few, or owned by older residents of the village. Many people have odd trees in gardens. They thought that using existing groups and publicity mechanisms in the village would be better than trying to establish something new from scratch. There is a

parish magazine and website. The local school, Bredon Hill Middle, are currently thinking of planting a small orchard.

The group thought that there would be quite a bit of interest in establishing a community orchard if the land could be found but weren't sure that many owners would be keen to give public access. However, they knew of a couple who might possibly be interested with the right approach. Important to promote the ethos of growing and using your own fruit and veg before the knowledge and encouragement to do this disappears. A community orchard and allotment project might be something that the Community Hall Committee was better placed to take forward as they look after the small amount of parish-owned community open space. People in the village do work together well on projects and organising events. A way forward might be to publicise the potential and organise a trip to see another local community orchard in action - Daffurn's in Kemerton?

Advised that it would be very important to engage the Parish Council early on, as they had strong links with (or were themselves) the older, more established residents within the village. These are the people who own the larger parcels of land and who will have memories of Ashton when fruit growing was more of a tradition. They will need to be shown the benefits to the village of getting involved in a project. The new comers will generally provide the energy and enthusiasm!

Local owners with a few trees generally gather their own fruit but there is inevitably a bit of waste. One lady puts her fallen fruit in a barrow by the road and asks for charity donations in return for it. A lot of local people are now aware that she does this and buy fruit to support the charity collection. Lots of people also make their own jams etc. One orchard owner also keeps bees.

The group were warm to the idea of including local orchards within the open gardens tour in subsequent years if the owners happy to get involved to promote management, produce and wildlife.

Successes, best practice or lessons learned

- 🍏 Organisation and running of the event has been honed over many years and is now hugely successful. Very experienced committee and supportive and experienced garden owners.
- 🍏 Close knit network of orchard owners and older residents within the village whose knowledge and skills would be invaluable - needs to be accessed carefully, probably through an existing village group.

Problems and obstacles

- 🍏 Difficult to get people to commit to ongoing involvement/work throughout the year due to busy lives.

Suggestions for inclusion within an IBDA orchard project, including ways in which communities/existing orchard groups could contribute

- 🍏 Open Gardens event would provide excellent vehicle for raising awareness and establishing support for involvement in a project.
- 🍏 Likely to be interest in the establishment of community orchard/allotment area within the village - would probably have support of newer residents in particular, who may not have the grow-your-own experience and expertise to do it on their own at home.
- 🍏 Village school likely to be keen to take part.

Putley Wildlife Action and Advisory Group www.putley.org.uk

The Putley Parish Plan was published in 2008 and within this were actions to undertake a biodiversity survey of the parish and produce a parish biodiversity plan. Production of the biodiversity plan was spearheaded by one resident in particular who arranged for one of Bulmer's employees, then doing a Masters degree, to produce it on behalf of the parish as part of his coursework. An action in the biodiversity plan was to establish a wildlife group and this was done in August 2010.

The group is now constituted with an organising committee of four. Since August a number of talks have been arranged from local experts on various topics, a training day held to get people involved in the Herefordshire woodpecker project and one work party organised to restore a village pond. Talks are popular, attracting between 15-40 people depending on topic. Work party was less well attended and the group are keen to promote the importance of getting involved with the physical work too. The people attending the events are generally enthusiastic beginners - lot of interest and passion in local wildlife and habitats. Several people on the committee and within the core wider group are already active recorders - bats and dormice - and their expertise helps to encourage others.

One of the committee is an orchard owner in Putley. Unfortunately she wasn't at this meeting but their website is fantastic - www.onceuponatree.co.uk/ - they run cropshare and sponsor-a-tree schemes as well as making cider, perry and juice and run/host a range of events throughout the year as part of the Community Supported Agriculture initiative. There are also quite a few smallscale cider-makers in the local area.

The group have built up a high profile in the village using the parish magazine and posters and also emailing updates and reminders direct to those who have attended events. They are keen to share their experiences and that the groups successes are duplicated elsewhere.

They would like to develop their advice and advocacy role and have focused so far on talking to local landowners about hedgerow management. There are lots of orchards around the village - some commercial fruit farms and some old, often neglected traditional orchards. Owners find it difficult to make the traditional orchards pay and many have warned that they don't intend to maintain the sites anymore but let

them fall into disrepair and the trees die off. Many are used as horse and sheep paddocks. Some of the traditional orchards are slowly being converted to commercial orchards with smaller stock as the old trees are lost. Many residents are also very tidy-minded and the group has often found that this conflicts with the biodiversity messages they are trying to get across.

One or two orchard-owning/landowning members of the group might be willing to establish new orchards, with support for purchasing trees and guards. It was suggested that this could be done with a parish tree-planting event - although as it would be on private land it may be difficult to engage community. There isn't any parish-owned land in the village apart from a tiny village green and so finding suitable publically accessible land might be difficult and limit opportunities for community orchard/allotment. It was suggested that they could perhaps approach Bulmers or Westons for support for a planting project.

The group thought it would be difficult to encourage older owners to maintain old trees and re-stock ageing orchards. Would be keen for an article in the parish magazine to start to raise awareness of the issue of old trees being lost and try and generate support. Incentives (financial support) would certainly be needed by many to keep their old orchards going. Trying to enforce maintenance with TPOs etc would just alienate people.

Successes, best practice or lessons learned

- 🍏 The group has built up a high profile very quickly, has support from other groups such as the Parish Council because of the Parish Plan link and there is momentum that needs to be maintained.
- 🍏 They have established links with several local experts and would have the support available to get more involved in biological recording in orchards.
- 🍏 Many residents clearly have an interest and enthusiasm for learning more about local biodiversity.

Problems and obstacles

- 🍏 Lack of public land makes it difficult to do site-based community projects.
- 🍏 Have found it hard to muster volunteers for physical work (although it is very early days).

Suggestions for inclusion within an IBDA orchard project, including ways in which communities/existing orchard groups could contribute

- 🍏 Group members are getting more switched on about local biodiversity and have been introduced to the importance of biological recording and habitat surveys. This could be built on, particularly by encouraging continued involvement in the woodpecker project and, through that, other orchard-related surveys.
- 🍏 Likely to be some interest in planting small, new orchards within larger gardens.

- 🍏 Contact should be made with Once Upon a Tree to see how their activities could be supported and or duplicated elsewhere (no time within this study to do so).

Day's Cottage

www.dayscottage.co.uk

Day's Farm has been in Helen's family for several generations and the land includes a 100-year old traditional orchard. Dave and Helen have lived in the cottage since 1989 and their interest in orchards and fruit production began not long after when they had a huge cropping year in the family orchard and decided to make use of it. They also realised that there was a generation of local orchard owners and cider makers reaching retirement age and fruit in the local area was starting to go to waste.

The money for juicing equipment was borrowed and the orchard harvested but struggled to get local shops to buy the juice. The local food movement and concept of food miles had not yet started and retailers didn't get the 'local' message that Dave and Helen were trying to sell. Finally, about five years later, farmers markets began to be established, public interest rose and the market for local orchard produce started to expand.

Customers at the market began to ask where they could buy their own trees of the varieties that Dave and Helen juiced and so they started a small nursery. They were also starting to build up a good local network of other growers and producers and gaining new skills and knowledge from them on traditional orchard management.

