

Postwick Ln



Broadland Tree Warden Network

Brundall Community Orchard Management Plan

By

**Richard Farley,
Broadland Tree Warden for Brundall**

February 2023

Introduction

This Management Plan supersedes the Broadland Tree Warden Network document “Countryside Park Orchard – Proposal” dated March 2022 that was accepted and adopted by Brundall Parish Council.

History

The Broadland Tree Warden Network inspected the Brundall Countryside Park orchard on 3 March 2022 and was dismayed at the poor condition of the few trees that had actually survived.

One cannot just plant trees, particularly fruit trees, then walk away ignoring them and expecting them to grow and produce fruit. There appeared to have been no formative pruning carried out and the competing ground vegetation (ie very long grass) had robbed the trees of valuable water and nutrients.

Pulling back the long grass from the base of the trees, we found several with spiral guards still attached and between the guard and trunk was a severe build-up of decomposing matter, heavy insect build-up and other detritus. In addition, most had the remains of rotting stakes still connected to the very base of the trunks by rubber tree ties. There was also clear evidence of rabbit activity which one must expect when there has been lack of management, long grass and (probably) fallen rotting fruit.

The Network’s Tree Wardens removed the spiral guards, rotting stakes and the rubber tree ties and also removed dead wood together with crossed and rubbing branches, but could do nothing about the apparent rabbit damage and rot at the bases of the trees.

As a result, the Network submitted its “Countryside Park Orchard – Proposal” dated March 2022 and that was accepted and adopted by Brundall Parish Council. Therefore, The Broadland Tree Warden Network immediately assumed sole responsibility for the orchard and only Broadland Tree Wardens are allowed to carry out any works associated with it, including general cutting of the grass. Furthermore, responsibility for the orchard shall not be shared with or be answerable to any other set of volunteers, such as any future “Friends of the Countryside Park”.

The Network immediately removed all current trees and accompanying matter and has since maintained all grass as short as possible. All tree matter was removed from site but grass cuttings were allowed to remain on the ground to improve nutrition. That left a bare area (except for grass) on which to create a Community Orchard

Work Undertaken to Date

Preparation for a new Community Orchard commenced immediately with the ordering of the trees from the East of England Apples and Orchards Project (56 trees plus stakes, ties and guards) and the Parish Council agreed to the Network’s planting plan plus the planting of a single row hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* hedge (430 1.0m whips plus bamboo canes and spiral guards) to bound the orchard with a single access gate and a small area for families to sit and enjoy the trees. The full agreed list of trees is as follows.

Details of Trees

- T1 Apple : Norfolk Royal** *Pick:* mid-season *Pollination:* D *Qty:* 2
Dessert apple. Discovered growing as a chance seedling at Wright's Nursery in North Walsham in 1908 but only named and introduced in about 1930. Once widely grown in East Anglia and still a popular exhibition apple. Medium to large in size and almost totally flushed bright red. Very crisp and juicy. Unusually greasy skin. Has good scab and mildew resistance.
- T2 Apple : Norfolk Royal Russet** *Pick:* mid-season *Pollination:* D *Qty:* 2
Dessert apple. A russeted sport of Norfolk Royal, discovered growing in the garden of Rev C Wright at Burnham Overy Staithe. It was first introduced by Highfields Nursery of Gloucester in 1983. A complex 'nutty' tasting russet, it has become a popular gardeners' choice and with farm shops in East Anglia. Has good scab and mildew resistance.
- T3 Apple : Lynn's Pippin** *Pick:* mid-season *Pollination:* D *Qty:* 2
Dessert apple. Bred by William Lynn of Emneth in 1942 by crossing Cox's Orange Pippin with Ellison's Orange and named in 1952. A medium-sized attractive yellowish-green skinned apple with delicate red stripes and a complex flavour.
- T4 Apple : New Costessey Seedling** *Pick:* mid-season *Pollination:* D *Qty:* 2
Dessert apple. Arose in 1926 from a pip planted by George Fayers of New Costessey. This may have been from the Bedfordshire variety Lord Lambourne. Shown in local horticultural events for many years. Medium-sized, greenish yellow skinned with a deep red flush and occasional russet scattered over the surface. Cream-coloured sweet crisp flesh. Was introduced in the 1990s by Ranworth Trees Nurseries, near Norwich.
- T5 Apple : Admiral** *Pick:* mid-season *Pollination:* D *Qty:* 2
Dessert apple. Propagated in 1921 by Mr A Watson of Upton, from pips brought back from Japan. Originally called 'Togo of Upton' but renamed 'Admiral' around 1940. Once grown commercially on a small scale in the Broads where it was sold as 'Gloria'. Medium-sized, mostly green in colour, sometimes with an orange flush and usually slightly russeted. Firm and sweet flesh.
- T6 Apple : Harling Hero** *Pick:* mid-season *Pollination:* E *Qty:* 2
Dessert apple. Arose at East Harling around 1914. It was developed or discovered as a chance seedling by Frank Claxton, a local game dealer. In the 1920s Daniels Bros, the Norwich nurserymen, began marketing the apple locally. A handsome yellow-skinned apple almost totally flushed red. Soft, sweet, juicy flesh.
- T7 Apple : Horsford Prolific** *Pick:* mid-season *Pollination:* E *Qty:* 2
Dessert apple. Arose around 1900 in the garden of the Rev Mountford at Horsford. Grown commercially on a small scale locally and sometimes sold under the name 'Queen Anne'. A very attractive apple. Medium to large. Yellow skinned with a bright red flush and some broken red stripes. Flesh is sweet, crisp and juicy. Has good scab resistance.
- T8 Apple : Sandringham** *Pick:* mid-season *Pollination:* E *Qty:* 2
Dessert apple. Raised by Mr Penny, Head Gardener at Sandringham House and first exhibited at the National Apple Congress in 1883. It is believed to be a seedling of the UK variety Winter Pearmain and was first marketed by Veitch's nursery, London. It became a popular variety for gardens. A large green-skinned apple with a dull orange flush. Keeps well and mellows with storage. Sweet and firm fleshed.
- T9 Apple : Hunter's Majestic** *Pick:* mid-season *Pollination:* C *Qty:* 2
Dual-use apple. Raised sometime before 1914 by Miss E Balding at Upwell, near Wisbech, probably from a seed of a Worcester Pearmain apple. Grown on a small scale commercially in the Fens during the 1930s by the Hunter-Rowe family. Large attractive red-flushed and striped yellow-skinned apple. Becomes less acidic with storage.

