

8. Keeping South Somerset Orchards Alive

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Charlotte Thomas, Orchard Project Officer (SCC) will attend the meeting to give a short presentation on the 'Keeping South Somerset Orchards Alive' project.

Background information about Keeping South Somerset Orchards Alive

The project, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and Somerset Biodiversity Partnership (supported by South Somerset District Council), will employ an Orchard Project Officer to deliver the two year project, which is focused on an orchard hotspot of 28 parishes within South Somerset.

The 28 parishes covered by the project, the majority of which are in Area North, are: Aller, Ash, Barrington, Chiselborough, Curry Rivel, Drayton, Hambridge & Westport, High Ham, Huish Episcopi, Isle Brewers, Kingsbury Episcopi, Langport, Long Load, Long Sutton, Lopen, Martock, Montacute, Muchelney, Norton-sub-Hamdon, Odcombe, Pitney, Puckington, Seavington St Michael, Shepton Beauchamp, South Petherton, Stocklinch, Stoke sub Hamdon, Tintinhull.

The project aims to keep an important part of South Somerset's heritage alive by raising the profile of orchards and providing advice for orchard owners on all aspects of management. Volunteers will receive training in techniques to survey orchards for their special wildlife and to encourage communities to plant new orchards or restore neglected orchards in their local area. The scheme will also encourage the planting of orchards within school grounds. Local school children will explore the natural heritage of the traditional orchards on their doorsteps and plant new ones in their school grounds.

The culture of traditional orchard heritage will be celebrated at events such as Wassailing and Apple Day, and efforts will be made to keep alive local heritage apple varieties that are not widely available today such as Chisel Jersey, Red Worthy and Slack Me Girdle.

The project has a webpage:
<http://www.orchardnetwork.org.uk/content/keeping-south-somerset-orchards-alive-0>