

Orchard Link AGM Thursday 12th November 2021

7.00-7.30pm, By Zoom

Annual Report and Agenda Papers

Welcome to the Orchard Link annual meeting! We will keep the formal AGM business short (max 30 minutes), and so invite you to read through the reports below in advance.

The Zoom link is: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83933215069?pwd=ekR3ZkhiaGlJSStJWGpxeE0wd3VxQT09>

Meeting ID: 839 3321 5069 Passcode: 639370

Agenda and supporting papers

Item 1. Welcome, introductions, and any apologies for absence

Item 2. Minutes of last year's AGM 12th November 2020 (see page 2)

- *Recommendation: that the Minutes of the 2020 AGM are approved as a true record.*

Item 3. Review of the year (see page 5)

- a. Chairman's report
- b. Membership report
- c. Equipment report
- d. Publicity and communications report
- e. Events and courses report

Item 4. Financial report for the year (see page 7 and the statement of accounts in Appendix 1)

Recommendations:

- *That the statement of accounts for the financial year 2020-2021 prepared by our accountants Elliott and Partners are approved for submission to Companies House.*
- *That the annual subscription fees for the next year are increased to £13 for individual members.*

Item 5. Appointment of management committee members and directors (see page 8)

Recommendations:

- *That the management committee is elected for the coming year.*
- *That the directors of Orchard Link Ltd are elected for the coming year.*

Appendix 1. Summarised statement or accounts for the financial 1st August 2020 – 31st July 2021 (pages 9-11)

Following the AGM, at 7.30, there will be an illustrated talk by Liz Copas: "Serendipity and selection: the long apple road".

Agenda item 2.

MINUTES OF THE ORCHARD LINK ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2020

Held on Thursday 12th November, by Zoom

Present:

Management Committee: Charles Staniland (chair), Robin Toogood, John Gower, Tim Walker, Sara Hurley, Tattwa Gyani, Peter Webb, Tess Wilmot, Sue Hallam

Members: Gill Gairdner, George Arnison, Anne-Marie Curror, Barbara Storey, Bettina Rixon, Chris Edwards, Dani Wootton, Gillian Glegg, Ian Hague, Jonathan Aylett, Judith Holder, Liam Thomas, Audrey Ryder, Peter Burkill, Rose Wood, Simon Buckler, Stella West-Harling, Thomas Kingham, Trudy Turrell, Philippa Wood.

Item 1. Welcome, introductions, and any apologies for absence

Apologies from Graeme Prowse, Janet Walker, Alison Thomas and Ian Pickvance.

Item 2. Minutes of last year's AGM 7th November 2019

Approved as a true record.

Item 3. Review of the year

Chairman's report

The year started off promisingly, with well-attended orchard pruning courses and an orchard planning workshop, but sadly other planned events were curtailed by 'lockdown'. Nonetheless great progress was made in developing the Orchard Link website which now enables payments and bookings online more effectively. Membership and finances are healthy.

Charles thanked members of the committee for their support through the year, and expressed his gratitude to George Arnison for storing our pressing equipment.

After seven years as Orchard Link Chairman Charles is stepping down, but will continue to assist with technical support and attend committee meetings.

Membership

The Orchard Link membership now stands at 178, which is a drop from last year; however the membership does fluctuate, with up to 20% per year not renewing. Membership tends to grow again when people need to join to hire equipment.

Equipment hire

This autumn our three apple presses were hired by 45 Orchard Link members and used for a total of 54 hire days between 5th September and 4th November, similar to the previous season overall.

Publicity and communications

Sue Hallam and Gill Gairdner produce the Orchard Link newsletter three times a year, this year organising material around different themes. A growing number of members are electing to receive the newsletter as a PDF, which saves both paper and postage costs.

We now have 185 members of the 'Orchard Link South Devon' Facebook group and 247 followers on Twitter. These social media channels have helped us to keep in touch with members, offer advice, publicise courses and events to members and non-members, and encourage a sense of community.

