

Statement of Priorities

The constitution of the Friends of Highfield Orchard states that the group's Aims and Objectives are to protect and nurture the fruit trees of Highfield Road Community Orchard, and to promote local community enjoyment and involvement in the orchard's long-term health and development.

To further these aims and objectives, the group has agreed the following specific priorities:

Year 1 (Sept 2021-22) :**A. Fruit tree care**

1. To complete the task of clearing grass, scrub weeds and saplings from under all fruit trees, except those on the bottom row adjacent to the allotments (area E – see map).
2. To complete the task of cutting meter circles of earth around each tree and applying wood chip, (except area E).
3. To obtain and spread fruit tree feed.
4. To complete the task of pruning stone fruit trees (summer) and apples/pears/medlars (winter) to manageable heights.
5. To request the council to increase the regular mowing area by the Totally Local Company, to include the orchard areas on periphery of the park (areas A, B, C and D), and around the fruit trees in the central areas (F, G, H and I)
6. To request the council to clear branches of park trees overhanging the fruit trees.
7. To clear non-fruit trees from the orchard areas where these interfere with the fruit trees' well-being.
8. To request the council clear area E of bramble, nettle, balsam, hogweed and other unwanted plants, back to a line 2-3 meters behind the fruit trees. Then to complete 1-7 with these trees.
9. Once 1-8 completed, to regularly cut back grass, sand scrub from in and around the fruit trees.

B. Resources

1. To agree shared banking with Stockport Greenspace.
2. To make applications for funding, specifically for :
 - Training in use of power tools (strimmers and powered mowers especially)
 - Tree feed
 - Tools to include power tools. secateurs, extendable loppers, pruning saws, shears, heavy duty gloves, spades, edgers, rakes, wheelbarrows.

- Hire of power tools as needed.

C. General Care of Highfield Park

1. To request the council remove existing and future piles of pruning debris/fallen branches of other trees (or turn these to wood chip on site), as these piles represent a potential fire hazard.
2. To request the council undertake (and/or give permission for the Friends of Highfield Orchard) clearance of scrub from around and amongst non-fruit trees in Highfield Park, to a. prevent encroachment of unwanted trees and scrub further into the park, and b. to improve lines of sight for park users to improve safety and security.
3. To request a second litter bin is provided at the gated entrance on Highfield Road to reduce the littering problem in the park.
4. To undertake a consultation exercise with park users and local residents regarding their wishes regarding the park.

Year 2 (Sept 2022-23) :

A. Care of the Fruit Trees

1. To conduct routine maintenance on the fruit trees, including weeding in and around the trees, applying compost, feed and woodchip to their bases, and pruning.
2. To remove dead and dying trees
3. To replant trees as necessary

B. Community Engagement

1. To build community engagement through the holding of open days and task days.
2. To explore engagement with local schools, local mental health charities and probation services, and develop volunteering opportunities

C. General Care of Highfield Park

1. On the basis of consultation with local residents, to undertake improvement works to the park.
2. To support increased bio-diversity in the park through building of 'insect hotels', bird boxes, bat boxes, and management of grass areas to different lengths to provide a range of habitats.

D. Resources

1. To apply for funding to support the Year 2 objectives above.

