

Orchard Link AGM Wednesday 6th November 2024, 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 AGM will be followed by a talk and Q&A session on orchard soil health.

The Zoom link for the meeting is:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86362612250?pwd=am3W84qw6W8akW1TB6laFBP6z6NLon.1>

Meeting ID: 863 6261 2250 Passcode: 180549

Agenda and supporting papers

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

Item 2. Minutes of last year's AGM 14th November 2023 (see page 2)

- *Recommendation: that the Minutes of the 2023 AGM are approved as a true record.*

Item 3. Review of the year (see page 4)

- a. Chairman's overview
- b. Membership
- c. Apple pressing equipment
- d. Newsletter
- e. Social media
- f. Events and courses
- g. Harvestline
- h. Community orchards

Item 4. Financial report for the year (see page 6 and the statement of accounts in Appendix 1)

Recommendations:

- *That the statement of accounts for the financial year 2023-2024 prepared by our accountants Elliott and Partners are approved.*
- *That the annual subscription fees for the next year remain unchanged at £13 for individual members.*

Item 5. Appointment of management committee members and directors (see page 7)

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 2023 – 31st July 2024 (page 8)

Agenda item 2.

MINUTES OF THE ORCHARD LINK ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2023

Held on Tuesday 14th November 2023 at 7pm by Zoom

Present:

Committee members: Robin Toogood (Chair), Chris Edwards (Courses/Events), Peter Webb (Finance), Tattwa Gyani (Membership and Newsletter), Tess Wilmot (Community Orchards), Gill Gairdner (Newsletter), Charles Staniland.

Members: Jonathan Francis, Amanda Makin, Dani Wootton, Henry Wainwright

Apologies: Graeme Prowse, Sue Hallam

1. Welcome and introductions

2. Minutes of last year's AGM, 12 November 2022

Recommendation:

- *That the minutes of the 2021 AGM are approved as a true record.*

All in favour – approved.

3. Review of the year

The following reports were circulated before the meeting and also made available via the Orchard Link website.

a. Chairman's overview

b. Membership

c. Apple pressing equipment

d. Newsletter

e. Social media

f. Events and courses

g. Harvestline

Highlights:

Orchard Link has had a good year. Membership steady at around 150; 50 members hired OL equipment (despite patchy harvest); there was a full schedule of courses/events; the website was maintained, along with our presence on social media. Thanks to all the volunteers who made this happen.

4. Financial report for the year

The financial report was circulated before the meeting and also made available via the Orchard Link website.

Summary: around £6,000 turnover, assets £9,500; main costs – insurance, equipment repair/replacement

Recommendations:

- *That the statement of accounts for the financial year 2022–2023 prepared by our accountants Elliott & Partners are approved for submission to Companies House.*

All in favour – approved.

- *That the annual subscription fees for the next year remain unchanged at £13 for individual members.*

All in favour – approved.

5. Appointment of management committee members and directors

Recommendations:

- *That the management committee is elected for the coming year.*

Robin Toogood, Peter Webb, Chris Edwards, Tattwa Gyani, Sue Hallam, Tess Wilmot, Gill Gairdner, Charles Staniland, Graeme Prowse and Henry Wainwright were proposed.

All in favour – approved.

- *That the directors of Orchard Link Ltd (i.e. a non-for-profit company) are elected for the coming year.*

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

All in favour – approved.

The AGM closed at 7.30 pm.

Following the AGM there was a short Q&A, which covered control of aphids, the winter chill factor in the context of rising temperatures and what to do with medlars. New members present asked if there were any particular courses they would like to see put on the agenda suggested history of orchards and cider in Devon and traditional cider-making.

Agenda item 3.

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

Chairman's overview (Robin Toogood)

1. Orchard Link is in a good position with a strong financial and membership base, an effective website, a great stock of fruit processing equipment for use by members, connections with nearly 30 active community orchard projects, and a continuing enthusiasm for orchards and fruit growing in south Devon.
2. I am as always hugely appreciative of the work put in by your committee members, doing the myriad of tasks that keep Orchard Link functioning. We are keen to have extra help, particularly in keeping our website content up to date, in promoting Orchard Link to a wider audience, and coordinating the hire of our apple pressing equipment.