Events and courses

Since November 2019 we have only been able to run three courses due to Covid restrictions - pruning a productive orchard, pruning a mature orchard, and planning and planting an orchard. Two events being developed for Orchard Link members and the public sadly had to be cancelled – it is hoped that these events will be realised in the future, subject to Covid restrictions allowing. An events sub-committee has recently been formed (comprising Sara Hurley, Charles Staniland, Graeme Prowse, Philippa Wood and Audrey Ryder.)

Item 4. Financial report for the year

Robin had circulated the accounts for the financial year 2019-2020. The year showed a planned-for deficit of about £3,500, due to the costs of the website re-build and the wildlife survey by John Walters. The balance in the bank at the end of the year was nearly £5,500. Orchard Link's assets consist of the pressing equipment and a gazebo used for attending fairs and events, worth a total of about £10,000. Regarding subscription fees, the proposal is to continue with the existing £12 annual membership fee (which covers two people); and to create a new group membership which would allow up to five named members of an organisation - such as a community orchard - to be eligible for discounted courses and to hire equipment on behalf of their group.

It was resolved:

- That the statement of accounts for the financial year 2019-2020 prepared by our accountants Elliott and Partners are approved for submission to Companies House.
- That the annual subscription fees for the next year remain at £12 for individual members and the new category of group membership costing £20 is applied as group renewals become due.

Item 5. Appointment of management committee members and directors

Ian Hague proposed a vote of thanks to the management committee and the directors, especially to those who have served and who are stepping down. All present concurred.

John Gower has stepped down from the committee and from his role as Equipment Hire Coordinator.

- **Election of management committee**

The following people were elected to the Management Committee: Charles Staniland (stepping down now as Chair but remains on committee), Robin Toogood (Treasurer), Tim Walker (will step down as Membership Secretary in the new year but remains on committee), Sara Hurley (stepping down now as Events and Courses Coordinator but remains on committee), Sue Hallam (Social Media and Assistant Newsletter Editor), Graeme Prowse, Tess Wilmot, Tattwa Gyani, Peter Webb.

The following new committee members were elected: Gill Gairdner (Newsletter Editor), Chris Edwards, Audrey Ryder.

It was emphasised that Orchard Link needs new people to fill the following Officer roles: Chair, Membership Secretary, Events Coordinator, and Equipment Coordinator. Without these roles being filled, Orchard Link will not be able to function fully. Any member who might be able to help in any way is encouraged to contact a committee member to discuss.

- **Election of Directors**

Robin Toogood, Peter Webb and Gill Gairdner were elected as Directors of Orchard Link for the current year.

Item 6. Open discussion and "Q&A" session

Following the formal AGM business, there was an opportunity for attenders to introduce themselves and to share experiences and ideas. Members shared their 'orchard stories' and some said they would be happy to help out on an occasional basis. Ideas included having talks on various apple and orchard topics, via Zoom.

Gill Gairdner thanked Charles Staniland very much for his many years of dedicated service as Chair, and presented him (virtually!) with an apple-wood bowl on behalf of the management committee and directors.

The meeting closed at approximately 9pm.

Agenda item 3. Review of the year

Chairman's report (by Robin Toogood)

1. At the time of the last AGM we were in something of a hiatus with a number of committee members stepping down or relinquishing their roles: I was even wondering if we could continue as an organisation. Well, strengthened by the arrival of some new committee members, and with a significant reallocation of roles, we have stabilised as an organisation and continued to run a good range of services and activities over the year. On behalf of the entire membership, I want to thank the committee members for their commitment and contributions over the year.
2. Orchard Link finds itself in a good position with a strong financial and membership base, a renewed website, a great stock of fruit processing equipment for use by members, active community orchards, and a continuing enthusiasm for orchards and fruit growing in south Devon.