Gloucestershire Orchard Group was formed just after the millennium and Dave has been the chair of the group since it began. A new 7-acre orchard was planted at Day's Cottage in 2001 on behalf of GOG - this was intended to be a group resource but it has generally been left to Dave and Helen to manage it and use the fruit. Two of each local variety known at the time and that could be obtained were planted. The orchards used to be grazed by the County Council City Farm and this worked really well. Now several local neighbours put their sheep in.

Through their own contacts and through GOG the interest in orchards grew and they began to run grafting and pruning workshops at Day's Cottage - initially free but started charging as demand increased. GOG received a landfill grant to help with the building of the yurt and roundhouse orchard skills training centre at the cottage. They have started to juice and bottle for other people and occasionally buy other people's crops if they have had a slow year. They normally pay over the odds for fruit to support other local growers as small, individual owners often end up with a raw deal on profits even if contracted to a big processor. All of their work has been helped by various bits of local and national press and a good website.

They have had to be firm about not giving free training and advice to GOG members as it just wouldn't be viable economically or time-wise. Much of the organisation of GOG activities is really dependent on a few people although interest and enthusiasm is growing all the time. People are starting to come from further afield for training

events and other organisations, e.g. Stroud Valley Project, are subsidising orchard owners to come on courses with them. They have also run events for FWAG, BTCV, NT and Wilts WT as well as individual owners and community orchard groups (who have grafted trees and used these to establish the community orchard).

Dave and Helen would like to cut down on their farmers market commitments as this is very hard work (although generates a lot of interest in what they are doing through face-to-face contacts) and concentrate more on increasing their capacity to juice other people's fruit and running the courses at the training centre.

Successes, best practice or lessons learned

- 🍏 Now have 20 years experience and a lot of mistakes under their belt! Eager to share this with others to pass on best practice and help others avoid pitfalls.
- 🍏 Have training centre established and would love to increase their capacity to run other types of courses - just need the time to organise.
- 🍏 Believe strongly that we need to enforce a culture of apple juice drinking and growing and using our own produce from traditional orchards.

Problems and obstacles

- 🍏 Time to co-ordinate and organise everything that they would like to do, coupled with what they take on as volunteers through GOG. Just not enough local experts and enough time to go round to support all the small groups and growers in the area.

Suggestions for inclusion within an IBDA orchard project, including ways in which communities/existing orchard groups could contribute

- 🍏 Believe that having the support of the County and District Councils and a dedicated project officer has been key to the success of many other orchard projects.
- 🍏 Existing groups need support to increase their capacity and share their experiences and expertise.
- 🍏 GOG has been thinking for some time about the benefits of employing a project officer to support orchard work. Feel that a post (or perhaps several existing people with different skills supported part-time rather than one new full-time post) should look at:
 - Contacting private orchard owners and providing management advice and support
 - Education work with orchard-horse owners to prevent tree damage
 - Engaging with schools and supporting education activities
 - Linking with several local projects on bee conservation
 - Supporting establishment of community orchard groups
 - Re-connecting the networks of orchards along the Severn Vale through liaising with landowners and enabling planting of new orchards

Gloucester City Council

www.gloucester.gov.uk

Many traditional orchards are known about within the city and around the urban fringe that do not appear on the PTES map - this needs to be rectified. There are also fruit trees on some of the city allotments. There may be opportunities for establishing small new orchards on the allotments, although holders are requested to use small rootstocks for any new planting due to space.

Particular orchards of note include Green Farm Orchard: community training days have been held here on pruning, grafting and variety ID. Up to 50 people have turned up to these events. A Friends group of the orchard has now been formed and the site has been made a LNR. Managing the grassland is an issue and the vegetation has become rank. Suitable equipment is needed to cut hay - City Council machinery is too big for the site and cuts in budgets make purchasing new kit unlikely. BTCV have helped with fencing and hedging.

The Friends run small fundraising events such as Apple Days but they aren't getting the amount of support they need from Council staff due to funding/time/manpower constraints. The dynamic of the Friends group works well if their enthusiasm is maintained by consistent support and encouragement. A small amount of seed funding was important for initial training. Found that they needed to be given a clear purpose for managing the site and a sense of responsibility for its welfare. Skills/knowledge of applying for funding and being comfortable handling bureaucracy is also important. Once those skills are in place the group can work outside of the Council or other support body fairly independently and can pass on those skills to other members of the community. Regular top-up training is important though.

Another orchard in the city was planted by residents with help from the Council's fruit tree scheme. Local residents now manage the site and pruning and grafting workshops have also been held here. Events have been successful in raising awareness and engaging the rest of the local community. Management tasks are led by one key person with the relevant skills. The site is being managed for biodiversity with dead wood left and nest boxes put up.

A community toolkit is being developed by the Council for orchard management that can be lent out to any group wanting to borrow the equipment. They also have an education pack on orchards and the local museum has pressing and juicing equipment that can be borrowed free of charge as well as a lot of historic equipment used in the fruit industry. There is a high demand for the presser/juicer in season and the museum itself also holds an annual apple day.

Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust has a mixed-age orchard at their Robinswood Hill HQ and also employs an orchard project officer.

Gloucestershire has a very active Tree Warden network who GCC believe would benefit from training to take part in the PTES survey and fill in the blank areas on the map.

BTCV have recently applied for a grant to work on derelict sites within some of the city's poorest estates on the back of a successful community consultation where a very positive response was received to the idea of using the sites for nature conservation purposes. Possibility of including new traditional orchards on these sites although anti-social behaviour is still a concern. If the project goes well other sites have already been earmarked. GCC staff will be providing a lot of support and training and loaning of equipment.

GCC have been engaging successfully with ethnic minority communities in the city to get them involved in the management of green spaces and raise their awareness of local produce - orchard sites around the city have been key to this. Apple ID and juicing events have been held and the produce from Green Farm Orchard is now being used by the Muslim Mums group, who have been a regular participant in the activities. Local residents themselves (from all backgrounds) have identified projects like this as a way for communities to get to know each other - GCC staff were surprised by how strongly people felt about this. Getting communities to take ownership of 'their' local fruit trees has been very important to this success.

The Council Greenspace project also ran a series of watercolour days in 2010 in local orchards - these were very engaging and really successful with a display event afterwards. The Muslim Mums group took part and they also worked with a group of recovering addicts. GCC would love to find funding to repeat this.

Council are keen to promote and encourage establishment of fruiting hedges. Wild pears are always included in any hedging schemes initiated by the Council. GCC staff would value some additional training in hedge planting and restoration. There is a good staff team currently in place at the Council who are very keen to get involved in nature conservation projects. They also have a recently much improved relationship with their grounds maintenance/greenspace management division which is already starting to benefit biodiversity on sites under GCC control within the city. They have been successful at getting 106 monies for fruit tree planting and habitat enhancement. They try and actively engage local residents when any fruit trees are planted by handing out recipe suggestion cards to local households along with encouragement to use the fruit from new and existing trees.

GCC would prefer any project in the city, and their involvement in it, to be sustainable over a long period (5 years suggested) as one-off ideas/skills and knowledge promotion have limited chance to embed into the local community and see real benefits. Education and community engagement experience would be essential for any person coming in to deliver orchard project activities - more important than orchard management and similar skills. Many of the communities within the city are isolated and hard to reach - need to go in and work with them directly to make a difference and inspire lasting benefits. Within the urban area there is an opportunity to engage with people of all ages from all backgrounds on their own doorstep. GCC feel this is more sustainable than trying to attract people to travel somewhere for a one-off experience that doesn't really get embedded.

