

CORSTON COMMUNITY ORCHARD

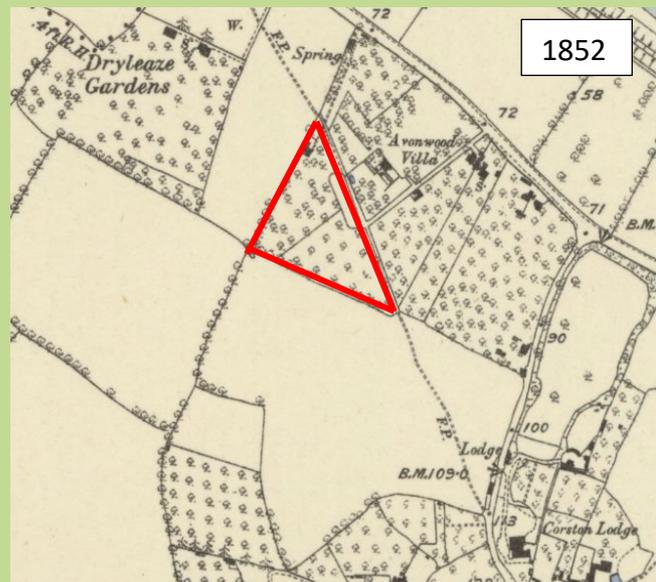
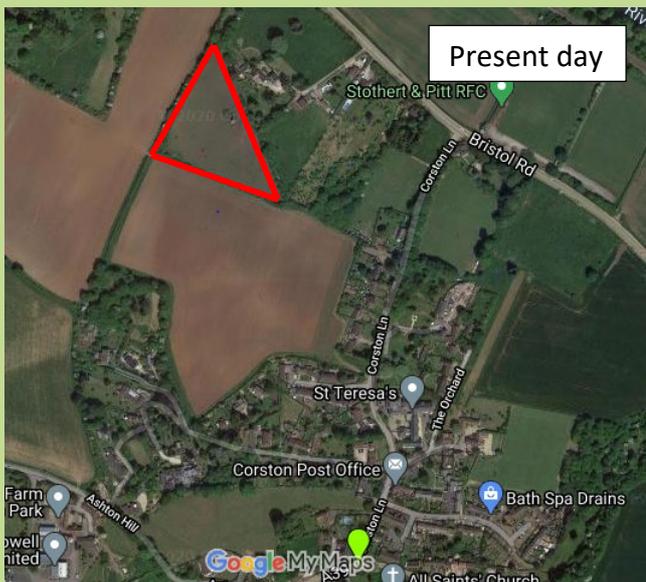


NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2021

EXCITING NEWS – POTENTIAL NEW SITE

Since the orchard consultation in November, another possible site for the Corston community orchard has become available – see highlighted area in red on the map below. It's the field adjacent to the one used for Corston Fair parking and has had horses on it for many years and back in the 1850s it was one of the many orchards in Corston. Nick Mould, deputy land steward for the Duchy, put it forward in December and the orchard steering group at their inaugural meeting in early January voted unanimously to explore it further.



We have been incredibly fortunate to have Martin Hayes, chief surveying officer for the Gloucestershire Orchard Trust and independent orchard consultant, visit both sites and provide the steering group with detailed reports.

There are many advantages to the new site as summarised in the table below – it is bigger and so can accommodate a wider range of fruit trees and other land uses, as supported in the feedback from the survey. Also, there are no immediate neighbours adjacent to the field who could be impacted upon and so it can be accessible to the general public, meaning it's easier to win funding.

Feature	Old site	New site
Size	0.6 ha (1.5 acres)	1.4 ha (3.5 acres)
Location	Central	Towards edge of village
Entrance	Wall and fence to reconfigure	Existing entry point
Fencing	Need to fence top boundary	Already fenced
Neighbouring houses	8-10	None
Public access	Restricted?	General public welcome
Funding	Challenging if restricted access	More schemes available
Martin's opinion	"Ready to plant, great location"	"Ready to plant, even better location"

The only feature that may be seen by some as a negative is its greater distance from the centre of the village. However, the business plan for the orchard will include a proposal to work with B&NES to improve the public footpath, enabling people to take a pleasant walk to what will be a beautiful space for everyone to enjoy.



The steering committee is really looking forward to working with the local community to transform the field into a beautiful and productive space, like the Batheaston orchard below, for the whole community to enjoy and get involved in.



BENEFITS OF THE CORSTON COMMUNITY ORCHARD

The project will bring environmental benefits of trees and wildlife to the village and offer a focal point for people from the community to gather together. The idea is that the orchard will be inclusive, open to people of all ages and situations who would like to enjoy the space. We would like to see it used for community events and activities, for example apple juicing days, picnics, treasure hunts, wassail or harvest suppers, and to provide people with the opportunity to develop new skills, such as pruning, or learn about wildlife. We also hope to build links with other local organisations such as Grow for Life that provides gardening sessions for people affected by low confidence, depression or isolation, Avon Wildlife Trust and other community orchards.

NEXT STEPS

The steering committee will now start work on the business plan to demonstrate how capital set-up costs and on-going revenue costs to maintain the orchard will be achieved. We will also be identifying grant funding opportunities, as well as exploring community investment ideas, such as tree sponsorship and community share offers. Later in the year, perhaps late spring/early summer we hope (pandemic allowing) to hold community planning sessions in the field to help us work up a detailed design that fulfils the community's wishes.

CONTACT

If you have any skills you can offer the project, or any ideas you'd like to share with us, or if you'd like to join the steering committee, please email corstonorchard@gmail.com. Please share this newsletter with your friends in the village and if they'd like to sign up to our mailing list, please let us know.

THANKS

Without the support of the residents of Corston this project would not be possible. Your support has been recognised by Corston Parish Council, the Duchy of Cornwall and Cllr Duncan Hounsell, one of our ward councillors. We are very grateful for all the support we receive from our community and very much welcome your input into this community and environmental project.

Batheaston orchard, Oct 2020