- T10 Apple : Dutch Mignonne** *Pick:* mid-season *Pollination:* C *Qty:* 2
 Dual-use apple. Introduced to the UK by Thomas Harvey of Catton Hall, probably from Holland, and first listed by George Lindley, nurseryman of Catton in 1771. A popular Victorian garden apple, it is a medium-sized dull green-skinned apple with a little russeting and orange flush. Not unlike a Blenheim Orange in flavour. Cooks to a stiff sweet puree.
- T11 Apple : Golden Noble** *Pick:* late-season *Pollination:* E *Qty:* 2
 Culinary apple. Discovered in 1820 growing as a chance seedling in an orchard near Downham Market by Patrick Flanagan, Head Gardener of Stow Bardolph Hall. A medium-sized, golden-yellow long-keeping apple. A Victorian table favourite, it has always been a popular garden apple. Contains a very high level of vitamin C. Cooks to a slightly acidic puree. Has good scab, mildew and canker resistance.
- T12 Apple : Winter Majetin** *Pick:* late-season *Pollination:* E *Qty:* 2
 Culinary apple. Earliest record is from Norfolk in 1734. A small to medium-sized smooth skinned green apple with a brownish-orange flush. Excellent keeper. Cooks to a firm brisk puree. Is notable for its very good natural resistance to woolly aphid. Also has good scab resistance.
- T13 Pear : Robin** *Pick:* early-season *Pollination:* C *Qty:* 2
 Dessert pear. May be the old 'lost' pear variety London Sugar, as listed in the catalogue of nurseryman George Lindley, of Catton, in 1796, but known before 1900. Can occasionally be seen on sale on Norwich market and elsewhere. A small red-flushed dessert pear best eaten very soon after picking.
- T14 Pear : Hacon's Incomparable** *Pick:* late-season *Pollination:* D *Qty:* 2
 Dessert pear. Origin confused but probably Downham Market. Arose as either a chance seedling found growing in a baker's yard in 1792 by Mrs Rayner, or it was propagated from 'Rayner's Norfolk Seedling' by Mr J Hacon, around 1814. A handsome mid-green coloured medium-sized pear. Sweet flavoured.
- T15 Cherry : Merchant** *Pick:* late-season *Pollination:* D *Qty:* 2
 Dessert cherry. A large black skinned variety with dark red flesh, raised by the John Innes Institute in Norwich in 1970. Heavy cropping. One of its parents is Merton Glory, also raised by the John Innes Institute, when based in London.
- T16 Cherry : Colney** *Pick:* **early-season**
Pollination: C *Qty:* 2
 Dessert cherry. A medium sized dark red skinned variety with deep red coloured flesh. Raised in 1974 by the John Innes Institute in Norwich. A useful late ripening cherry.
- T17 Cherry : Summer Sun** *Pick:* mid-season *Pollination:* C *Qty:* 2
 Dessert cherry. A medium sized dark red coloured variety from Norwich. Good late frost tolerance and suitable for planting in exposed areas. It is partially self-fertile so will set some fruit by itself. A useful pollinator for self-sterile cherry varieties.
- T18 Cherry : Hertford** *Pick:* mid-season *Pollination:* D *Qty:* 2
 Dessert cherry. A medium sized pink fleshed and dark red, almost black, skinned variety, raised by the John Innes Institute in Norwich in 1974. One of its parents is the variety Van. A very heavy cropper.
- T19 Plum : Coe's Golden Drop** *Pick:* late-season *Pollination:* B *Qty:* 2
 A dessert plum first raised in Bury St Edmunds. Yellow fruits with red dots on the sunny side. This variety insists on a sheltered position and excels against a wall. A very worthwhile variety with delicious, slightly apricot flavoured fruits.
- T20 Plum : William** *Pick:* mid-season *Qty:* 2
 Medium to large with a true pyriform shape, which has a large rounded base that tapers to a smaller curved neck with a light brown stem. The thin skin brightens as it ripens, transforming from green to a golden yellow, and is smooth and firm with some blushing and russeting. The flesh is aromatic, moist, cream-coloured to ivory and is fine-grained encasing a central core containing a few small,