Successes, best practice or lessons learned

- 🍏 The orchard community training days and the events held in local orchards have been very popular.
- 🍏 The development of the community toolkit will allow a wider number of people to get involved in basic orchard management.

Problems and obstacles

- 🍏 GCC don't currently have equipment suitable for cutting hay within their orchards.

Suggestions for inclusion within an IBDA orchard project, including ways in which communities/existing orchard groups could contribute

- 🍏 Gloucestershire has a very active tree warden network which could be tapped into for carrying out basic orchard survey work.
- 🍏 GCC has worked hard alongside other organisations such as BTCV to reach out to more isolated and deprived urban communities. This success should be built on.
- 🍏 Other Councils have lessons to learn from Gloucester in the relationship they have developed with their greenspace management section that is already showing gains for biodiversity.
- 🍏 It is essential that any project officer employed by the IBDA project has a background in community engagement and education - even more critical than orchard management experience when working with urban communities.

Keith Jones

Keith's family have been farming at Arlingham for around 200 years and he has managed the farm for the last 30. He is now 5 years into an ELS/HLS agreement, after previously dismissing CSS as it would not have allowed him to farm as intensively as he needed to in order to make the farm financially viable. The HLS is working well and he has a good relationship with his NE advisor. The payments provide him with a guaranteed basic salary which is very valuable. He expects that he would have undertaken small bits of conservation management without the HLS, as he has a strong interest in the wildlife around the farm, but the scheme has allowed him to do a lot more.

There are two old orchards on the farm - one perry pear, one bramley apple - both planted around 1920. He also has a row of old walnuts. The pear and apple orchards have had some new planting under the HLS and both are due to be pruned. The fruit goes mainly to feed the cattle but last year the family juiced some of the apples for their own consumption and plan to keep doing this. The trees are all fenced and both sites are grazed by cattle.

One new 8-acre 300-tree orchard has been planted as part of the HLS. At the moment only the rootstocks are in the ground to see which take. Keith will start grafting this year with most to be done in 2012. He plans to have alternating rows of

local cider apple and perry pear varieties and would be happy in the future to provide scion wood to others. He will cut the new orchard for hay as these trees won't be fenced. He has attended two courses at Day's Cottage on pruning and grafting, subsidised by the Stour Valley Biodiversity Project (a letter seems to have been sent 'cold' to local farmers in the area after the project presumably got funding to offer subsidised orchard management courses), and found these very useful.

He has no long-term plans in place for the fruit from the new orchard. Keith hopes his son will come home to the farm when he retires and so it will be his son's job to figure out the harvesting and marketing! At the moment Keith is motivated by helping to conserve local varieties and by creating a new habitat that will become valuable to wildlife. He has been discussing the possibilities for marketing the mistletoe from the old orchards with Jonathon Briggs but isn't sure this will be much of a money-earner. He fears that within 20 years farmers will again be paid to grub out less productive orchards for more intensive cropping.

One or two of his neighbours are in ES and a few people locally are in the process of going organic. No one else is looking at orchards on such a scale though. There are many remnant old orchards around the village and the trees all seem to be a similar age which poses problems for continuity of the habitat. Keith is very interested in the history of orcharding in England and values them very much as an important part of the landscape.

Keith has been a member of GOG for two years since the new orchard was planted. He particularly values the access to knowledge, enthusiasm and training this has brought. In terms of an IBDA orchard project he feels there is a strong need for all biodiversity work to be co-ordinated as farmers end up dealing with so many organisations and individuals with slightly differing interests. It does concern him that all of these people are not aware of what each other are doing and are not working towards some common goal. He is always very happy to consider carrying out more conservation work on the farm - hedging, more general tree planting, barn owls and bats would be particular projects of interest. He doesn't have the facilities for large group activities but would be OK with having e.g. an NE or FWAG advisor (he is a member) lead a walk for other farmers. He is also happy for recording groups to come onto the farm to look for particular groups of species.

Successes, best practice or lessons learned

- 🍏 The HLS is working very well for him and he has a good relationship with a lot of organisations advising him on biodiversity management on the farm.
- 🍏 The courses he was subsidised to attend at Day's Cottage were very useful.
- 🍏 Really values the knowledge and enthusiasm he has been able to access through GOG membership.

Problems and obstacles

- 🍏 He currently has no long-term plans for use of the fruit from the new orchard and hasn't yet started to think about this.

- 🍏 Many old orchards in the local area are of an age and this poses problems for continuity of the habitat as few people are restoring them or planting new ones.

Suggestions for inclusion within an IBDA orchard project, including ways in which communities/existing orchard groups could contribute

- 🍏 He would be happy for people to visit the farm on organised training or other events, led by one of the conservation organisations he works with.
- 🍏 He is keen for any biological recording to take place on the farm to help inform the conservation management he carries out.

Transition Newent Food Group www.transitionnewent.org.uk

The core aim/motivation of the Newent Transition group is the localisation of energy and food supplies to address the issues presented by peak oil. Forest of Dean DC picked up on the transition movement message about 5 years ago and a popular public meeting was organised. Out of this the local transition group was formed: it now has a steering group of 12 plus a wider membership. The food group is quite active but hasn't to date done much in the way of community projects - tends to be talks and film shows etc which are popular.

Several members are smallholders producing for local country markets. Two others are commercial orchard owners who run their own juicing events for the local community, so there is a network of people involved with the transition group who manage and sell produce from local orchards. Chris used to produce his own cider and suspects there would be an interest in the local area in learning about and increasing home cider production.

The current group volunteers are all busy people and there is a noticeable lack of younger generations getting involved in the activities. The wider transition group are concerned about expanding the demographic of their membership and increasing overall numbers to spread the message to a wider audience. They have not historically had much support or recognition from the Town Council and this is an issue that needs addressing - bigger membership, bigger voice. The group has very little funding outside the philanthropy of individual members. They have just organised a bank account so in principal can now think about funding applications, although this isn't something they have experience of.

Establishing a community orchard within the town could be popular, inspired by the advice and vision within the Common Ground books (Chris will be presenting the idea of a community orchard to the rest of the food group committee at their next meeting). There are a few small areas of public land in Newent - parks and allotments - and could explore the possibility of using these. The transition group has in the past also discussed the idea of a community farm but this was an ambitious idea that hasn't been taken forward. Chris thinks that approaching the main traditional orchard-owning farm shops that already hold public events and discussing developing their programme of activities to raise awareness of the transition group

and the local food message might be productive. This could provide a means of enabling year-round publicity for orchards and orchard produce with key events.

Newent is a big apple growing area and there are lots of local varieties available if you look for them. There are still several independent supermarkets trading in the town, along with numerous farm shops in the surrounding area. All generally have a policy of buying local where available - both fruit and juice. Some of the bigger local orchards also sell direct to customers at the farm gate. There is a wealth of good quality local fruit and veg out there - but do people seek it out and buy it? Chris would be interested in carrying out a consumer shopping habits survey in the Newent area to research the extent to which the local farm shops etc are used - feels the group would need advice and support from external partners to organise this.

There are probably people in the area who know much more about local orchards than the transition group (Charles Martel mentioned) who may be persuaded to get involved as ambassadors - approaching owners of neglected orchards and promoting the advice and support available for management. One food group member works at one of the local farmshops and has been into schools to give talks.

