



Evaluation of Racehill Orchard Consultation

November 2012

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Introduction

Brighton & Hove Food Partnership's Harvest Project and Brighton Permaculture Trust are proposing to plant a community orchard on a site on Race Hill.

The consultation was to find out the views of local residents and organisations about the community orchard. It was also to establish whether the residents are in favour and whether they would like to be involved in the project in some way should it get permission to go ahead.

We were given permission to consult by Brighton & Hove City Council after extensive research into different sites across Brighton & Hove. We were informed this site was not in demand as allotments and that as it had been used as allotments previously, would be a suitable habitat for a planted orchard.

The consultation was delivered in partnership with Serendipity (the local community development work organisation) and Brighton and Hove City Council who are undertaking a wider consultation to ask local residents in the Whitehawk and Manor Hill area about plans for sheep grazing, extending allotment sites and the Orchard.

Site: The proposed orchard is situated at the back of Whitehawk and Manor Hill Estate, up a steep hill which is bordered by Wilson road to the north-east, Race Hill allotments to the west, Swanborough drive to the south and See-saw way. The local housing is predominantly council housing and the nearest buildings are high-rise flats. On the other side of the hill sits Bevendean estate.

Overview: A community orchard is a space that local people can enjoy, ideal for dog-walkers, picnics, nature lovers and children's play. There are opportunities for members of the community to get involved in the management, maintenance and sharing of the produce.

The Race hill site was chosen due to its aspect, soil quality and access. The area has become hard to access because of brambles and rubbish.

The original idea was to plant about 200 trees (mainly apples and plums) that would produce fruit within 3 years.

The introduction of a community orchard fits in with the city wide Spade to Spoon food strategy, which was re-launched in April 2012. The strategies aim is to 'create a healthy, sustainable food system for Brighton & Hove.' The orchard specifically adheres to Aim 5:

'Aim 5 More food consumed in the city is grown, produced and processed locally using methods that protect biodiversity and respect environmental limits.'



Summary

The number of local residents consulted: We have approached **426** individuals, **114** households and **10** community meetings (with at least **72** attendees in total). Countless other people have been reached through forwarded emails, newsletters, websites, social networking and press releases.

We have distributed **2,500** leaflets and **100** posters.

We have received **221** responses in the form of questionnaires, at least **12** people have rung in to chat about the project and I have in depth information (such as through interview or email correspondence) from **16** individuals.

63 % of respondents who have left their postcode live in the Whitehawk and Manor Hill area, **85 %** of respondents live in the BN2 postcode area of East Brighton (which includes Elm Grove and Bevendean) and is easily accessible from the site.

The response to our consultation has been overwhelmingly positive, with **88 %** of people in favour of a community orchard on the site at Race Hill.

Summary of Recommendations

However there are a number of issues that have arisen from the consultation which need to be looked at before a decision is made about the project.

1. The most vocal opposition has come from people who are concerned that the site should be conserved as open chalk downland and as such contain no trees. There is also concern about the site's habitat for the Whitehawk Soldier Beetle. Therefore we have already recommended that an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is undertaken and is now currently being done by Council staff. This should ascertain what impact an orchard would have in the area, whether it is a good idea to proceed and answer any concerns from conservationists. **BHCC Matthew Thomas**
2. There is concern that the fruit trees will be vandalised. We can research what other city based Orchard projects have done to prevent vandalism, unless we can find any preventative measures we might have to accept a certain amount of loss. **BHFP Helen Starr-Keddle**
3. There are concerns about Travellers using the site; further consultation work will be done with Friends, Family and Travellers organisation and with the Traveller Liaison team at the council. **BHFP Helen Starr-Keddle**
4. There have been a few requests to make the orchard Wheelchair accessible, which is something that could be worked into the design, by widening the access path. **BPT Bryn Thomas/BHCC Paul Gorringe**
5. Some people are concerned about the need for extra allotment land in the city and why this area is being allocated for an orchard. We need to work with the Allotment Service and Federation to understand the demands in the area and why there is conflicting information about it. The proposed orchard site is only a small proportion of the disused allotments and there is still old allotment land adjacent to the current allotments which could be re-opened. It will also be very important to make our position clear in any publicity about the project as to why this site is suggested for use as an orchard. **BHFP Vic Borrill/Helen Starr-Keddle**
6. The size of the orchard has been questioned and subject to the findings of the EIA and subsequent permission; it is recommended to phase the introduction of an orchard. The suggestion is to plant 30 trees this winter (2012/13) and if this is successful then plant further next year. This gives us the opportunity to find out what if any vandalism occurs, research any changes in habitat and how the trees cope with the soil and weather. **BPT Bryn Thomas**
7. The positioning of the orchard has also been questioned as plans for the site have been deliberately vague (to allow for feedback in the consultation). The recommendation is to take any findings from the EIA and after subsequent permission, plant the first 30 trees in an area that does not conflict with any habitats identified in the EIA. The Orchard can be planted sensitively to avoid any