black-brown seeds. When mature but not fully ripe, William pears are crunchy, tart, and slightly gritty, but when fully ripe, they develop a juicy, smooth, buttery texture with a sweet flavour.

T21 Medlar *Pick: late* *Qty: 6*
 Culinary fruit. Cultivated since ancient times and was once a commonly eaten and symbolic fruit described in literary prose. Native to the area surrounding modern-day Iran and introduced to Western Europe by the Romans. Used to be widely eaten in Britain through the 19th century but fell out of favour when more appealing fruit and sugary sweets came into popularity.

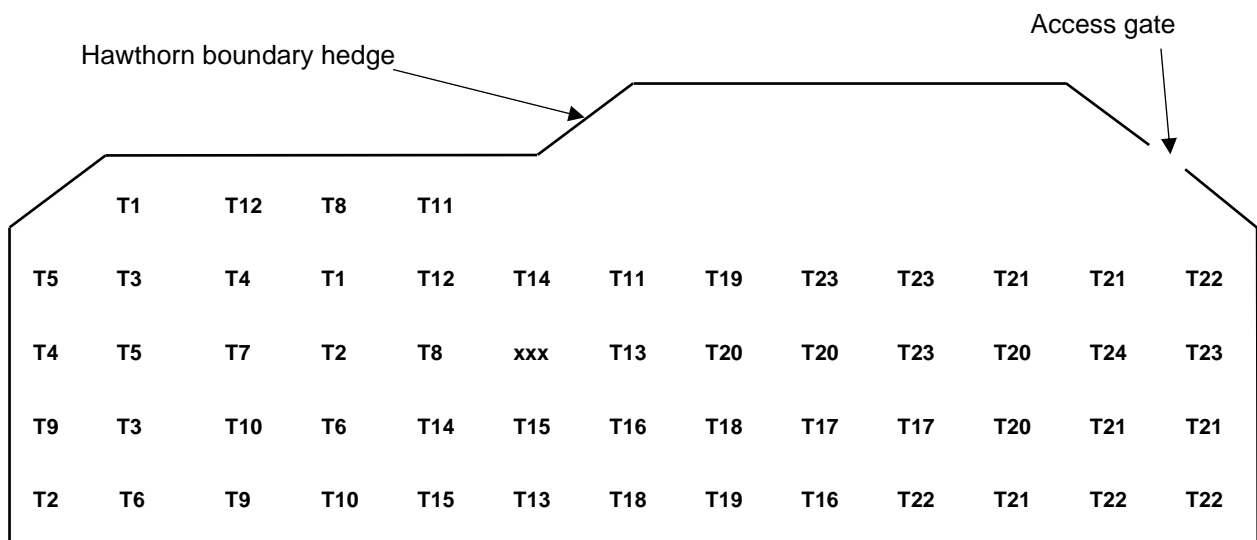
T22 Quince *Pick: late* *Qty: 4*
 Culinary fruit. When ripe, quince is very fragrant, with a smooth, golden yellow skin, but the hard, bitter flesh means that it is used almost exclusively for cooking, rather than eating raw. Once cooked, the flesh develops a deeper flavour and turns a golden pink.

