

Local Green Space Toolkit Application

Site 15

Albemarle Orchard Garden

1	General Information	Tick if relevant evidence provided
1.1	Name and address of site <i>Some sites have several names and all known names should be given</i>	
	Albemarle Orchard Garden, Saville Close, Cheltenham GL50 4NE	
1.2	Site location plan <i>The plan can be at any scale, but must show the location and boundaries of the site. Please indicate the scale.</i>	
	<i>Insert here or attach separately</i>	
1.3	Organisation or individual proposing site for designation <i>This will normally be a Town or Parish Council or a recognised community group</i>	
	Albemarle Orchard Garden Group	
1.4	Ownership of site if known <i>Information on land ownership can be obtained from the Land Registry. Some land parcels are not registered however local people may know the owner.</i>	
	Cheltenham Borough Council	
1.5	Is the owner of the site aware of the potential designation? Do they support the designation? (Sites may be designated as Local Green Spaces, even if there are objections from the site owners)	
	They are unaware of the potential designation.	
1.6	Photographs of site	
	<i>Insert here or attach separately</i> See appendix 1	
1.7	Community served by the potential Local Green Space <i>i.e. does the site serve the whole village/town or a particular geographic area or group of people?</i>	
	The site serves the residents of Pittville Mount Estate but is also open to the public.	
2	Planning History	

2.1	Is there currently a planning application for this site? If permitted, could part of the overall site still be used as a Green Open Space? for further information please contact Cheltenham Borough Council Planning Applications team	
	There is currently a planning application being considered for 'change of use' from an unused area of public land to a community orchard garden. Application reference: 14/02039/COU. Decision date: 02/02/2015	
2.2	Is the site allocated for development in the existing Development Plan, emerging Joint Core Strategy, Cheltenham Plan or a Neighbourhood Plan? If allocated, could part of the overall site still be used as a Green Open Space? For further information please contact Cheltenham Borough Council Planning Policy team	
	No	
3	Size, scale and "local nature" of proposed Local Green Space	
3.1	Area of proposed site	
	658m ²	
3.2	Is the site an "extensive tract of land"? <i>(Extensive tracts of land cannot be designated as Local Green Space) e.g. how large is it in comparison to other fields; groups of fields; areas of land in the vicinity etc.? Does the site "feel" extensive or more local in scale?</i>	
	The area of land is large enough to contain a small community orchard that can easily be managed by the local residents. We plan on planting 31 local heritage fruit trees and having seating areas with benches. There is also space for wildlife / insect habitats to be built. The area of land is enclosed on all sides by hedges and feels more like a garden than a large tract of land.	
3.3	Is the proposed site "local in character"? <i>e.g. does the site feel as though it is part of the local area? And why? How does it connect physically, visually and socially to the local area? What is your evidence?</i>	
	Although the land is enclosed and cannot be seen from the public highway it is within short walking distance of all the local residents in the area. It is very much part of the Albemarle Gate estate and totally separate from Pittville Park itself. All the local residents are aware of the orchard project with many of them being members of the group. The local community has become much closer with residents keen to use the orchard to continue this growing sense of community.	
4	Need for Local Green Space	
4.1	Is there a need for a local green space in this location? <i>e.g. is there a shortage of accessible greenspace in the area? Is there a village needs survey or parish plan that provides evidence of that need.</i> <i>Further information – Natural England (Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard)</i>	
	With Pittville Park on our doorstep there is plenty of green space nearby but the orchard will provide a unique site within our neighbourhood and will be a	

	feature that Pittville park does not have. It will be a unique site as it will have been created and maintained by local residents, to be enjoyed by the whole neighbourhood and those who visit.	
5	Evidence to show that “the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves” Please indicate what evidence you have provided against each point.	
5.1	How far is the site from the community it serves? Is the site within 2km of the local community? <i>Possible evidence – a map to show that distance</i>	
	The land is within a ½ mile radius of the residents it serves. There are approximately 4,500 residents in the Pittville ward who live within walking distance of the site. It is overlooked by some homes and is perceived by local residents who are involved to be in the heart of our community.	
5.2	Are there any barriers to the local community accessing the site from their homes? <i>e.g. railway line; main road</i> <i>Possible evidence – a map to show any potential barriers and how those can be overcome.</i>	
	There are no barriers to access the land. The route for all local residents is direct along the public highway. There is currently a vehicular gate on to the land which is kept locked although our group will be installing a pedestrian gate which will be left unlocked.	
6	Evidence to show that the green area is “demonstrably special to a local community” Please indicate what evidence you have provided against each point.	
6.1	Evidence of support from Parish or Town Council <i>e.g. letter of support; Council minutes</i>	
	We have had a strong supportive vote from the Cheltenham Borough Council Assets Committee who have given our project the go-ahead. We have negotiated a 5 year lease on the land which is currently being drawn up in time to plant the fruit trees in February. G.A.V.C.A (Gloucestershire Organisation for Voluntary and Community Action) have also been extremely supportive and helpful. They are keen to see the project be a success. We have also received a grant from the Council’s Community Pride Award Scheme in support of the project (see Appendix 6).	
6.2	Evidence of support from other local community groups or individuals. <i>e.g. letters of support; petitions; surveys etc.</i>	
	Following the last 18 months our neighbourhood has worked closely to protect this land by proposing to set up a community orchard. It has been clear that the residents of Pittville Mount Estate are keen to see the land kept	