A crop-share scheme was tried a few years ago in Newent at a local vineyard. This was very popular for a year or two but the owners moved on and it ceased. There might be a possibility of launching a similar thing for traditional orchards. Newent generally is a very foody area but most people seem to be interested in the more high-end produce such as asparagus rather than simple apples and pears.

Successes, best practice or lessons learned

- 🍏 The Transition movement has the support of the District Council.
- 🍏 Several members of the food group are, or have previously been, orchard or smallholding owners so there is experience within the group to be shared.

Problems and obstacles

- 🍏 All those volunteering time for running the Transition group are busy and there are few new people coming forward to get involved. There is a particular lack of involvement from younger generations.
- 🍏 The group has little of its own funding.
- 🍏 Historically they have had little support or acknowledgement from the Town Council.

Suggestions for inclusion within an IBDA orchard project, including ways in which communities/existing orchard groups could contribute

- 🍏 There may well be an interest within the Newent area in learning about home cider and perry production.
- 🍏 Establishing a community orchard may be popular if the land can be found.
- 🍏 Local farm shops with orchards may be open to expanding their existing calendar of events to raise greater awareness of traditional orchards, local produce and the Transition movement in the town.

- 🍏 There are several independent supermarkets within Newent and a lot of farm shops so plenty of opportunities for access to local food.
- 🍏 A crop share scheme may be a possibility as this was tried with some success several years ago by a local vineyard.

Colwall Orchard Group

www.colwallorchardgroup.org

The group were first established in September 2008 with 3 volunteers after starting life under the banner of Colwall Parish Council. They have just registered Colwall Orchard Trust (trading as Colwall Orchard Group) as a company limited by guarantee. They are in the process of registering for charitable status and expect this to be completed end March 2011. Have full constitution, articles and insurance for current activities and are currently investigating extended insurance required to cover the running of a community orchard. Governance issues and grant applications have been found to take up quite a lot of time.

The group has 100+ volunteers (63 actively involved, 40+ peripheral who attend events as 'visitors'). Volunteers are predominantly, but not exclusively, middle class (reflecting local demographic), from a range of professional backgrounds – age range approx 5 – 70! Some volunteers are very active in village activities elsewhere e.g. in Colwall Allotment Association, Colwall Greener, School, preschool organisations, scouting/guiding orgs, range of village societies etc. Group is active all year round, with different emphasis according to the season – work parties in orchards in winter, events in spring, autumn and midwinter and less active in the summer. This financial year they expect volunteers to contribute about 1300 hours on events and orchard management tasks (but not including admin). The group's activities have proved to be a hook for a wide variety of different people and have brought many different sections of the community together.

Motivations for the work of the group include: conservation, landscape and heritage appreciation, desire to be outdoors, history, artistic activities, culture, opportunity to do something positive for community, training opportunities offered, fun, social exchange, access to otherwise inaccessible (private) orchards. They are motivated by all three elements of sustainable development principles (including delivery of local, regional and national Orchard HAP). The main stated aim is: to promote, restore and celebrate traditional orchards. There are some quite ill-informed contractors in the area who are not aware of the biodiversity value of old orchards and older, veteran trees are often lost to bad management.

There are lots of old orchards and trees around the parish and one of the group's first activities was to ground truth the PTES map. Most of the local fruit seems to go to feed sheep as this is the predominant use of the grass under the trees. Grazing rights and rights to use of the fruit are often rented out by the owner. There are a few small cider makers around and a small mistletoe market but this is not very well managed. The group have begun selling a small amount of mistletoe themselves and are looking into the feasibility of taking it to Kew each year for the Christmas market.

The group operates at a range of scales: currently in the throes of purchasing land to set up Colwall Village Garden – community orchard, allotments and range of other facilities (6.4 acres) - which will be wholly owned by the Trust; the volunteers work with the owners of a number of private orchards in the parish, advising on management and carrying out practical management; recently started providing advice to orchard owners within the wider Malvern Hills AONB (outside the parish); aware of further demand (as yet unmet) from beyond AONB boundary – have received requests for advice from Herefordshire, surrounding counties and further afield. Owners are grateful for the voluntary assistance to overcome the expense of restoring and managing an old orchard.

The group owns all of its own equipment and storage of this is now starting to become a problem. They are currently considering expansion of their activities via a contracting arm to allow them to meet some of the additional demand for their time and expertise. In terms of requests for their services, they have insufficient capacity at present to meet demand from beyond Colwall.

Funding is received from several sources:

- Annual grants to date from the Malvern Hills AONB Sustainable Development Fund - focus of grant has shifted over the course of the 4 FY involved
- 3 year grant from National Trust (Countdown 2010 funding) for orchard management, tree planting and events
- Some support from a range of small grants elsewhere e.g. WestFest, Herefordshire Council, Malvern Lions
- Regular income from four 'signature' public events (blossom picnic, apple day, mistletoe fair and wassailing). These events are now self sustaining and raise a small profit
- One benefit concert in 2009 raised £700.
- Very small income from produce mainly sustainably harvested mistletoe, small income from apple juice (would like to expand this market) and some income from jam, chutney etc
- Some funds raised from subscriptions – mainly to cover insurance costs
- Receive in-kind support, mainly from volunteer hours, but also through: pro-bono professional services e.g. legal, web services and structural engineering advice, agricultural advice, arboricultural advice and training; donations of trees from Herefordshire Council; discounts from regular suppliers e.g. Vigo, Trees for Life, Silky Fox, Westons; free use of venues for signature events – Broadwood orchard, Cummins orchard, Caves Folly Nursery, Yew Tree Inn, Colwall Cricket Club

One of the orchards they help manage is in countryside stewardship, four in OELS and one other going into HLS. Other orchards managed are not in any agri-environment scheme. Will be applying for HLS on their own community orchard and the purchase of this is being funded by donations and loans from supporters.

They initially brought in a consultant to prepare management plans for owners of 12 orchards and have since assisted in managing approx 20 orchards around the village.

The management plans included maps identifying each tree and a spreadsheet recording several parameters for each tree and recommendations for tree management, general orchard management and planting including a map of recommended replacements/gapping up. Of the owners they work with have found some focused on the landscape and heritage value of the orchards, others just interested in the grant payments they attract. They have found that many farmers have lost the knowledge to establish and manage traditional orchards as they are now generally so peripheral to the farm income. There is a real skills and knowledge gap. Local orchard owners entering HLS have approached the group desperate for advice and information on local varieties and suppliers.

All the orchards they work in are private, although one has a footpath running through it. Access for people is only via the group's activities, including the four main events listed above plus other subsidiary events, and they have found owners to be quite protective/hesitant about letting people onto their land. The volunteers all really value the opportunity to explore sites they wouldn't otherwise see. The group expect to get 100-200 people at the Blossom picnic, about 200 at Wassailing and smaller numbers at a range of events through the year.

The group also undertakes or enables a range of survey activities for invertebrates, moths, bats, birds, woodpecker etc. They provide training for volunteers in pruning and orchard management skills including tree planting and mistletoe management. They have organised juicing events, fruit ID events and have helped with the selection of varieties for planting. They aspire to acting as a hub for orchard planning, fruit tree purchase and orchard management for local orchard owners and householders.

The group feel they have been very effective in working with orchard owners to manage their sites in particular pruning old trees and planting a new generation of trees. They have built up a good core of volunteers, attract a significant number of people to events and have a high profile in the local community and further afield. PR has included articles in national newsletters, presentations at national conferences and establishing and maintaining a website. They have developed a good relationship with the Malvern Hills AONB Unit and the group are aware that the SDF support pushed them to develop their activities in a very positive way that was essential early on.

