

RODNEY STOKE AND DRAYCOTT PARISH COUNCIL

Community Orchard Grassland and Orchard Management Policy

Purpose of Report

To seek Parish Council approval for the proposed grassland and orchard management policy for the Rodney Stoke and Draycott Community Orchard.

Background

The Community Orchard is being established on Parish Council-owned land adjacent to Draycott Memorial Hall. The orchard will provide opportunities for recreation, education, volunteering, wellbeing, biodiversity enhancement and remembrance.

Policy Objectives

Maintain an attractive and welcoming community space; encourage biodiversity; support pollinators; reduce maintenance costs; protect fruit trees; ensure accessibility; and deliver the outcomes identified in funding applications.

Grassland Management

The orchard floor will be managed as traditional orchard grassland. Grass will be cut two to four times annually, with longer growth encouraged during spring and early summer to benefit wildlife and pollinators.

Tree Protection Areas

Each tree will have a vegetation-free mulched area around its base. Tree guards, stakes and ties will be inspected and maintained regularly.

Accessible Pathways

The accessible path and associated routes will be maintained throughout the year to ensure safe access for all users.

Central Community Area

The central gravel seating area will be maintained through weed control, gravel replenishment and regular inspection of seating.

Overflow Parking and Access

The overflow parking area will be mown more frequently, while a continuous 3.66 metre maintenance strip will be retained around the perimeter to facilitate hedge cutting and site access.

Financial Implications

The proposed management regime reduces long-term maintenance costs compared with a conventional park-style mowing regime while enhancing environmental value.

Environmental Benefits

The policy will increase biodiversity, improve pollinator habitat, support community wellbeing and contribute to environmental sustainability.

Risk Assessment

Risks are considered low and will be mitigated through regular inspections, scheduled maintenance and annual review.

Recommendation

That Rodney Stoke and Draycott Parish Council adopts this policy and delegates implementation and annual review to the Community Orchard Committee in consultation with the Parish Council.

Prepared by: Community Orchard Committee

For: Rodney Stoke and Draycott Parish Council