



# COMMUNITY ORCHARD

---

ENVIRONMENT AND  
TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

PAPER A

7 OCTOBER 2024

---

## 1) BACKGROUND

- a) A Community Orchard will be created on a space at Steephill Down Road.
- b) The site is likely to be able to accommodate eight trees. A plan of the site is being developed.
- c) It is recommended that crab apple trees are planted to assist with pollination.
- d) It is recommended that the planting of trees is staggered with four to six trees being planted in November 2024.
- e) It is suggested that a historical board is placed at the site.

## 2) PROPOSAL

- a) Four to six trees are to be planted in November 2024. A list of options is appended to this paper.
- b) A historical board is created for the site. The suggested material for the board is appended to this paper.

## 3) RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended to:

- a) Consider the number and type of trees to be planted in November 2024.
- b) Approve the creation of a historical board for the site and instruct the Town Clerk to arrange the creation of the board using the information attached to this paper.

## Steephill Down Road

Steephill Down Road is bounded on its northern side by tangled brambles, covering the gardens of the now demolished cottages. The building of the cottages (seventeen in all) commenced in 1871 and they were part of the Hambrough Estate. They were the homes of working men, many with very large families (as many as nine children in some!) which was amazing because the cottages and rooms were tiny. The cottages were built of flint and brick with a slated roof. The road was made up in 1899 by Mr. W.H. Wallder, a local builder. There was a Lime Kiln at the very top of the road and in the latter part of the 1960's and early 70's, it was used as a refuse tip by the local authority. The road was nicknamed 'Soapsuds Alley' because of the number of women who took in washing for people in the town. It was reputed to have been strung across the road to dry. This is the area of the infamous *graben*, or split in the land that is causing the Newport Road and the adjoining land to sink. As a result of this subsidence the cottages became unsafe and the final cottages were demolished in 1994.

In recent years the area in which the cottages once stood became neglected and overrun with brambles and nettles. The area also appeared to have become a 'favoured' spot for fly tippers. The local community, fed up with rubbish and not being able to walk along the overgrown footpath decided to do something about it. The aim was to make the footpath accessible to walkers, clear rubbish, make blackberry picking easier, plant wild flowers to attract butterflies and bees, whilst retaining the natural habitat for the abundant wild life in the area. Since the road links up with several public footpaths, we thought it would also be nice to provide a bench for walkers to rest. A community spirit developed and without any financial assistance, just commitment and hard work, we have achieved our aim. Both the local community and enthusiastic passers by (some of whom lived in the former terraced cottages) donated seeds and plants. We are very grateful for all these donations and proud of what we have achieved as a community. The area remains as 'work in progress' and any further donations of seeds and plants would be gratefully received.





