Main weaknesses have been in raising money (failed to get a Big Lottery grant recently for community orchard purchase), dealing with cash flow issues early on and building sufficient capacity to deal with demand as it arises. Another issue is limited access to fruit for processing into a range of products, as all the orchards in which they work are in private ownership (hence impetus to create a community orchard). They have found that funding deadlines and timescales often do not fit with the annual timing of orchard management and events and this has proved a headache.

The group have now built up their core funds enough to overcome cash flow problems, after being entirely dependent on grants, and at times the philanthropy of

individual members, at first. They are dealing with the failure of the Big Lottery bid by dividing the project up into smaller elements and applying to different grant streams. They are continuing to build their capacity, but there is still a barrier to overcome to move committed and knowledgeable volunteers into taking on a more proactive role and going and speaking to new owners on their own initiative. They feel that they are very vulnerable to loss of key skills and volunteers due to unforeseen life changes e.g. illness, bereavement, family illness etc and know that they need to increase their capacity and support base to grow any further.

They have contact with and support from a range of organisations including having a presence at local events such as Ledbury Poetry Festival, Colwall Fun Day and WestFest. They have worked with the local school and other groups such as Beaver Scouts. They network with other orchard groups, conservation organisations and businesses through the Herefordshire Orchard Topic group and liaise with Gloucestershire Orchard Group and the Marcher Apple Network. At a national level they are linked in to the Orchard Network. Links to other groups/organisations are not particularly strong, largely because there have been no obvious areas of synergy.

Key benefits of involvement in a larger project would be better co-ordination and communication between the different groups out there and the ability to develop and exchange best practice. They would be happy to mentor less well developed orchard groups and host training or other events. They feel that there needs to be more encouragement and support to get people out on the ground looking for and recording old orchards and tracking down ownership details as this can be time-consuming. The group would welcome any access to additional funding and in particular if a bigger project can work to open up some grants that they have not managed to access (such as those grant givers looking to focus on disadvantaged areas). They are aware of the risk of losing their own 'brand' identity though and would not want this to be a consequence of involvement in a bigger project.

They have a limited reserve of core funds to use as match funding. They anticipate gaining further SDF funding for orchard survey work and could perhaps use this to lever other funds for similar work outside the AONB. They are continuing to fundraise for the community orchard, but not sure how funds focused on this one site could be used effectively to lever out funds for other projects. They have a good reserve of volunteers and so are generally well 'in credit' for match funding based on volunteer time – they would be happy to contribute this to the larger project. They have also been quite successful in obtaining trade discounts and pro-bono services and some of these could be extended to offer match funding for a bigger project.

Successes, best practice or lessons learned

- 🍏 The group have been very successful in recruiting volunteer support within the local community and this has brought many different sections of the community together.
- 🍏 They have built up a good relationship with the Malvern Hills AONB Unit, which has provided funding over several years to enable the group to expand their activities.

- 🍏 The group have established a successful series of signature events.
- 🍏 They have found involvement with the Herefordshire Orchard Topic group very useful as a point of networking.

Problems and obstacles

- 🍏 Governance issues and grant applications have taken up a great deal of time.
- 🍏 Cash flow was a problem early on in the development of the group.
- 🍏 They often found themselves out of sync with the deadlines and spending requirements of funding bodies when wanting to carry out orchard management work.
- 🍏 They are aware of the vulnerability of small groups to losing trained volunteers as people move on and lives change.
- 🍏 Orchard owners find the expense of restoring ageing sites prohibitive in many cases once trees become less productive.
- 🍏 Many farmers have lost the skills and knowledge to manage traditional orchards and there is now a real gap in expertise. Landowners planting new orchards, including under the HLS schemes, are coming to Colwall Orchard Group desperate for advice and information.

Suggestions for inclusion within an IBDA orchard project, including ways in which communities/existing orchard groups could contribute

- 🍏 The group have a lot of demands on their time and expertise that they are not currently able to meet and would love to find a way to increase their capacity to allow them to assist more owners and other orchard groups.
- 🍏 They aspire to acting as a hub for sourcing local varieties, providing training and giving advice to orchard owners and to being a mentor to other community orchard groups.
- 🍏 A bigger project across the IBDA may be able to open up funding streams that are not available to small groups individually.
- 🍏 Colwall Orchard Group have a substantial amount of volunteer support that they might be willing to offer as match funding towards gaining access to more funds. Likewise they may be willing to offer other funding they receive as match.

Geoff Newman

Geoff has been producing perry and cider for home consumption for about nine years and over the last two the hobby has started to grow into a small business. Last year he made 700 litres of perry and a much smaller amount of cider. He currently gets all of his fruit free of charge from the family farm and other family and friends living locally, with one other traditional orchard owner supplying fruit in return for some of the perry. He is the only producer that he knows of within the village although there are several in the wider surrounding area. As the business grows he can anticipate a time soon when the fruit supply arrangement will have to become more formal with owners making a charge.

To date all investment in the business has been from his own pocket - no grants or loans - and the initial set-up costs were fairly substantial to meet the food-grade premises and equipment requirements. He has reached the stage now where to increase production further would definitely require external financing. The amount of work needed now each year requires him to take annual leave to concentrate on getting the fruit harvested and processed.

He has attended two basic introductory courses on cider and perry making - at Pershore College and with Colwall Orchard Group - both of which were useful. He then subsequently enrolled on a week-long course at the Cider Academy. This was a very worthwhile course and gave him a lot of contacts for purchasing equipment and also taught him about all the legislative and regulatory requirements for producing and selling for public consumption. Other local producers have been good mentors - James Marsden has been very supportive.

The main motivation for starting to make cider and perry was to make use of the fruit from his brothers orchard, which otherwise was going to waste. Geoff's job as a farm advisor for NE meant that he already had a certain amount of orchard management knowledge. He isn't currently licensed to sell direct to the public (but is applying at the moment) so a lot of bottles are given away to family and friends or bartered for other goods/products. He now also attends the popular Kempley Produce Market, the organisers of which have started applying for a temporary event licence each time in order that he can sell alcohol there. This isn't a long-term solution due to the paperwork required each time but he is grateful for the opportunity to raise the profile of his business locally and get local people buying.

The hardest thing has been to scale up production to marketable levels and gain contacts in order to open up local markets. A particular frustration is that there is no one place to go for advice on meeting the necessary legal/regulatory food safety requirements and the planning requirements for being able to produce at home on a reasonable scale. He has found the food standards inspectors to be quite quick at checking up on him. Guidance on doing risk assessments and health and safety paperwork is also needed by all small producers thinking of selling to the public. A one-stop-shop for advice and guidance on setting up a food or drink business at home would be great - should be something the county or district councils take on board.

All the perry and cider is currently taken to Pershore College for bottling as it would be far too much investment to set up a home bottling plant for the amount of alcohol he is making. Having to take it off site is hugely inconvenient and dependent on finding suitable transport at the right time, then ensuring you can fit into a vacant slot at the college. He thinks that having a mobile bottling plant that can come to you, as they have in France, would revolutionise the businesses of small producers here.

