

Lagoon View Community Orchard

Chair's Report for 2025

The year has been successful in many ways but ended with anxiety about the future.

The orchard survived the very dry spells of the summer well, with bumper apple and pear crops. One tree has been lost to a canker infection. Working parties have been sparsely attended but enough work has been done to maintain a good standard of care. Many thanks to those who were able to contribute.

Events included a successful summer BBQ, apple pressing in October and some spirited carol singing round a log fire in December.

Our major concern has been the proposal by Pearce Construction Ltd to access the fields to the west of Lagoon View via a new road access, through the orchard. Other compensatory land was proposed, but public reaction has been implacably opposed. We currently wait for the expected planning application to appear.

We have received encouraging support from local councillors and our MP. Numerous emails to Planning Officers have sought clarity over the Public Open Space status of the orchard, now confirmed. The upcoming revision of the Local Plan has also been questioned. My particular thanks to Bob Walters and Paul Harwood for their energy and expertise in these areas. Paul has constructed a website, (<https://www.yellandorchard.co.uk/>) for the Orchard, met with much acclaim. Other committee members have contributed information and research evidence which helps our case. It is clear that access to the fields through the orchard is entirely unnecessary, with an obvious alternative from the main road. It has been confirmed by the vendor that options have been purchased on the HELAA areas 0193 and 0304, so planning development to start at the furthest point from the main road seems perverse.

We have joined the Open Spaces Association and the Environmental Law Foundation, which may well be able to assist in the fight to come.

I very much welcome our new committee members, bringing new skills and energy to what was a small group. We currently number 15 members!

We approach 2026 with determination to preserve a much-valued public facility.

Pete Thorn

Chair