particular areas of interest. The trees will be widely-spaced so that there are no overhead canopies to block the light and the area underneath will be left as a wildflower meadow. **BPT Bryn Thomas**

8. The findings about how the project should be run (community involvement, management and potential funding avenues) need to go to the Orchard Advisory Committee* in order to best establish how to organise the project. This can then feed into a project management plan for the Orchard.
BHFP Helen Starr-Kedde

The findings from this consultation and any measures we have taken to address concerns raised by residents and interested parties need to be widely publicised in November after the Council have finished their consultation.

*The Orchard advisory committee will originally consist of one representative from Brighton Permaculture Trust, two representatives from Brighton & Hove Food Partnership, one representative from Brighton & Hove City Council, one representative from Serendipity, two local people and will be phased over to include more local people as the project progresses. The Orchard advisory committee will meet after the Council's final decision in November 2012.

Summary of consultation techniques

Survey

The questionnaire was distributed by undertaking a door-knock of the roads most closely surrounding the proposed project; Swanborough Drive, See-Saw Way and Vines cross Road. All **114** houses were visited and return forms were left at those where there was no answer.

15 people answered the door **5** were not willing to answer questions **10** filled in questionnaires.

Serendipity undertook a Street Survey starting at the Orchard site, moving to the Allotments, then the shop under tower blocks, walking to the Broadway and at the Broadway (outside the Co-op). They noted that the further away from the site people became less interested.

250 people in total were approached of which about 40% were willing to stop to talk - overall just fewer than 10% of those approached were willing to complete a questionnaire - **23** people. Those that did not wish to complete a form there and then were given self-return forms.

Overall **31** questionnaires have been sent back by post from the Whitehawk area consultation.

At least, **12** people have rung in to talk to someone in depth about the project.

Exhibition

A display of the proposed project was left at Whitehawk Library.

Events

Whitehawk Festival / Sat 14th July 11am – 4pm

1 member of staff and 2 volunteers had a stall and talked to the public about the orchard.

45 people were approached about the project, **35** questionnaires were completed.

Meetings

Key local organisations

A member staff contacted key local organisations and had in-depth interviews regarding the proposed project. They discussed potential partnerships, community contacts, benefits and barriers.

Organisations contacted so far; The Crewe Club, Whitehawk Primary School, Valley Social Centre, The Green Centre, Whitehawk Food Project, The Whitehawk Inn, Friends of Sheepecote Valley, Bevendean Community Food Project,

Residents groups

Serendipity sent group questionnaires to the 8 resident's associations in the area. 50% responded to the consultation of which all were in favour of the project although all feedback was verbal. Serendipity

commented that based on previous work with these groups if one had disagreed they would have been informed. The residents associations have at least 6 people at each meeting. Therefore, at least **48** people have been approached in this way.

Focus meeting

Brighton and Hove City Council organised 3 consultation events about the proposals for the wider Whitehawk Hill area. 3 members of BHFP/BPT staff attended 2 events.

12 people attended this consultation event.

Leaflets and Posters

A simple leaflet and poster was designed which contained information about the proposed orchard and potential community benefits, with a web address of the survey and contact details for the food partnership.