Geoff didn't start out with any particular marketing strategy and in hindsight thinking more in advance about the market and where his place in it might be would have

been sensible. He is struggling to sell all of the perry and cider he made last season, with a little going to a couple of local deli's and one online company. He enjoys selling face-to-face but is struggling to crack the shops. He definitely feels he could have done/could do with more advice on the 'brand image' side of marketing - producing bottle labels and other publicity etc. He has learned that the public are generally very interested in the varieties of fruit going into the product and that this is quite a powerful marketing angle that helps reinforce the local message. The main company selling equipment for cider and perry making also seems to have cornered the market a little and prices are sometimes inflated.

His brother's farm is now under an HLS agreement and as part of this an additional 60-tree orchard has been planted with some of the best local perry varieties. Geoff will have access to this fruit once the trees mature. He became a member of GOG primarily to find out about local fruit varieties but has found everything about the organisation really helpful. He has also joined the Three Counties Cider and Perry Association, which provides more marketing opportunities at their events. Organisations like this do very well promoting local cider and perry to the public.

Geoff has written up his experiences for others to learn from on the national Orchard Network website. This is a developing resource but has the potential to be really good if more people start contributing. The amount of local information available on the GOG website desperately needs to be available for other counties/areas - particularly local variety lists. The Marcher network hold this sort of information but he has found it difficult to access - needs opening up to a wider audience via the web. Geoff would find this really useful for his farm advisory work and feels that NE should concentrate more on promoting diversity of traditional varieties that are appropriate to each area and raising farmers awareness of the difference between pruning for a commercial crop and pruning for biodiversity. The Weston's organic scheme has been valuable for promoting this message to commercial growers and Geoff will encourage his brother to look at this when the new orchard matures. He believes it is important that NE encourage farmers who are planting orchards to think about the long-term management and use of produce: it is important that the orchards are valued by their owners over the ten years of the management agreement and this is helped if the orchard produce is also valued.

He believes that cherry orchards and the conservation of cherry varieties is currently neglected. Few people are focusing on them and old orchards are in danger of being lost. He is aware that the Colwall Orchard Group is also concerned about this in their area.

Successes, best practice or lessons learned

- 🍏 He is fortunate to have fruit readily available free of charge that has enabled him to scale up production.
- 🍏 The courses he has been on were very worthwhile, particularly the one with the Cider Academy.
- 🍏 Other local producers have been helpful in mentoring the development of his business.

- 🍏 The willingness of Kempley Produce Market to apply for an event licence has enabled him to start selling face-to-face and build up local awareness of his brand.
- 🍏 The Gloucestershire Orchard Group has proved an excellent source of information and advice.

Problems and obstacles

- 🍏 The initial set-up costs of equipment were fairly substantial, when aiming to get production to marketable levels.
- 🍏 Having to take produce off-site for bottling is logistically difficult.
- 🍏 More advice and training on branding and marketing is needed.

Suggestions for inclusion within an IBDA orchard project, including ways in which communities/existing orchard groups could contribute

- 🍏 A one-stop-shop for advice and information on planning, health and safety/food safety, risk assessment etc when setting up a food and drink business from home would save a lot of time.
- 🍏 Availability of a mobile bottling plant that could come to you at an agreed time would revolutionise the businesses of small-scale producers.
- 🍏 More emphasis needs to be put on ensuring farmers planting new orchards have access to advice and training to decide on a marketing strategy for their fruit.

Transition Evesham Vale

www.transitioneveshamvale.org.uk

The food group of TEV has a committee of six, all volunteers busy with other things. One of the committee is a local orchard owner who has recently started selling juice. The group has very limited resources and projects they undertake need to be small and manageable. Wider members of transition groups do not contribute subscription fees and the group hasn't organised fundraising events - they get by on one-off donations and small grants. Awareness of the transition group in the town and the publicity gained is fairly low, although the film shows and talks put on do often attract 60-70 people.

The food group have recently applied for a small grant from Wychavon DC to support the publication of a local food directory. Publication of this is their major aim at the moment, taking up quite a lot of time, and they hope to do that soon with a launch arranged to coincide with the asparagus festival at Easter. They have also had advertising contributions but without the grant they will have to scale back the size of the publication or publish it online only.

A food festival is being organised by the transition group for the middle of June, which the Market Town Partnership is encouraging and supporting. They have got several local food businesses committed to attending and hope to get more - they have a new, young volunteer tasked with mustering support from other potential stallholders. The event will take place as part of the Morris Festival weekend to get access to a bigger audience and in future years, if the event goes well, they may

alternate the location between Evesham and Pershore or hold it as a joint event with Pershore. They have been inspired by the growing success of the Pershore Plum Festival and aspire to creating a similar Evesham-based event.

Successes, best practice or lessons learned

- 🍏 The publication of the local food directory will be a significant resource for people in the area.
- 🍏 The Pershore Plum Festival has provided inspiration locally to do something similar for Evesham.
- 🍏 The Market Town Partnership is supportive of the group's efforts.

Problems and obstacles

- 🍏 The group has very limited resources and is reliant on a small group of busy volunteers to organise activities.

Suggestions for inclusion within an IBDA orchard project, including ways in which communities/existing orchard groups could contribute

The group felt that the following could be worth undertaking in Evesham if extra support and resources were available via a bigger orchard project:

- 🍏 Unemployment is rising within the town and there may be an opportunity to teach and support people to grow their own as a contribution to saving money, through training and seed swap events
- 🍏 Petrol prices are rising, meaning that people may well begin to look more locally for their food and also the supermarkets may look to source more locally to make transport savings
- 🍏 Would like to undertake a rigorous price comparison exercise between the farm shops and the supermarkets, publicising the results to prove to people that farm shops are affordable
- 🍏 Carrying out a town consumer survey of shopping habits, to see how many people and from where are actually using local food businesses
- 🍏 Supporting groups like the Vale Landscape Heritage Trust to market produce from their orchards - e.g. Hipton Hill jam
- 🍏 Prince Henry's high school has recently planted an orchard and this could be used as a venue for community events or training
- 🍏 There are lots of unused orchards in and around the town and there is an issue to be solved in helping owners to get both a top crop and a grass crop from the site in a biodiversity friendly way
- 🍏 Local supermarkets are still importing asparagus from Peru, even during the height of the British asparagus season - also applies to other fruit and veg

Beverley Kinnaird

Beverley and her husband moved to their property three years ago and the land includes a 6-acre traditional orchard. They have some previous experience of looking after a smallholding but have found the orchard to be more work to manage than they had anticipated. They are unsure how old the trees are but comparing them to other orchards believe some may be around 100 years old. When they moved in a

handful of younger trees had also been planted and then neglected and these took a bit of saving. They have added a few other local varieties of eating apple using the Herefordshire Council fruit trees scheme. They have found sourcing local varieties difficult and think the Council scheme is very good for addressing this.

There are approximately 120 mature standard trees, all of cider apple varieties that they have gradually identified by taking them along to the Big Apple events at Much Marcle. They have found this event very useful and interesting and enjoy meeting other orchard people and being able to taste the different local varieties.

Beverley sits on the food groups of both Newent and Ledbury Transition groups - she and her husband are fairly eco and energy conscious, shopping locally. They are thinking about going organic with the Weston's organic scheme, although this would commit them to staying under a contract with Weston's.

They are putting a lot of thought into how the orchard should be managed. They have been on training courses with the Colwall Orchard Group and found these really useful. They have been quite inspired by the work that Helen and Tim are doing. They find 'doing and learning' training courses much better than just researching on the web or in books. They would like to expand their expertise a bit and find out more about mistletoe management.