	for community use. We have regular meetings with many local residents attending and have now set up a committee with an agreed constitution in place. (For a copy of the minutes from the last AGM see appendix 5).	
6.3	Evidence of support from community leaders <i>e.g. letters of support from Ward Members; County Councillors; MP etc.</i> <i>Further information on these contact details – Cheltenham Borough Council, Gloucestershire County Council, House of Commons</i>	
	We have received support for the Orchard from Cllr John Rawson; Chairman of the Council’s Asset Committee, Martin Horwood; local MP and Cllr David Prince; our local ward councillor who has attended all our meetings and has provided a vital source of help and advice. Support from MP Martin Horwood – see appendix 2	
6.4	Evidence of support from other groups <i>e.g. letters of support from organisations such as Campaign to Protect Rural England; local amenity societies; local schools etc.</i>	
	Martin Hayes from the Gloucestershire Orchard Trust has attended our meetings and offered to be our tree consultant to help guide us through the project. He will source the trees, help plant them and has assisted us in drawing up a ten year management plan. – see appendix 3 for G.O.T support and appendix 7 for the 10 year management plan. We have also received advice and support from Adam Reynolds (CBC’s Parks Manager) and Janice Payne (CBC Community Ranger). Friends of Pittville have also taken an interest and offered their support. GAVCA statement of support – see appendix 4	
7	Evidence to show that the green area “holds a particular local significance, for example because of its <u>beauty</u>,” (if applicable) <i>Please indicate what evidence you have provided against each point.</i>	
7.1	Is this criteria relevant to this site ?	
	NO	
7.2	Describe why the community feels that the site has a particular local significance for its beauty.	
7.3	Site visibility <i>e.g. is it easy to see the site from a public place? Are there long-distance views of the site? Are there views of the site from any key locations?</i>	
7.4	Is the site covered by any landscape or similar designations?	

	<i>e.g. Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; Conservation Area; Special Landscape Area</i> <i>Further information – Cheltenham Borough Council; Natural England;</i>	
	The site is located within a conservation area.	
7.5	Is the site (or the type of site) specifically mentioned in any relevant landscape character assessments or similar documents? <i>e.g. Cotswolds AONB landscape character assessment. Further information – Cheltenham Borough Council; Natural England; Cotswolds Conservation Board</i>	
7.6	Does the site contribute to the setting of a historic building or other special feature?	
	No	
7.7	Is the site highlighted in literature or art? <i>e.g. is the site mentioned in a well-known poem or shown in a famous painting?</i>	
	No	
8	Evidence to show that the green area “holds a particular local significance for example because of its <u>historic significance</u>” (if applicable) <i>Please indicate what evidence you have provided against each point.</i>	
8.1	Is this criteria relevant to this site ?	
	NO	
8.2	Are there any historic buildings or remains on the site? <i>e.g. listed buildings; scheduled ancient monuments ; registered parks and gardens; war memorials; other historic remains or structures.</i> <i>Further information – Cheltenham Borough Council; English Heritage; Gloucestershire Historic Environment Record; Gloucestershire Archives; local history society;</i>	
8.3	Are there any important historic landscape features on the site? <i>e.g. old hedgerows; ancient trees; historic ponds or historic garden features</i> <i>Further information – Cheltenham Borough Council; English Heritage; Gloucestershire Historic Environment Record; local history society</i>	
8.4	Did the site play an important role in the historic development of the village or town? <i>e.g. the old site of the town railway station; the old garden for the manor house etc.</i>	