100 posters and **2,500** leaflets were distributed around the local area.

Media

Website

The website Survey Monkey was used to create an online poll. This was attached to the Harvest, Food Partnership and Brighton Permaculture Trust website.

By email

An email was sent round to community contacts with a link to the Survey Monkey website and a paper copy of the survey. This email had a short explanation of the project and the contacts were encouraged to distribute it to their networks.

Email sent to at least **63** community contacts who have forwarded it to an unknown number of people.

Press release

A press release with information about the project and a link to the survey monkey was sent out to local media contacts.

Know press coverage; Interview with BBC Sussex, Article in Devour Sussex and Bristol Estate – The news.

Social Networking

Harvest posted on both Facebook and Twitter with a link to the survey which spread through Food Partnership channels.

Summary of responses

Feedback from questionnaires

221 people have responded to the questionnaire regarding the Orchard.
(Please see Race Hill Orchard Questionnaire.doc)

1) Do you think a community orchard is a good idea on this site on Racehill?

88.1 % (192) people) of respondents are in favour of the Orchard, **8.4% (18)** do not think an orchard is a good idea on this site and **4.7 % (10)** do not know.

Why?

There were 149 responses to this question, here is a summary:

In Favour

30 people thought an orchard would make an unused area more usable and productive.

12 people thought an orchard would make the area more attractive.

40 people thought it would be a great idea to get the community together, meet people and provide somewhere for local people to go.

9 people thought an orchard would help the biodiversity in the area.

11 people thought that children would benefit from having an orchard there.

17 people thought that it would provide a great educational and learning experience.

19 people thought an orchard would provide local people with a supply of healthy fruit.

19 people thought an orchard would help the environment (more trees!) and give better access to local fruit.

3 people thought an orchard would help save the site from development.

Some examples:

I think a community orchard anywhere is a great idea. I live nearby and would love to be involved.

Because it brings into best use of prime green land otherwise under used and in danger of neglect and therefore development

It would be a great way of getting to know others within the community

Trees are great for: shade, beauty, climbing, hide-and-peek, tree-houses & swings, carbon absorption, air cleansing, soaking up water (& moderating water run-off) and holding the ground together - as well as the gentle rustling of leaves providing a visual accompaniment to wind. Fruit trees are even better because they are food bearing and everyone gets to see and enjoy where their fruit comes from. We don't have enough trees in this part of the world so I would welcome more.

Appropriate fruit trees and understory crops will stabilise slopes, allow an area for rain to enter the groundwater system, produce oxygen, encourage wildlife, provide shelter from the sun and wind, provide a place for kids and adults to play, relax and learn, provide local food - in fact it would be silly not to plant an orchard in every local area as long as they are well designed and maintained.

Concerns

3 people were concerned about potential vandalism to the trees.

6 people were concerned about travellers using the site. Some people thought having an orchard and more people using the site would prevent travellers staying there, other people thought they would vandalize and steal the fruit.

6 people were concerned about the accessibility of the site (suggestion to make Wheelchair accessible).

8 people were concerned about the orchard destroying natural wildlife/Rare species/chalk grassland habitat.

2 people were concerned that no Environmental Impact Assessment had been undertaken.

- 4 people thought the site unsuitable for an orchard due to the soil and weather (too windy and exposed)
- 5 people wanted to ensure the existing fruit trees were protected.
- 3 people were concerned that allotment land should be returned to allotment land.
- 2 people thought that there wouldn't be enough local support or participation to undertake the project.
- 2 people were concerned the allotments/quiet area would be disrupted.
- 2 people were concerned about animals.
- 1 person did not want the gate opening.

Some examples:

'The local biodiversity of the ancient chalk grassland needs to be preserved firstly. Northern Europe has all of the world's ancient chalk grassland sites which are a very elusive and valuable commodity, and five sixths of these are in south east England (Sussex and Kent mainly). They are in danger of extinction alongside all of the wildlife and plants and environmental conditions they support. An orchard will take valuable light from this area and flora and fauna will become extinct here. Unless trees are very well spaced out without overhead canopies, I cannot see how this will work. Many of the creatures and plants that the chalk grasslands are habitat to, are in danger of extinction and are very rare, and we are lucky to have the last bastions of these colonies in the South Downs areas around Brighton, i.e. Whitehawk and Wild Park and Stanmer Park.'