Membership report (by Tattwa Gyani, membership secretary)

3. We continue to have a steady stream of new members, 31 since May of this year, and the total of active members is now 152.
4. Having newly taken on the role of membership secretary, this year has been a very steep learning curve! With Tim and Robin's help and tuition, I have just about got the database and mailout lists in some kind of order, and we have now extended the procedure for notifying members when renewals are due, and for deleting them from the system if they fail to renew. This, of course, has resulted in a drop in the membership numbers since last year, but we are now more compliant with data protection regulations.
5. Our intention to create a new "group membership" category has had to be abandoned for the time being as we cannot make it work within the current website structure and membership programme. We therefore continue to offer just the "individual membership" category, which also covers two people living at the same address.

Equipment report (by Robin Toogood, equipment bookings secretary)

6. This autumn our three apple pressing kits were hired by 32 Orchard Link members and used for a total of 40 hire days between 4th September and 31st October. This was a significant reduction from the level of use last year, reflecting the very poor harvest experienced by many members resulting from the bad weather during the May blossom time.
7. The equipment has performed well, having been professionally serviced and maintained again ready for the season. The on-line equipment booking process and administration appears to have worked smoothly. We are particularly thankful to George Arnison who continues to act as storekeeper for all the equipment.
8. We own a significant amount of equipment - our apple mills and presses, and all the associated kit, as well as display materials and a large gazebo. Because of the way accounting conventions deal with the depreciation of fixed assets, our official accounts indicate that this "plant and equipment" has a book value of just £1586. A more realistic picture would be to look at the replacement value of this equipment – how much it would cost us to buy it all new – which is in the region of £12000.

Publicity and communications (by Gill Gairdner and Sue Hallam, publicity secretaries)

9. Sue Hallam and Gill Gairdner have put together the usual three newsletters, which have been circulated to the membership through the post and, increasingly, digitally. We've very much enjoyed pursuing both

themes and the work of individuals in order to reflect what's going on in the apple-y world of south Devon. Thinking of the future, however, we wonder whether the time might have come for a fresh look at the newsletter, so that it remains useful and relevant.

10. Our social media audience continues to grow in a modest way and we now have 247 followers on Twitter and 187 members of our Orchard Link Facebook group. It's useful to be able to publicise our courses and events, and to encourage people to join Orchard Link, through our own social media accounts and to other online groups involved with orchard, cider-making and smallholding activities.

Events and courses (by Chris Edwards, events secretary)

11. This has clearly been an unusual year for events and courses with most of the in-person training and events either sparsely attended or having had to be cancelled due to the pandemic. Hopefully next year we'll be able to resume our face-to-face events and training on a more regular basis.
12. Since the beginning of the year we've successfully branched out into Zoom-based events, with several talks both from Orchard Link members and from invited guests alongside some training sessions held via the internet. We've also made informal links with Moor Meadows as a way of providing some joint activities where we think there are topics that will be interesting for both groups, with the talk from the author and wildlife documentary-maker Nick Gates on the range of wildlife to be found in vintage Orchards being our first venture.
13. We are aiming to start our in-person courses in 2022 with pruning training sessions in January and February and further events and courses throughout the year, alongside more internet based events.

Agenda item 4. Financial report for the year

1. Our summarised statement of accounts for our last financial year (1st August 2020 to 31st July 2021) is attached as an appendix at the end of this report. The financial statement has been prepared for us by our accountants Elliott and Partners.
2. Once these are approved by the AGM, they will be submitted to Companies House as required by the regulations governing limited companies. Note that the small size of Orchard Link Ltd exempts us from the requirement to have a formal audit undertaken of our accounts.
3. The company is in a stable financial position. The accounts show a surplus of £1824 for the year (compared to the deficit of £3595 the previous year arising from the additional one-off costs of the website rebuild). At the end of the year we had £7287 in our bank and Paypal accounts.
4. We have made a number of administrative changes during the year. Orchard Link now pays invoices via BACS and payments to Orchard Link are mostly through PayPal, so that the cheque book and cash deposits have become relics and digital transactions are the norm. This has reduced the administrative burden.
5. The annual membership subscription for individuals has been unchanged at £12 since 2011, but it is proposed that this should be increased to £13 in view of increasing costs (particularly our insurance premium, as well as Paypal transaction charges that are levied).