8.5	Did any important historic events take place on the site?	
8.6	Do any historic rituals take place on the site? <i>e.g. well-dressing; maypole dancing etc.</i>	
9	Evidence to show that the green area “holds a particular local significance, for example because of its <u>recreational value</u> (including as a playing field)”, (if applicable) <i>Please indicate what evidence you have provided against each point.</i>	
9.1	Is this criteria relevant to this site ?	
	YES	
9.2	Is the site used for playing sport? <i>If so what sport? How long has it been used for sports provision? Is this sports provision free or is a club membership required?</i> <i>Further information – Sport England</i>	
	No	
9.3	Are the public able to physically access the site? <i>e.g. are there any public rights of way across the site? Or adjacent to the site? Has access been allowed on a discretionary basis? Is there public access to the whole site or only part? Is there good disabled access to the site? (A site can still be designated even if there is no public access.)</i> <i>Further information – Gloucestershire County Council</i>	
	The land is classed as Council owned Public Open Space. The existing vehicular access gate is currently locked and the land is unused. It has not been used by the public for over 40 years. Previously the Council had used it as a turf nursery but have recently indicated that they wish to gain planning consent to build on the land and sell it. Our proposal to create a community orchard has halted this process. We intend to install a pedestrian gate with disabled access to allow public to enter.	
9.4	Is the site used by the local community for informal recreation? And since when? <i>e.g. dog walking; sledging; ball games etc</i>	
	No	
10	Evidence to show that the green area “holds a particular local significance, for example because of its <u>tranquillity</u>” (if applicable) <i>Please indicate what evidence you have provided against each point.</i>	
10.1	Is this criteria relevant to this site ?	
	YES	
10.2	Do you consider the site to be tranquil? <i>e.g. are there are any roads or busy areas close by?</i>	

	Although there is a road to the side of the land, the site is enclosed by a Yew and Privet hedge which is high and dense so the land is very protected. This will provide a quiet, pleasant area for people to meet and enjoy the orchard that our community will have worked to create. It will also be an excellent environment for nature to thrive.	
10.3	Is the site within a recognised tranquil area? e.g. within the Campaign to Protect Rural England 's tranquillity maps	
	No	
11	Evidence to show that the green area “holds a particular local significance, for example because of the <u>richness of its wildlife</u>”; (if applicable) Please indicate what evidence you have provided against each point.	
11.1	Is this criteria relevant to this site ?	
	NO	
11.2	Is the site formally designated for its wildlife value? e.g. as a site of special scientific interest; a key wildlife site etc Further information - Natural England ; Gloucestershire Centre for Environmental Records	
	No	
11.3	Are any important habitats or species found on the site? e.g. habitats and species listed in the UK priority habitats and species lists or Gloucestershire Biodiversity Action Plans or protected species or on the red/amber lists of birds of conservation concern. Further information - Natural England ; Gloucestershire Centre for Environmental Records ; National Biodiversity Network ; RSPB	
	None presently known.	
11.4	What other wildlife of interest has been found on the site? Further information - Natural England ; Gloucestershire Centre for Environmental Records ; National Biodiversity Network ;	
	None yet although we intend to encourage wildlife by building various habitats.	
11.5	Is the site part of a long term study of wildlife by members of the local community? e.g. long-term monitoring of breeding birds.	
	Members of the Albemarle Orchard group have expressed an interest in creating wildlife habitats for future study, including bee-keeping. All Saints Scout Group have asked to be involved in creating insect lodges and using the site for educational purposes. Children in the neighbourhood will be able to learn about growing fruit and the wildlife habitats they attract. It will help provide a focus for outdoor activity for all ages thus creating a sense of pride and ownership of a community orchard. The fruit trees themselves will be as important because of the heritage varieties we intend to plant. The varieties of apple, pear and plum we have chosen are unique to Gloucestershire's heritage	

12	Evidence to show that the green area “holds a particular local significance, for <u>any other reason</u>”; (if applicable) <i>Please indicate what evidence you have provided against each point.</i>	
12.1	Is this criteria relevant to this site ?	
	YES	
12.2	Are there any other reasons why the site has a particular local significance for the local community?	
	It has been evident from the planning of the orchard that we now have a tighter local community with people getting to know their previously unacquainted neighbours. Once established the orchard will continue to bring the community together through the increased use of the land. Its continued sustainability through careful management and ongoing development will create a recognised site of interest. The orchard will bring an improved feeling of well-being to local residents through a sense of involvement and achievement in the project. The neighbourhood will benefit from higher levels of biodiversity. It will provide an educational resource for children and an opportunity for local residents to learn new skills in horticulture.	

Appendix 1





Appendix 2

Dear Vince

I am delighted to support the application for a Local Green Space designation for the proposed Albemarle Orchard Garden. In contrast to the much larger and more open park over the road, this small, enclosed space would be extremely safe for younger children, very accessible to everyone and a real community asset if it was developed as a community orchard as the local residents propose. The Local Green Space designation is designed to protect land of value to local people, including for recreation and enjoyment and local food production and this small human-scale space could meet all those objectives. I have no hesitation in welcoming and supporting this application.