They were fortunate when they moved in that the local builder working on the barn conversions had several contacts to help them out with managing and harvesting the orchard. Over the last few years they have had a neighbour's sheep grazing the orchard and also tried the local flying flock for a short time. The latter didn't work out very well logistically and the orchard ended up getting a bit overgrazed. Grassland management isn't something they have solved yet as they would rather not resort to the petrol mower. They wouldn't necessarily rule out getting a few of their own sheep although this would probably involve having to section the site up so they could move them around.

A local orchard contractor comes in to mechanically harvest the fruit and take it away - he has a contract to supply both Weston's and Bulmer's. This arrangement is working really well and he has also been a good source of management advice.

They want to continue with the restorative pruning work they have begun on the old trees to prolong their lives as long as possible.

Successes, best practice or lessons learned

- 🍏 Access to training through the Colwall Orchard Group has been really important for them - think they are a very valuable resource.

Problems and obstacles

- 🍏 The Ledbury Transition group is very small and all volunteers tend to be busy, so the group is limited in the activities/projects it can get involved with.

- 🍏 Taking on and managing a big orchard has been more work than they initially appreciated - need to make sure that other people/groups taking on or planting new orchards are fully aware of the time and resources needed.
- 🍏 Has found the county borders to be a bit of a barrier - groups they have approached for advice and information do seem to be a bit fixated about only working on their patch.

Suggestions for inclusion within an IBDA orchard project, including ways in which communities/existing orchard groups could contribute

- 🍏 Thinks that key groups should definitely be assisted to increase their capacity to provide more training, advice and practical support to orchard owners (Colwall highlighted as an obvious example).
- 🍏 Volunteering with a group working to manage and enhance the natural environment in your own back yard reconnects people with the land and with their surrounding community.
- 🍏 Knowledge gained by volunteers and those attending training courses can be cascaded to others.
- 🍏 Local stories related to orcharding have enriched the ownership experience for them - this sort of thing should be shared.
- 🍏 Funding tends to be focused on one-off management activities or with planting a new site - support needed for ongoing management costs.
- 🍏 Would love case studies to be readily available sharing people's experiences and lessons learned.

Transition Worcester

www.transitionworcester.org.uk

Transition began in Worcester 3 years ago as the 'One Planet Worcester' initiative, led by local resident Robert Wilkins, which then evolved to become part of the national Transition movement. There is a core co-ordinating group of 10, four working groups (food, energy, transport and communications) with another 15-20 active volunteers and then a wider membership of around 250 people who have signed up to receive communications from the Transition group. The food group is the most active of the four working groups.

Transition Worcester is set up with a bank account, constitution and insurance. They have no core funding and there is limited experience in applying for grants and dealing with finances and they would need support to do this. Transition Worcester does not have a written strategy/aims to deliver, although the working groups do have basic aims developed by the group members. Development of ideas and projects tends to be based on the interests of working group members present at meetings. Transition did feed into the recent Future Worcester consultation organised by the City Council.

Transition made links with the Worcester Orchard Workers early on as one of the food group members is a volunteer. The Orchard Workers were first established about 12 years ago by a 2-year project officer post funded by Worcester City Council, Worcestershire County Council and Cecil Duckworth. The group carried on led by

key volunteers when funding for this project ended although they have continued to receive time and support from Wade Muggleton at the County Council which has been a great help in keeping the group going. They are currently a small group with around 5-6 volunteers turning up to a regular work party at New College Worcester to manage the orchard there. The Orchard Workers brought their activities under the banner of Transition Worcester very recently when they were struggling to pay their insurance costs: this new arrangement is currently working well.

The orchard at New College was derelict and overgrown when the group took it on and they have gradually opened it up, begun using it for running pruning courses and started using the fruit. Transition run juicing events here for the public and the Orchard Workers hold a monthly work party for general maintenance. They try and leave some of the fruit on the ground for birds and insects and are conscious not to be too tidy. The Orchard Workers don't advertise themselves particularly widely other than through the Transition group website and specific publicity prior to events. Recruitment of new volunteers is low and they are aware that they are due some new blood. They have established a relationship with the Tree Warden who looks after the Ombersley Community Orchard and are supporting him in restoring this site. They also occasionally help with management of Aconbury Community Orchard, owned by the City Council. The Orchard Workers are a bit disappointed that much of the fruit from this orchard is taken by a commercial contractor, rather than effort being put towards promoting its use by the community.

The Worcester City orchard survey data, compiled 11/12 years ago, shows lots of small orchards around the city. The Transition food group would like to make contact with owners and advise on or carry out restoration work and, ideally, gain access for the surrounding communities so they can take ownership of the management and the fruit can be used. However, finding owner contact details is extremely difficult and they haven't got much manpower to dedicate to this. The Orchard Workers would also like to run more courses on pruning for other owners and get the county Tree Wardens more involved in looking after orchards on their patch, empowering them to work in their own communities.

The food group are currently exploring the idea of establishing a community orchard - they have identified a couple of possible sites from the Worcester City orchard survey but are struggling to locate and make contact with the owners, which is proving frustrating. They are also aware of, but not directly involved with, another community orchard being set up in the city that is further along in the process. One food group member is also looking into setting up food co-operatives within the city. The group are keen to accept any assistance possible in setting up a community orchard and would value support and advice on the process, which can become long and drawn out if land purchases are involved. There are quite possibly schools within the city with an orchard or access to an orchard who would be interested in getting involved in a project.

A concern in establishing a community orchard would be to ensure that there was an outlet for all of the fruit and that none went to waste. This might involve looking at

marketing opportunities in the city beyond any local communities using the site. At the moment this seems a bit impenetrable and wouldn't be sure where to start.

Transition organises lots of one-off events in the city such as film shows, seed and plant swaps. To date they haven't been involved in delivering any longer-term projects but have made successful links with groups such as the Orchard Workers, Master Composters and the city parks team. Group members all have lots of good ideas to contribute and helping at events and with outdoor physical activity will attract lots of support, but finding the time for organising, doing paperwork etc is hard as all are busy and often involved with other things. They don't at the moment have the capacity for delivering a big project without external support and have found that delays in the organisation of activities has a negative impact on the initial enthusiasm of group members to continue with an idea.

The food group have initiated an innovative perma-blitz scheme where local residents can request physical help from food group members to blitz their garden and turn it into a productive growing space. Three people have had this garden makeover so far. They also carried out a consultation at the recent Worcestershire County Council Health Fair to find out what would make local people more likely to grow their own: expert growing advice and a community orchard they could visit were top responses. Transition are also promoting Channel 4's Landshare scheme.

Ruth is employed by Worcester City Council as a graduate internship and part of her role is to provide a certain amount of administrative support to the Transition group and to represent the Council on the core Transition co-ordination group. The City Council maintain the Transition website and have begun to engage with the wider membership using web-based applications such as facebook and twitter. The demographic of Transition members tends to be older, often retired people and few in the 18-30 age group have engaged with the activities to date. The City Council would be happy to use its communications and publicity remit to promote IBDA orchard project activities under the Transition banner.

Successes, best practice or lessons learned

- 🍏 Good admin and publicity support from the City Council.
- 🍏 Transition food group members are all keen, committed and forthcoming with good ideas.
- 🍏 The Worcester Orchard Workers have a lot of collective experience and enthusiasm.

Problems and obstacles

- 🍏 Getting contact details of owners of sites that could be used for a community orchard is time consuming and difficult.
- 🍏 Sites that could be suitable are also often those vulnerable to being lost to housing development.
- 🍏 A shortage of time for all the volunteers involved impacts on how big an idea the group can take forward.