Membership (Tattwa Gyani)

3. We have now 158 active members, back up to our average number after a dozen or so new sign-ups since the end of August. Some people inevitably don't renew their membership, but the majority do.
4. There are still a very members who have not yet cancelled their old £12 standing order payments, from back before we raised the annual subscription to £13 a couple of years ago. Please check if you are one! Although we are not too excited by losing £1, it does result in your membership not renewing automatically as our database system doesn't recognise the old £12 payment, only the current £13.
5. Please also be aware that if your membership lapsed more than a few months previously, you may have been taken off the database (as we are required to do by the law) and so you will not be able to renew by logging in, but only be re-joining from scratch. So it pays to keep your membership up to date!

Equipment report (Robin Toogood)

6. Our three apple pressing kits were hired by 38 Orchard Link members (3 of whom were new first-time hirers) and used for a total of 55 hire days between mid August and early November.
7. This was another decrease in the number of equipment bookings compared with 2023 and 2022. Given that the equipment, the booking system, the hire prices and our membership numbers have been virtually unchanged over that period, the conclusion is that this is due to recent poor and uneven harvests.
 - 2021: 50 bookings.
 - 2022: 80 bookings.
 - 2023: 70 bookings.
 - 2024: 60 bookings.
8. The equipment has performed well, and even though we had some minor breakdowns and losses, we had spares on hand so were able to maintain continuity of service. The on-line equipment booking process and administration worked smoothly. We are particularly thankful to George Arnison who continues to act as our storekeeper for all the equipment.

Newsletter (Tattwa Gyani, Henry Wainwright and Gill Gairdner)

9. An annual newsletter was posted to all members in paper format after the last year's AGM. This was supplemented by e-mailed news items from the chairman and events coordinator.

Social media (Sue Hallam)

10. We now have 288 members of our Facebook group, and coincidentally the same number of followers on X/Twitter. Our social media community is an enthusiastic and supportive bunch and it can often be useful and quick to get orchard-related advice this way. We have also connected with other like-minded people by contacting cider-making, smallholder and sustainable/green groups, to promote Orchard Link events and courses. Do join in - search for Orchard Link South Devon Group in Facebook groups, and @orchardlink on X. (There are also links to these sites from our website homepage).

Events and courses (Chris Edwards)

11. Despite the long, cold, wet spring forcing the late rescheduling of some of our courses this year, 2024 has seen a busy spring and summer. Our regular pruning courses were all well attended and received. We held a restorative pruning course in a veteran orchard in January and followed it up with a summer pruning course on the same trees in July to see how the trees had reacted and to learn how to manage that reaction. We also ran two courses on grafting techniques and a course on the differing methods available to map the location and variety of trees in an orchard.
12. We held a much delayed blossom tour in the orchards at Sharpham House in early May and held a delightful wildflower walk in a young orchard in Bigbury on Midsummer's evening. To cap the summer off we held our biannual cider making course in September, demystifying the art for a group of participants just starting out on their cider-making journeys.
13. We took our trusty gazebo and apple pressing kit to the Kingsbridge Show again this year and spent a happy, if somewhat damp day juicing fruit and tasting the results accompanied by lots of enthusiastic help from visiting children whilst also answering their parents' apple- and orchard- related questions.
14. Unfortunately we weren't able to go ahead with our Annual Summer Gathering this year, but aim to be back with this popular afternoon in 2025.
15. Planning for the courses and events for next year is in progress, with the details to be advised in our regular membership emails and on the Orchard Link web site.

Harvestline (Robin Toogood)

16. The Harvestline noticeboard on our website has had a number of posts this autumn from people with surplus apples on offer, totalling over 15 tons, but meeting little demand from people seeking apples. The surplus of fruit has been increased because some commercial juicers have stopped out-sourcing their fruit supply. Addressing the waste of unwanted apples left rotting on the ground was one of the primary reasons Orchard Link was set up in the 1990s, and this is clearly an issue that has not been solved.

Community Orchards

17. The community orchard listings on our Website have been augmented over the last year by the addition of orchards at Dawlish, Exminster and Littlehempston, bringing the total to 29.
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Agenda item 4.

