



PRESS RELEASE

October 2022

Community invited to get juicing and help restore ancient orchard

A traditional orchard, dating back more than 200 years, is being brought back to life thanks to a project involving local landowners, fruit tree experts and the whole community.

Ten-acres of orchards at Halmore will be regenerated and extended over the next three years, with the planting of 70 new trees as well as restoration of existing trees. Many insect and bird boxes will also be installed, as part of a plan to bring greater biodiversity to the land.

The project is being jointly steered by national educational charity The Ernest Cook Trust, whose land much of the orchard stands on, and CPRE Gloucestershire The Countryside Charity (part of a national group of charities which aim to protect, promote and enhance the countryside), at the Trust's Redwood Outdoor Learning Centre which is based in Halmore.

Also involved are specialist orchardists at Orchard Revival, who recently featured on BBC2's Gardeners' World, and two further local landowners.

Community involvement is at the heart of the project, which is officially launching on **Saturday October 22**, with a community juicing morning from **10am-midday**, at Redwood Outdoor Learning Centre.

People are being invited to come along to find out more, and have a go at harvesting and pressing apples. They can even bring their own containers to carry their juice home!

The Ernest Cook Trust is one of the UK's foremost funders and providers of Outdoor Learning, running programmes on its own land as well as with partner estates. It has a particular focus on supporting disadvantaged young people and/or those living in deprived areas. Every year, the Trust also gives around £2million in grants to further Outdoor Learning.

The project plans to bring in groups and volunteers from across the wider community to help with the regeneration, which will give them access to the outdoors for wellbeing, as well as learning new skills in orchard management.

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“We’ve been consulting with the local community about restoring the orchard. Our aim is not only to rejuvenate it and increase biodiversity, but to bring wider benefits to the community as a whole, particularly young people and those affected by rural isolation,” said Emily Crawley, Head of Learning at The Ernest Cook Trust.

“We will be passing on skills and expertise in orchard management, potentially opening up career opportunities for disadvantaged young people, and we’ll also use the orchard to support those experiencing poor mental health.”

Tim Andrews, CPRE Gloucestershire Director and also founder of Orchard Revival, added: “Orchards are an important part of the Gloucestershire landscape and part of our heritage. The county has lost over 75% of the orchards over the last 50 years. Halmore was once famous for its cider house and cider makers and there are even three critical rare apples, including the Nine of Diamonds which originates from the village. Our work restoring the orchards will help these increasingly ‘at risk’ habitats and fruit varieties survive.”

The project is being jointly funded by The Ernest Cook Trust, CPRE Gloucestershire, Orchard Revival and Severn Trent’s Boost for Biodiversity fund.

For more information about The Ernest Cook Trust visit <https://ernestcooktrust.org.uk/> or for CPRE Gloucestershire visit <https://www.cpreglos.org.uk/>.

Listen to Tim Andrews talk to BBC Radio Gloucestershire’s Dominic Cotter about the Halmore Orchard <https://ernestcooktrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/BBC-Radio-Glos-Halmore-Orchard-interview-with-Tim-Andrews.mp3>