Suggestions for inclusion within an IBDA orchard project, including ways in which communities/existing orchard groups could contribute

- 🍏 There are existing community orchards within the city that could be made better use of by local residents.
- 🍏 The group would very much value support in establishing more community orchards in the city, probably initiated by the food group but with the sites then taken on and used by their local communities.
- 🍏 Tree Wardens are an important network to tap into and are in an ideal position to liaise with orchard owners in their communities.

IBDA traditional orchard project steering group

Francesca Griffith, Herefordshire Nature Trust

Paul Esrich, Malvern Hills AONB (group chair)

Juliet Hynes, Natural England (Wye, Severn and Avon Vales IBDA project officer)

Rebecca Lashley, Worcestershire LBAP

Nicky Davies, Herefordshire LBAP

Esther Collis, Gloucestershire LBAP

Helen Woodman, Worcestershire Wildlife Trust

Chris Wedge, Natural England

Geoff Newman, Natural England

David Armitage, Malvern Hills AONB

Jim Chapman, Gloucestershire Orchard Trust

Helen Stace, Colwall Orchard Group

Neil Rimmington, Herefordshire Council

Appendix 1

Questions forming the basis for discussion
with those interviewed

Who is the group comprised of and what is the motivation for their interest in orchards?

What is the geographical scope of their project/group?

How long has the group/project been established and how are their activities funded?

Who owns the 'assets' (land, produce, equipment used) and what are the arrangements for use of the orchard by the group?

Does the number/size of sites available to them allow them to do everything they would like?

What activities are they undertaking?

What aims are they actually trying to achieve?

Do they have a written long-term management plan for the orchard?

Is the group active year-round or is activity limited to when funds are available?

Do their orchard(s) currently have community access/use?

What do they feel they have they been very successful at doing?

What problems/stumbling blocks have they encountered?

How do they ideally see themselves overcoming those problems?

Do they think they need support from other sources to sustain or develop their project?

Do they have any contact with other orchards groups?

Do they have a relationship with any local conservation groups e.g. Wildlife Trust?

What do they feel they could get out of being involved in a bigger orchard-focused project?

What involvement might they be willing to have in such a project?

How active is the village/parish in terms of working together on 'community' projects? Has there been any activity like this/is there currently?

Where does the momentum for such projects generally stem from? Has the parish council/parish plan group been actively involved?

Are they aware of the extent of the traditional orchard resource in their local area and its value?

Is the traditional orchard resource something that residents value? Is there evidence of an active interest or potential untapped interest?

If community projects have taken/are taking place: What do they feel has been very successful? What issues and problems have they encountered?

If they have not: Is this something the village has considered? What barriers prevented them taking ideas forward?

Do they think a traditional orchard project might be something people in the village would be interested in?

What support do they think they would need to enable the parish to take part?

Appendix 2

Delivery objectives established for the Wye,
Severn and Avon Vales IBDA

Aims (added value of IBDA)	Objectives	Broad IBDA partnership milestones (based upon the added value the partnership will bring to individual projects)	Lead	Indicators of success
Community Engagement Socio Economics Partnership Working	1 Effective delivery of BAP habitat and species targets and integration of species needs of species identified as IBDA priority (Appendix 5 of delivery strategy) within habitat management	Farms containing best opportunities for BAP maintenance restoration and expansion brought into agri-environment schemes by 2015 Opportunity maps utilised to inform priority areas to restore and expand BAP habitat improving network by end 2011 BAP species list produced for IBDA by Dec 2010 Ascertain priorities through discussions with taxon groups and identify niche requirements or specific needs that can be integrated into each pilot project within the IBDA by March 2011	NE, NFU, CLA NE, LAs, LBAPs NE (IBDA project officer) NE (IBDA project officer)	LBAP target progress greater than previous year X ha under HLS within identified biodiversity opportunity areas Improvement seen in species populations and range (long term goal)

Aims (added value of IBDA)	Objectives	Broad IBDA partnership milestones (based upon the added value the partnership will bring to individual projects)	Lead	Indicators of success
2	<p>Encourage effective community engagement, and develop opportunities for education/training (e.g. heritage skills), awareness and access.</p> <p>(demonstration of localism and Big Society)</p>	<p>Community defined and list of communities with associated issues (positive and negative), produced and considered by steering Group by xxx</p> <p>Baseline of existing education, training and awareness opportunities in the IBDA identified</p> <p>Improved engagement with recording community and recording encouraged in currently under recorded areas</p>	5 counties' LRCs, LBAPs	<p>Number of community groups involved in delivery</p> <p>Number of education/training/awareness opportunities carried out</p> <p>Even distribution of recording effort across IBDA (No. of Km squares recorded)</p>
3	<p>Process:</p> <p>Identify project delivery at the most appropriate landscape scale to produce coherent resilient ecological networks taking into account the Ecosystem Services.</p>	<p>Three pilot landscape scale projects identified and funding applications drawn up.</p> <p>Produce list of ecosystem services and issues within IBDA by end March 2011</p> <p>Lessons learned and best practice rolled out across IBDA or wider</p>	<p>HNT, Worcs WT, Warks WT</p> <p>?</p>	<p>Project outlines completed by end Dec 2010</p> <p>Increase seen in number of species at sample locations within IBDA (proxy measure for improved habitat network)</p> <p>Ecosystem services considered within projects (identified as part of project proposal)</p>

Aims (added value of IBDA)	Objectives	Broad IBDA partnership milestones (based upon the added value the partnership will bring to individual projects)	Lead	Indicators of success
4	<p>Policy: Ensure biodiversity objectives are integrated into Green Infrastructure (GI) Planning</p>	<p>IBDA objectives considered in GI strategies</p>	?	<p>Number of GI fora IBDA representatives actively participate in</p>
5	<p>Effective use of funding sources through ensuring projects are linked up where appropriate and demonstrate coordinated program approach to funders. Make appropriate use of match funding opportunities such as HLS, investigate potential of PES and GI delivery.</p>	<p>Suitable funding sources for each pilot project identified by March 2011 and bids under development Strategy developed for approaching funders with other IBDA projects</p>	<p>Steering Group Steering Group</p>	<p>Pilot project bid successful by end 2012 Further IBDA projects following on from initial pilots funders showing that funders understand progressive roll out of projects across the IBDA</p>
6	<p>Maintain list of current and proposed projects within the IBDA area and their contribution to IBDA objectives, ensuring long term continuation of the work beyond the period of funding is fully developed</p>	<p>Project list made available on ? website by end March 2011 Pilot projects each produce a sustainable 'business plan' by end March 2011 Monitor outcomes of projects and share best practice and lessons learned shared with wider biodiversity community (integrated into new projects)</p>	<p>NE (IBDA project officer) HNT, Worcs WT, Warks WT</p>	<p>Up to date list maintained and accessible to all. Suitable markets tapped into. Number of machinery pools or partnerships/cooperatives developed</p>
7	<p>Projects monitor progress and report through BARS to ensure information and lessons learned are publically available.</p>	<p>IBDA project area set up on BARS by mid 2011</p>	<p>NE (IBDA) project officer to set up IBDA on BARS, all to add and maintain projects on BARS</p>	<p>Objectives, targets and Current projects on BARS and maintained by partners</p>

Appendix 3

Location of groups and individuals
interviewed