T23 Plum : Victoria *Pick: mid-season* *Self-fertile* *Qty: 4*
 Desert and culinary plum. Reliably fruiting, self-fertile. It is probable that this famous variety was originally found as a chance seedling in a garden at Alderton, Sussex in the 1830's. The story of its early history has been mainly lost. A deep carmine rose colour with a wonderful flavour and they make the best of jams. One of the best of all loved plum trees.

T24 Apple : Cox's Orange Pippin *Pick: mid-season* *Pollination: D* *Qty: 2*
 Said by many, for the last 170 years, to be the best tasting apple in the world. It is most definitely British and is suited to growing in our variable climate. The parents of Cox's Orange Pippin have never been confirmed but one parent is likely to have been Ribston Pippin and there is good reason to believe the other parent may have been Blenheim Orange. It was bred by Richard Cox sometime around 1825 in Colnbrook, Berkshire. The original house, The Lawns, was knocked down many years ago and is now under the foundations of a High Street in Slough. The original tree was then propagated by a local nurseryman, E Small & Son, on his market garden. They attempted to market the trees in the early 1840s with only minimal success. In 1950 however, another local firm in Slough, Royal Nurseries marketed the trees with much more success. This variety does not store particularly well and neither does it develop its full flavours when picked early and kept in cold storage.

Planting Plan

The planting layout is as follows.



The trees are planted on a basic 4m grid delivering a good spacing for growth, effective pollination and harvest/maintenance access. The layout also accommodates the pathways used by runners.

Planting

Planting will be carried out by Broadland Tree Wardens. Volunteers may help with planting but that will only be permitted if under the strict supervision of the Broadland Tree Warden Network as the trees must be planted properly if they are to produce good fruit.

Each tree will have a support stake, an adjustable tie and a suitable guard. Any side shoots below the height of the guard will be removed and the tree will be watered well. The planting hole will be filled with a mulch of soil and rotted matter purchased for the planting and each planting will be “topped-off” with a generous layer of clean wood chippings, again specifically purchased for the task.

Initial pruning will be carried out once all trees have been planted and will only be carried out by the Broadland Tree Warden Network. Apple and pear trees are pruned between December and late March while plums, gages and cherries are only pruned in early summer.

Aftercare and Maintenance

All aftercare and maintenance will be carried out by suitably qualified and experienced Broadland Tree Wardens to the highest standards with clean, sharp, suitably sterilised tools. Volunteers may assist the Tree Wardens but only under strict instruction and supervision.

The trees will remain staked for at least 5 years, while they establish their roots. Each year the stakes shall be checked for decay or damage and carefully replaced if necessary, avoiding damaging the roots. Tree ties will be adjusted to ensure that they are not strangling the trees but are instead affording adequate support. Tree guards will be replaced as and when necessary.

Over the first 5 winters any weaker growing feathers will be selectively pruned by up to a half and any stronger growing feathers by no more than a third, pruning back to just above an outward-facing bud on each feather. That will eventually create an open-centred fruit tree which will ensure that air and sunlight can reach all parts of the tree, reducing the risk of infections and helping its fruits to ripen.

After 5 years any dead, diseased or damaged shoots or branches and any that grow into the centre of the tree, are over-vigorous, upright growing or cross over other branches will be pruned out. Rootstock suckers growing from the base of the trunk may also need to be removed and, if the tree has a tendency to produce a lot of it each year, any upward growing non-fruit-bearing ‘water wood’ should be removed.

Medlar does not need pruning but it can be pruned to restrict size. Heavy pruning every 5 to 8 years is better than yearly trimming. The best season to prune is winter but during non-freezing weather. Dead and diseased branches will be removed whenever noticed the weaker, frail branches snipped off if necessary. In-growing branches will be removed and the scaffold branches evened out.

Watering of the trees during prolonged dry spells will be essential.

It is most important to manage other vegetation in the orchard, such as grasses and “weeds”. Grass must be cut regularly in order to prevent it competing with the trees or harbouring unwanted pests and diseases. The Tree Wardens will manage the grass with brushcutters, keeping it short but leaving the cuttings to lay on the ground, returning nutrients to the soil.

Care will be taken to ensure that trees are not “ring-barked” by brushcutters so only suitably qualified and experienced Tree Wardens shall manage the grass.

Harvesting Fruit

Apples are harvested between August and November. Different varieties of apple will be ready to pick at different times in the autumn, so Tree Wardens will check when varieties are ready. Fruit is ready when it comes off easily when you lift the fruit towards the tree using the palm of your hand. You should not need to twist or pull the fruit too firmly and it should come off the tree with its stalk intact. If the stalk is left on the tree the fruit may be underripe.

