

FRIENDS OF DARTMOUTH COMMUNITY ORCHARD
Annual General Meeting
30 April 2025, 6.00pm at Dartmouth Yacht Club

Present: 17 members attended (plus 3 proxy). Quorum declared.
Apologies 6 members presented their apologies

Attending:

Julie Downing	Sally Walley	Janie Harford
Anthony Downing	Jon Walley	Peter Forey
Peter Shaw	David Thorneywork	Juliet Mason-Jones
Pamela Nicholson	Lee Thorneywork	Nick Mason-Jones
Robert Williams	Jemma Pyne	Gwendolyn Alker
	Jenny Gould	John Alker

Apologies:

Cliff Williams	Chris North **	Matt Horan**
Sue Williams	Fiona North **	Barbara Forey

NB ** = Proxy vote

Julie Downing presided over the meeting and welcomed everyone. She led a slide presentation accompanied by committee members (now attached to complete the record).

1. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the AGM held on 01 May 2024 were AGREED. There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere.

2. COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

Peter Aylward has stepped down, but Julie Downing wished to record thanks for all his help.

Julie Downing, Jemma Pyne, Pamela Nicholson, Lee Thorneywork and Sally Walley all AGREED to complete the second year of their term of office. Three new committee members volunteered, and were proposed by Peter Forey and seconded by Peter Shaw. The new committee members are Juliet Mason-Jones, Robert Williams and David Thorneywork. Juliet Mason-Jones and David Thorneywork had been co-opted during the year.

Committee appointments were agreed; Julie Downing – Chair, Pamela Nicholson – Treasurer, Lee Thorneywork - Secretary

Matt Horan continues co-opted (ex officio as Head of Grounds DTC)

With eight members, there is a full committee.

3. REPORT ON ACTIVITIES OF FRIENDS SINCE LAST AGM

The annual report was part of the presentation. Highlights/additional points:

- The trees are looking healthy with no disease apparent.
- One tree fell during a winter storm but this was reduced (cut away branches where obstructing pathway) and looks as if it might recover.
- A second wooden hive has been constructed by Janie Harford ready for the split.

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- An anonymous donor has kindly assisted with funding for a new electric honey spinner
- Asian hornets continue to pose a threat to the orchard bees and have been seen in Plymouth
- Thanks were recorded for Pamela Nicholson, Janie Harford and Juliet Mason-Jones for all their work with the bees this year.
- Sally Walley reported on the biodiversity in the orchard – see attached slide
- Jemma Pyne reported on the butterfly transect stating it had been a disappointing year.
 - o In 2024, we completed all 26 weekly surveys (compared with 23 in 2023).
 - o We recorded a total of 123 butterflies from 15 Species
 - o This was a 50% drop in numbers compared with 2023
 - o Nationally, this has been the second worse year since records began
 - o We saw an increased number of Green-veined Whites and Commas (1 – 5 & 1 – 6 respectively)
 - o We lost 3 species, small skipper, small copper and silver-washed fritillary
 - o We saw large declines in another 10 species
- Peter Shaw reported that Barry Henwood, County Moth Recorder, recorded 15 species
- A new hedge is to be added by the collapsing fence, hopefully encouraging biodiversity
- Another successful year both in maintaining the orchard, and fund raising.
- Thanks to Jon Hall & Sheree Hall for managing our website and social media.
- New information postcards now printed and to be put into visitors' centre, Dartmouth Yacht Club and Library

4. Report on the Group's Finances for the year ending 31 December 2024

Pamela Nicholson gave the Treasurer's report, and thanked Peter Adolphus for again auditing the accounts. She reported that the finances were in a comfortable position.

INCOME	2024	2023
Donations and Subscriptions	£1,271.00	£1,423.79
Seamoor Lottery	£248.50	£355.50
Grants/Investments		£5,000.00
Credit	£121.43	
Total Income	£1,640.93	£6,779.29
EXPENDITURE		
Solar project	£423.88	£1,846.53
RHS Insurance	£100.00	£90.00
Pathways		£95.40
Trees, tools and consumables	£151.66	£542.67
Beekeeping	£556.18	£497.58
Biodiversity	£169.50	
Gifts	£78.50	£27.50
Refreshments	£17.00	
Adjustments	£46.43	£112.99
DTC repayment	£2,729.59	
Total expenditure	£4,272.74	£3,212.67
c/f from previous year	£5,201.82	£1,635.20
BALANCE	£2,570.01	£5,201.82

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The accounts were AGREED. Proposed by Janie Harford and Seconded by Peter Shaw.

Monies from Seamoor Lottery were reduced but direct donations from Friends amounted to about £300.

A 'Tap to donate' box was discussed but rejected due to prohibitive background costs and security.

5. PRIORITIES

Julie Downing reported that we had basically achieved our priorities for 2024 and explained the priorities for 2025.

- Continue to keep the Orchard in as good state as it is today or even better!
- Maintain rolling programme of pruning and tree care
- Stabilise the Bees and increase honey production
- Increase Biodiversity & Wildlife Habitat (including more hedging)
- Install the new College Way Noticeboard
- Orchard Information Postcards in Visitor Centre, Library and Yacht Club to encourage new faces
- Bug Hotel replacement (involving children)
- Maintain social contact with Friends of the Orchard culminating in Apple Picking and Pressing Event in Autumn!

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

It was suggested that notices be put at both the Ridge Hill entrance and the College Way, expressly inviting 'regular orchard users' to visit the website to make a contribution.

Peter Shaw commented that many 'non orchard' saplings were growing and should be monitored/removed as necessary to maintain the integrity of the orchard, not as a woodland

Reference was made to a bat study that was completed 2016/17 and it was questioned whether this should be repeated, possibly hiring a 'bat detector'

A formal letter of thanks is to be sent to Jon and Sheree Hall for their work establishing and maintaining social media presence for the orchard

The hedge along college way needs to be reduced in height (Matt Horan & team) and new saplings/whips need to be added beyond college way entrance.

Jon Walley wished to record thanks for the current committee members and all their work

Julie Downing declared the meeting closed.