Recommendations for the AGM:

- *That the statement of accounts for the financial year 2020-2021 prepared by our accountants Elliott and Partners are approved for submission to Companies House.*
- *That the annual subscription fee for the next year is increased to £13 for individual members.*

Peter Webb, Treasurer & Finance Director

Agenda item 5. Appointment of management committee members and directors

1. Orchard Link is run entirely by unpaid volunteers who are members elected by the AGM each year. The members and office holders over the last year have been:
 - Robin Toogood (chairman, and equipment hire secretary)
 - Tim Walker (information and harvestline secretary)
 - Peter Webb (treasurer)
 - Gill Gairdner (newsletter editor)
 - Susan Hallam (social media editor and assistant newsletter editor)
 - Tattwa Gyani (membership secretary)
 - Charles Staniland
 - Sara Hurley (resigned during the year)
 - Audrey Ryder (standing down at this AGM)
 - Graeme Prowse
 - Tess Wilmot
2. The committee usually meets six times a year at the Church House Inn Harberton, although since Covid restrictions have been introduced we have mostly met online via Zoom.
3. Additional new committee members are both welcome and needed. The offices of equipment hire secretary, newsletter editor and website editor, are now vacant and require filling.
4. Following this AGM, the first meeting of the new management committee will be held in the next two or three weeks, with a date to be chosen by Doodle poll.
5. The AGM is also required to appoint directors to serve for the year ahead. Orchard Link is constituted as a limited liability company and currently has three directors registered with Companies House: Robin Toogood, Gill Gairdner and Peter Webb.

Recommendations:

- *That the management committee is elected for the coming year.*
- *That the directors of Orchard Link Ltd are elected for the coming year.*

Appendix 1. Summarised statement or accounts for the financial 1st August 2020 – 31st July 2021

ORCHARD LINK LTD (LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)		
INCOME STATEMENT		
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2021		
	2021	2020
	£	£
TURNOVER	4,804	5,015
Depreciation and other amounts written off assets	(397)	(442)
Other charges	(2,583)	(8,168)
Taxation	-	-
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	<u>1,824</u>	<u>(3,595)</u>

ORCHARD LINK LTD (LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)

DETAILED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2021

	2021		2020	
	£	£	£	£
Turnover				
Fees and expenses	1,591		2,240	
Other income	3,213		2,775	
	<u> </u>	4,804	<u> </u>	5,015
Cost of sales				
Direct costs		-		576
		<u> </u>		<u> </u>
GROSS SURPLUS		4,804		4,439
Expenditure				
Insurance	708		693	
Maintenance repairs renewals	537		1,258	
Printing, stationery and post	683		256	
Advertising and marketing cost	305		4,059	
Sundry expenses	-		1	
Accountancy	350		325	
Professional fees	-		1,000	
	<u> </u>	2,583	<u> </u>	7,592
		2,221		(3,153)
Depreciation				
Plant and machinery		397		442
		<u> </u>		<u> </u>
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)		1,824		(3,595)
		<u> </u>		<u> </u>

ORCHARD LINK LTD (LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)

DETAILED BALANCE SHEET FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2021

	2021 £	2020 £
FIXED ASSETS		
Plant and equipment	1,586	1,770
CURRENT ASSETS		
Stocks	50	50
Other debtors	225	-
PayPal Account	1,992	-
Bank Current Account	5,295	5,479
	7,562	5,529
CREDITORS		
Amounts falling due within one year		
Sundry creditors	(350)	(325)
NET CURRENT ASSETS	7,212	5,204
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES	8,798	6,974
NET ASSETS	8,798	6,974
RESERVES		
General Fund	6,974	10,569
Income and expenditure account	1,824	(3,595)
	8,798	6,974