Of the 18 people who voted against the project, 7 were recorded during one consultation exercise. This was the survey walk from the site into town. Some of the answers suggest that they might have misunderstood parts of the project. For example 'I'm a roman catholic', 'animals' 'do not want the gate opening' 'disrupt allotments'.

Of the 18 people who voted against the project, 12 left their postcode, 6 were residents of Whitehawk and Manor Hill, 4 lived in the BN2 area postcode and 2 lived in the wider Brighton & Hove area.

2) If this project were to go ahead what would you like to see?

- 94.1 % (190 people) Fruit trees
- 46.5 % (94) Green Gym e.g. Health walks
- 79.2% (160) Children learning about nature
- 60.9% (123) Adults trained in fruit tree care
- 68.3% (138) Picnic areas
- 63.9 % (129) Events e.g. harvest festivals, lunch clubs
- 74.3 % (139) Conservation activities e.g. counting bees, butterflies and wildflowers

Other:

No dogs, closer to housing, closer to road, Kids sponsoring a tree, Elderly involvement, Teen involvement, Planting hedgerows, planting fruit bushes (x2), cooperation with other community groups (x2), craft activities, free/low-cost events, Pick and cook sessions, Beehives and learning about honey, engage marginalised communities, Forest Garden, Wheelchair friendly, Bramble left 20 – 30ft wide around the houses, Summer holiday clubs, enhance chalk grassland, left as it is (x6).

'Be nicer if dogs not defecating near where children running freely and or exploring trees. If dogs kept on a lead going through and reminded of this. After all plenty of racecourse to let dog off either side.'

'Encouragement to people of Whitehawk specifically to be very involved in any project on that area of land. I do feel very strongly that this area should not be taken away from the people that use it most - i.e. those people who live on nearby estates. How will the permaculture trust ensure that the people involved in choosing, preparing planting and using the area are not all better-off people with a fashionable interest in local foods? It would be a great opportunity to engage people ON LOW INCOMES to become involved in a project that offers a chance to be REALLY involved in a local initiative that offers decision making, and agency to truly local people to that area (i.e. Whitehawk estates - not just the middle classes and educated classes that live there) People on low incomes are more likely to eat less healthy food - because it is cheaper. Working class food culture has been virtually trashed by the influx of burgers and KFC in the last

forty years. I do feel that public money and community organisations ought to address these very important issues - rather than providing yet another playground for the already well off and healthy 'hippies' of Brighton'

3) Would you like to get involved in the project by planting, maintaining or harvesting?

53.2 % (101 People)	Planting the trees
55.3 % (105)	Picking the produce
43.2% (82)	Maintaining the trees e.g. pruning
26.8 % (51)	Helping with the organisation
53.2 % (101)	Attending events or training
26.8 % (51)	None of the above

Other:

10 people don't have enough time, 4 people said they are too old to get involved, 2 people said they have disability and health problems, 2 people would like to work with schools, 3 don't like the idea, can assist with memorial orchard idea, help set up events, training people, cooking, conservation, design/planning, buscraft activities, Cider and making the site wheelchair accessible.

4) How do you think the trees and the upkeep of the orchard should be paid for?

68.3% (129 people)	Members of public or organisations 'sponsoring a tree'
67.7% (128 people)	Memorial orchard - Trees being dedicated to individuals who have passed away
46.6% (90)	Members paying for a share in return for the produce
73.5% (139)	Grants and trust funds

Any other comments:

34 people favoured 'by creating a social enterprise (this would allow the orchard to sell produce to cover running costs)' (this question was only in the latter part of the paper survey)

6 people had issues with the share idea; 'members shouldn't have to pay a fee but it could be an option for those that can afford it', 'produce from the orchard should be shared with the local community – not just the chosen few who can afford to pay for a share', 'don't exclude people who can't afford it', 'it could create problems of ownership'.