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR

1. Our summarised statement of accounts for our last financial year (1st August 2023 to 31st July 2024) 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. The accounts have been submitted to Companies House as required by the regulations governing limited companies. Note that the small size of turnover of Orchard Link (£5,886 last year) exempts us from the requirement to have a formal audit undertaken of our accounts.
3. The company is in a stable financial position. Net assets decreased slightly from £9,788 the previous year to £9,430 this year.
4. Membership subscriptions, course fees and equipment hire were the principal sources of income. The major items of expenditure were website maintenance and insurance.
5. We own a significant amount of equipment - our apple mills, presses and pasteurisers, as well as display materials and a large gazebo. Because of the way accounting conventions deal with the depreciation of fixed assets, our accounts indicate that this "plant and equipment" has a residual book value of £812. A more realistic valuation would be to look at the replacement value of this equipment if we were to purchase it anew, which would be in the region of £12,000.

Recommendations for the AGM:

- *That the statement of accounts for the financial year 2023-2024 prepared by our accountants Elliott and Partners are approved for submission to Companies House.*
- *That the annual subscription fees for the next year remain unchanged at £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 elected by the AGM each year. The members and office holders over the last year have been:
 - Robin Toogood (chairman, also covering equipment hire and harvestline)
 - Peter Webb (treasurer)
 - Gill Gairdner (newsletter co-editor)
 - Susan Hallam (social media editor)
 - Tattwa Gyani (membership secretary and newsletter co-editor)
 - Chris Edwards (events and courses organiser)
 - Charles Staniland
 - Graeme Prowse
 - Tess Wilmot
 - Henry Wainwright
2. Gill Gairdner and Sue Hallam have resolved to stand down from the committee at this AGM, after many years of service to Orchard Link and we are deeply appreciative of their contribution. New committee members are both welcome and needed. The committee usually meets six times a year, sometimes via Zoom and sometimes in person. The specific roles we need to fill are:
 - Meeting secretary (agendas and minutes)
 - Apple pressing equipment hire coordinator
 - Publicity and social media coordinator
 - Newsletter assistant editor
 - Website editor
3. 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. Gill Gairdner is standing down at this AGM.

Recommendations:

- *That the management committee is elected for the coming year.*
 - *That the directors of Orchard Link Ltd are elected for the coming year.*
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Appendix 1.

SUMMARISED STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS
FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 1ST AUGUST 2022 – 31ST JULY 2023

ORCHARD LINK LTD (LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)

DETAILED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2024

	2024		2023 as restated	
	£	£	£	£
Turnover				
Fees and expenses	5,460		5,736	
Other income	426		535	
	<u> </u>	5,886	<u> </u>	6,271
 Cost of sales				
Direct costs		203		222
		<u> </u>		<u> </u>
GROSS SURPLUS		5,683		6,049
 Expenditure				
Insurance	1,029		932	
Maintenance repairs renewals	424		1,365	
Printing, stationery and post	712		802	
Advertising and marketing cost	2,406		1,418	
Training and staff welfare	532		680	
Sundry expenses	-		66	
Accountancy	450		395	
	<u> </u>	5,553	<u> </u>	5,658
		130		391
 Finance costs				
Bank charges		60		-
		<u> </u>		<u> </u>
		70		391
 Depreciation				
Plant and machinery		203		254
		<u> </u>		<u> </u>
NET (DEFICIT)/SURPLUS		(133)		137
		<u> </u>		<u> </u>

ORCHARD LINK LTD (LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)

DETAILED BALANCE SHEET FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2024

	2024	2023 as restated
	£	£
FIXED ASSETS		
Plant and equipment	812	1,015
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
CURRENT ASSETS		
Stocks	50	50
Other debtors	-	225
PayPal Account	884	1,221
Bank Current Account	8,135	7,672
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	9,069	9,168
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
CREDITORS		
Amounts falling due within one year		
Trade creditors	(1)	-
Sundry creditors	(450)	(395)
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	(451)	(395)
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS	8,618	8,773
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES	9,430	9,788
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
NET ASSETS	9,430	9,788
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
RESERVES		
General Fund	6,974	6,974
Income and expenditure account	2,456	2,814
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	9,430	9,788
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>