Early season varieties should be eaten within a week or so of picking. Some mid and late season varieties can be stored, where they will continue to mature. Some varieties can be stored until well after Christmas. Only undamaged fruit should be stored.

To store, lay the picked apples out in a single layer into cardboard boxes or wooden trays, ideally so that they are not touching each other. Wrapping them individually in newspaper is not necessary. Store them in a cool, dark, frost and vermin-free place and check them regularly, removing any which show signs of rotting. Apples can also be preserved by peeling and then drying or bottling.

Like apples, different pear varieties will be ready to pick at different times, so varieties should be checked when they should be ready. Pears are best ripened off the tree. They should detach from the tree easily when you lift the fruit towards the tree using the palm of your hand. You should not need to twist or pull the fruit and it should come off the tree with its stalk intact.

To tell if a pear is ready to eat, gently press the fruit at the base of the stalk. If it gives very slightly, it is ready. Early season pears should be eaten within a few days of picking, while some later season varieties can be stored for a few weeks. Only undamaged fruit should be stored.

Pears can be stored in the same ways as apples, but check stored pears more frequently as most varieties do not store for very long after picking. Pears can also be preserved by peeling and then bottling or drying.

Cherries are harvested in June and July. Different varieties will be ready to pick at different times, so check when varieties should be ready. They ripen on the tree and should come away easily without the need to twist or pull the fruit. Many will come off with their stalk intact. Cherries should be eaten within a few days of picking, but they can be stored for about a week if refrigerated or kept in a cool place. They can also be preserved by freezing, drying and bottling.

Plums are harvested from July to September. Different plum and gage varieties will be ready to pick at different times, so check when your varieties should be ready. Plums and gages are ripened on the tree. To tell if a plum is ready to pick, gently press the fruit at the base of the stalk. If it gives very slightly, it is ready. You should not need to twist or pull the fruit and many will come off the tree with their stalk intact. Plums and gages should be eaten within a few days of picking, but they can be stored for about a week if refrigerated. They can also be preserved by freezing, drying and bottling.

It is best to harvest medlar before birds start pecking at them. Pick the fruit by grasping it between thumb, index and forefinger. The fruit sometimes bursts open and even though it looks rotten it is actually at its best with a taste that is surprising and sweet. Our bird friends know the secret and quickly come to feast on them when the fruits start bletting. Bletting means the fruit starts maturing to the point of turning mushy. Although for most fruit types this would be over-ripe, for fruits like medlar this is really the best time to eat them!

Medlars are typical ingredients for pies, clafoutis, jelly, liquor and even medlar wine.

Quince may not be a familiar fruit, but at one time it was an extremely popular staple in the home orchard. Picking quince fruit was a normal harvest chore for many families, made less of a chore when considering the fruit's destination which is jellies and jams or added into apple pies, applesauce, and cider.

Quince, as a rule, does not ripen on the tree but, instead, requires cool storage. A fully ripened quince will be entirely yellow and exuding a sweet perfume. Harvesting quince fruit should begin when it changes from light green yellow to a golden yellow colour in autumn, usually in October or November. Picking quince should be done with care, as the fruit bruises easily. Use a sharp pair of garden shears to snip the fruit from the tree. Select the largest, yellow fruit that is blemish free when harvesting quince fruit. Do not pick

damaged, bruised, or mushy fruit. Once harvested, ripen the quince in a cool, dry, dark area in a single layer, turning the fruit each day. If the fruit was harvested when it is greener than golden yellow, it can slowly ripen in the same manner for six weeks before use, checking for ripeness on occasion.

Quince should not be stored with other fruit. Its strong aroma will taint others. Once ripe, the fruit should be used immediately. If left for too long, the fruit becomes mealy. Quince can be stored in the refrigerator for up to two weeks wrapped in paper towels and kept separate from other fruit.

It is strongly recommended that the public is discouraged from picking fruit from the trees for at least the first three years to allow full establishment of the trees as harvesting by inexperienced people can cause damage. People can always sample fruit at official open days.

To help to dissuade the general public from taking fruit from the trees the Network strongly recommends that the Parish Council holds three Community Orchard Days each year at the orchard when the public can taste the various varieties, seek further information and ask questions of the Tree Wardens.

The best time to hold such days would be September, October and November when most varieties will have been available for harvest.

The Network will be pleased to ask representatives from the East of England Apples and Orchards Project to attend such a Community Orchard Day.

Richard Farley
Broadland Tree Warden for Brundall.