'What's the point of members paying when all and sundry will be coming and taking all the fruit'

'Possibly the share idea, but this could discriminate. People who don't have that interest or connection should have equal access to use & learn & connect with nature. Those buying shares will be usual suspects, not those we could do with reaching & teaching.'

'Members could pay with their spare time in return for produce'

- 3 people thought the Council should pay for it
- 2 people thought bankers and council staff should pay for it.
- 3 people thought it could become a carbon offsetting scheme.
- 3 people thought that no local people would contribute towards the orchard.
- 2 people thought that local schools can help fundraise towards it.

Other ideas; farm shop, donations from garden centre, don't waste money as it will be vandalised.

Someone thought a memorial orchard might prevent vandalism and we have already had one offer of sponsoring a tree.

Location of respondents

We have collected postcodes from **140** of the **218** people who filled in the questionnaire. Unfortunately this was because a section for entering postcodes was built into the online survey monkey part way through the consultation; therefore we did not capture addresses for some of the questionnaires. Also, some people did not want to disclose their address.

63.1 % (89 People) live in the Whitehawk and Manor Hill area

85.1 % (120 People) live in the BN2 postcode area; this includes Kemptown, Hanover, Bevendean and Moulsecoomb

12.7% (18 people) live in the wider Brighton & Hove area not including BN2

2.1 % (3 people) lived outside Brighton & Hove (in this case all three people lived in Peacehaven)

Feedback from meetings and individuals

Whitehawk Community Allotment Project

'I'd like you to know that I support the proposed community orchard if any fruit produced there is available for any member of the public to pick, and that it won't be an extension of the scrumping project in terms of a monopoly on the fruit, nor a CSA-type arrangement where individuals pay to receive a share. A truly public orchard would be very welcome. I thought the idea of memorial trees was quite interesting.

On a final note, as I'm sure you know, the proposed site is florally very rich at the moment, with swathes of rosebay willowherb, ox-eye daisy, marjoram, ragwort etc - a valuable bee and butterfly forage. I trust that any planting would be sensitive to the site's unique character.'

Neil Smith, Friends of Sheepcote Valley

'A lot of people around the area, are very positive – even people who usually object to everything!'

The main concerns are about kids vandalizing the trees, the previous allotments used to have a lot of vandalism.

Many local residents are quite elderly so many wouldn't be able to do the physical maintenance of the site.

People are concerned that maybe some people would wholesale nick all of the fruit overnight –such as travellers.

If you add Bench's it will help make it a nice place to hang out – if people stayed up there would be less chance of vandalism.

Dave Bangs, Ex-chair Friends of Whitehawk Hill author of 'Whitehawk Hill, Where the Turf Meets the Surf'

I am very worried by the proposal for an orchard and wildflower area on the Wilson Avenue site. A far better site for such an orchard would be within the Craven Vale Wood (on the south western slope of Whitehawk Hill) – an existing poor quality recent woodland dominated presently by Sycamore poles.

Orchards are, in effect, a highly modified form of woodland (and no doubt had their origin in scrubby woodland dominated by fruit bearing *Rosaceae* trees). The Craven Vale Wood is poor in species and structure, and a major modification of its composition along perma-cultural lines would provide for both the interests of the advocates of a new orchard and those who wish to enhance the wildlife interest.

The proposals for the orchard above Swanborough House are grandiose. Paul was unable to show me on the ground exactly where the proposed boundaries are (because of lack of time and tangled vegetation) but they seem very big. Yet (to repeat) this is a historically treeless landscape with skeletal soils.

The consultation is not being driven by the objective needs of the Hill...that are the reasons why the LNR (Local Nature Reserve) and SAM (Scheduled Ancient Monument) were designated. The Hill was designated an LNR for its archaic chalk grassland, and the SAM was designated cos there's a nationally important prehistoric building on its top.

The landscape character of the Hill is not being respected in this consultation...and is, indeed, being challenged. Its character is derived from its open treelessness, and its ancient grassland.

