

Coronation Living Heritage Fund: Coronation Orchards

Briefing Note No. 23 - 36

Service : *Natural and Historic Environment*
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Summary of the Project

The Grant Application and Planting Support (GAPS) team has been successful in a grant bid that will see £50,000 funding for community orchards throughout Wiltshire. This comes from the Coronation Living Heritage Fund, a fund to support local tree-planting projects across communities to celebrate the King's Coronation. The grant will allow Wiltshire Council to provide grants to local people and groups to establish community orchards.

The Grant

The types of applicants for community orchards include (but are not limited to) - schools, residents associations, community groups, charities, businesses and parish/town councils. A community orchard:

- Can be on either private or public land if there is a community/public benefit for the orchard, such as, the community involved in setting up/maintaining the orchard, or the community has access to the orchard on a permanent or occasional basis
- Can have a minimum of 5 trees. There is no maximum.

The grant can be used to fund new trees, protection (including fencing) and signage to celebrate the orchard and the King's coronation.

Wiltshire Council has the option to use up to 10% of the fund to purchase and plant community orchards itself.

Strategic Fit

The council's application was commended for the strategic fit of community orchards to Wiltshire's strategies, including the following goals:

- Wiltshire Council's Climate Strategy requires an increase in tree cover from 14% to 17% by 2045. Planting goals are 212 ha (2024-25) and 424ha thereafter.
- Wiltshire Council's Climate Strategy identifies use of its communications networks to; help landowners / community groups bid for funding to enhance green infrastructure; support sustainable, local food production, and work with training providers to teach green skills. Climate benefits of orchard planting include: carbon absorption, supporting biodiversity,

physical and mental wellbeing, natural cooling and shade as well as helping to reduce flooding through improved soil structure and planting.

- Orchard planting will support the council's Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy (GBI) goals in providing high quality, accessible green spaces that contribute to health, well-being, activity, involvement in community food growing and the management and protection of local GBI assets.

Next Steps

The project will be overseen by the Woodland officers of the GAPS team that started in Spring 2023.

Next steps will be to:

- Identify suppliers of biosecure fruit trees that are Plant Healthy certified.
- Establish an application form and assessment process.
- Promote the grant amongst communities and schools.
- Offer training to Tree Wardens throughout the county in orchard planning and maintenance
- Liaise with other organisations and landowners, such as Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, on potential sites.
- Consider any potential Council owned land on which 10% of the fund can be spent.

Orchard planting will take place in Autumn/winter 2024-25.

How you can help with this project

Please promote and celebrate the Coronation Living Heritage Fund with your networks especially at local level and encourage consideration of potential sites for an orchard ready to make an application once the fund is open.

Please note that if areas are struggling with the ongoing maintenance of their community orchards or would like to celebrate them by holding events or training days, please encourage them to contact the GAPS team.