No environmental impact assessment has been done prior to the proposed change of use represented by both the allotments and the orchard.

Matthew Thomas, Council Ecologist

- The main drive for the consultation has always been conservation of the species-rich chalk grassland – the orchard would take up less than 0.5% of the total area of the LNR, on former allotment land which does not support species-rich chalk grassland. Part of the reason for designating LNRs, according to Natural England, is to maintain “special opportunities for study, research or enjoyment of nature as the priority concern.” (see <http://www.lnr.naturalengland.org.uk/special/lnr/office.htm>) The ethos behind the orchard is to actively engage the local community at the top end of Whitehawk in the LNR. The LNR has never been just about chalk grassland (it was designated to include a significant proportion of active allotment land) so the needs of the LNR and the Hill are driving the consultation completely.
- It's been a generation at least since the Hill was entirely treeless and I suspect if the council tries to return it to that state, there would be opposition. Fruit trees have been cultivated at the north end of the Hill for many years – probably since the Second World War. Species-rich chalk scrub has ecological value too.
- An EIA would clearly define the effects of the orchard on the land so if there is any controversy, it's a good thing to do. The nature conservation aspects would take a couple of days' work to pull together, but it would also need to look at landscape impact which would have to be carried out by an external body since the council doesn't employ a Landscape Architect.

Issues raised from the consultation event 12/09/12

Land use

- How could the orchard trees be protected from the sheep? This either means surrounding the area with a fence or fencing individual trees, which could be expensive. This also raised the subject of whether the sheep could damage the Whitehawk Soldier beetle habitat.
- An orchard isn't part of the natural flora and fauna of the area and requested a full environmental impact assessment before any change of use takes place. (Dave Bangs)
- The whole area should have a conservation management plan (Dave Bangs)
- Could another site be more appropriate for a large orchard? (Dave Bangs)
- Would the use of the allotment land as an orchard need to lead to a 'change of use' in planning?
- Maybe fruit trees could be established as part of the existing natural fence. (Dave Bangs)
- Could the site be technically brownfield, due to the waste (including asbestos) of the previous allotment site? The site is not open downland at the moment. (Bryn Thomas)

Orchard Management

- Why has the orchard been called 'community' and what does this mean? (Kim & Simon)
- What is the method of management for the community allotment? It was suggested that the

orchard should be open for everyone to help themselves to fruit. (Kim & Simon)

- How can the trees be protected from people coming to help themselves to fruit? (Local Dog-walker)

Consultation Method

- What is the consultation method and is it fully democratic? Will the majority vote win? Just because a lot of people are in favour of the orchard does that mean the minority of people who are expert on downland and conservation issues and not in favour of tree planting be ignored? (Kim)
- How can the public be informed of all the issues regarding the land use. As many people who have commented on the orchard and hill are probably not aware of the knowledge around conservation of the area. There could be some publicity regarding the arguments for and against and this could be distributed. (Dave Bangs + Kim)
- How will the consultation once it has been completed be published and what techniques are employed to communicate this with the public?

Issues raised from the consultation event 08/10/12

This consultation event was attended by about 14-18 (?) people on a cold misty evening and mainly concentrated on the plans for the area around the Fort. However there was also some discussion about the proposed allotments, current allotments and orchard. Overall the group was opposed to the new allotments and heard from Paul that this idea was unlikely to go ahead. There was a suggestion that the Race Hill site should have more plots opened but Jane (site rep for Craven Vale) pointed out that even though people are on the waiting list when you call them they don't actually want a plot.

There are a number of empty plots at Race Hill Allotments especially at the top where rabbits are a big problem. One suggestion was that the top of the hill is no longer used as allotments but instead open to provide access for the public to the whole of Whitehawk Hill and that new allotments were opened at the bottom of the hill. The Food Partnership explained that there is enough space to accommodate the orchard and more allotments if this decision were taken.

Questions about the orchard included clarity on the nature of the orchard and two people saying they were reassured when they heard it would be a well spaced, informal planting that would allow wild flowers to flourish. One woman suggested that there was no point doing anything because it would only get vandalised.

Other people were interested that local residents were supportive of the orchard but Kim pointed out that they were only asked 'would you like an orchard here' not 'would you like an orchard or would you like a sheep grazed landscape'. Whilst this is true the Food Partnership's remit was only to consult on the site as a potential orchard and the wider consultation on Whitehawk Hill provided opportunities to discuss wider issues.

Dave Bangs attended and continued to offer opposition to the orchard idea despite Matthew Thomas as city ecologist explaining that to return this piece of land to chalk downland would be highly costly and that he believed an orchard would support bio-diversity and encourage the engagement of residents with the whole hill. Dave reiterated that he believed that all of the land in the LNR should be grazed as that is what the designation was about.

Brighton & Hove City Council Whitehawk Hill Survey

Over **165** people responded to the council's survey, however only **75** of these responded in the section about views on the orchard. Therefore, only 45.7 % of respondents had an opinion about the orchard. There wasn't a question regarding whether people were in favour or not. However taken roughly from people's views we can gauge that **68 %** (51) were in favour of the orchard, **14.6%** were not in favour and **17.3 %** put ambiguous statements that could be read either way.

The combined total for the two surveys means that **296** people have responded about the orchard. Of these **82 %** are in favour of the orchard, **11.9 %** are not in favour and **8.1 %** do not know. However this is not an accurate picture of the two surveys as it is clear from some of the answers that the same people have completed both the Council's survey and our own. Therefore the two surveys have been kept separate in this report.

Do you have any views about the community orchard and wild flower area proposed for land at Swanborough drive?

Concerns

- 5 people were concerned about vandalism, either the trees being destroyed or the fruit stolen.
- 8 people were concerned about the biodiversity on the site, of these 4 people wanted to see the current biodiversity maintained and 4 people wanted to restore the site as Chalk down land.
- 5 people were concerned about how the orchard would be managed and the harvesting controlled.
- 4 people were concerned that the site should remain open-access.
- 2 people thought the site should return to use as allotments (although 1 wanted the orchard and wildflowers as well)
- 2 people wanted to ban dogs from using the site.
- 1 person was worried that the existing hedges would be removed.
- 2 people could not see a benefit for the community.

Ideas

- 1 could create a co-op fruit/veg store
- 1 suggestion to put beehives on the site
- 1 person would like picnic areas
- 1 person wanted to see hedgerow enrichment
- 1 it should involve young kids

Examples of quotes:

"Orchard compensates for any trees removed in scrub clearance"

"I don't like fruit trees, I only eat crisps, kinder eggs and cheese strings (9 yr old)"

"Essential to get local people back on the land, taking care and pride. Realising the potential for social, economical and environmental growth. Perhaps some local incentive scheme or way of community farming?"

"Need further information about how this will be managed and harvested. Currently have wild fruit trees that are accessible. Will we have to pay or be able to harvest ourselves? I currently make plum and damson jam from trees where you propose new allotments."

"Sounds good, but will it be possible to ensure only volunteer workers receive fruits?"

"I don't feel strongly, but I think one can be too purist about this. There seem to be good social arguments for the orchard and it is hardly going to undermine significantly your management of the site as a whole and the eventual restoration of chalk grassland elsewhere on Whitehawk Hill."

“I'm not sure what is involved in the community orchard - though would support a well managed and open access orchard along the lines of BPT's at stanmer park. 'Wildflower area' sounds tokenistic, when the aim of the overall plan is to improve biodiversity on the hill - and hence 'wildflowers'.”

“I have some concerns about the proposed community allotment area. It is a part of the LNR which I don't know so well but it would be important that none of the current wildlife value was lost by the creation of the orchard area.”

“It's a fantastic idea. The only reservation I have is how we can stop fruit being stolen whilst at the same time providing open community access.”

For more information on this consultation please contact Helen Starr-Kedde or Vic Borrill at Brighton & Hove Food Partnership on 01273 431700 or email helen@bhfood.org.uk or vic@bhfood.org.uk