All the best

Martin Horwood

Martin Horwood MP

Liberal Democrat Member of Parliament for Cheltenham

Appendix 3

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE- Albemarle Orchard Garden

I would like to add my support, and, as the Chief Surveying Officer for the Gloucestershire Orchard Trust (GOT) I have the authority of the committee, and thus the full membership, to give their backing to the afore mentioned project. As a trust we (GOT) promote orchards, their conservation and their importance within the community. This support is on a practical level in the form of 6 fruit trees, donated by the trust, and my time as a consultant to the orchard project.

My involvement started early on and, with the help of GOT, was able to set about formulating a 10 year management plan with costing. What struck me more than any of the projects I am involved in was the turnout at each of the meetings I attended. The Albemarle orchard Garden truly represents a community orchard , bringing people together and making for an inclusive neighbourhood, something that we need to celebrate and support .

I am happy to meet any Cheltenham BC members on site to discuss the merits of this exciting Orchard Garden

Name and address supplied

Appendix 4

Hi Vince

Please feel free to include the statement below:

GAVCA has been pleased to support the AOG with developing the organisation, by advising on the governance structure for the group. It seems there is plenty of local support for the group. There is a desire to engage with members of the local community to develop the work using voluntary action to protect and improve the environment and develop a strong community infrastructure.

Hope that helps

Name supplied

Appendix 5

Albemarle Orchard Garden Annual General Meeting Minutes of the meeting held on 20103-06 at 19:00

2014:047 Present: 18 names supplied

Apologies: 3 names supplied

2014:048 Introduction: Councillor David Prince thanked all present for attending. He outlined the events leading up to the meeting. Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC) had proposed that the piece of land at the corner of Saville Close and Albemarle Gate, presently part of the designated public open space of Pittville Park, should be sold as building land for development.

However, if the local community can demonstrate a need for it and present a viable scheme for its use, we have the chance to save it from development.

The chair of the Assets Committee, John Rawson, was previously involved in preventing the land from being built on, so is supportive. However, his views are not shared by all members of the Assets Committee, at least one of whom is keen to see the land built upon. About 20 people from the local area have had several meetings hosted by Vince & Emma Norvill to consider possibilities. It has been agreed that a community orchard would be a good use

of the land and leaflet drops have been done in the area to stimulate interest. A name and a draft constitution for the project have been agreed, and some funding possibilities investigated. 130 fliers were distributed from Tommy Taylors Lane to Evesham Road to announce this first AGM, the purpose of which is to formally create the group. Once formally constituted, the Group can go on to develop detailed plans.

2014:049 Election of Committee: Derek Buckley, Rowland Carson, Colin Eynon, Rosemarie Kenshole, Mary- Ann McClaran, Vince Norvill, Emma Norvill, Wendy Vick were all prepared to stand. David Prince asked if the meeting was prepared to accept these names en-bloc for the Committee and this was agreed unanimously.

2014:050 Election of Chairman: Diane Hibbert proposed and Jacqueline Buckley seconded Vince Norvill for Chairman. Agreed unanimously.

2014:051 Election of Treasurer: Diane Hibbert proposed and Mary-Ann McClaran seconded Emma

Norvill for Treasurer. Agreed unanimously.

2014:052 Election of Minute Taker: Jacqueline Buckley proposed and Rosemarie Kenshole seconded Rowland Carson for Minute Taker. Agreed unanimously.

2014:053 Election of Vice-Chair: Diane Hibbert proposed and Jacqueline Buckley seconded Mary-Ann McClaran for Vice-Chair. Agreed unanimously.

2014:054 Chairman's address: Vince Norvill said that this is a very good time to be starting this project because of the Government's support of such initiatives. The localism bill suggests that we might be able to get the land listed as an asset of community value which would then give us the right to buy it.

Obviously the proposed orchard would be a community resource, and also an educational resource for

local schools and an opportunity for all of us to learn new skills. We could hold community events, and that need not wait until the fruit trees are planted (probably in Autumn 2015). Once established, we could apply for a Green Aag Community Award. In answer to a question from the floor, David Prince made it clear that CBC owns the land and that it is still part of the public open space. Thus, anyone can walk into it; the gate erected recently is to prevent entry by vehicles for parking or squatting. Either CBC or the Group might consider improving the fence along the boundary with 6 Saville Close. In answer to a question from the floor, David Prince agreed to seek the views of John Rawson on the most appropriate arrangement for our management of the land. There might be a qualifying period to see how things work out before we could apply for a long lease.

2014:055 Adoption of Constitution: Copies of the draft Constitution had been issued to all attending. Vince Norvill had received some suggestions for minor improvements to that draft from Angela Gilbert of Gloucestershire Association for Voluntary & Community Action (GAVCA) and read them

out for consideration. It was agreed unanimously to adopt the Constitution, incorporating those amendments. A copy of the amended Constitution is attached to these minutes.

2014:056 Next Steps: Vince Norvill said that our Committee intends to hold 3 meetings in preparation for our presentation to the CBC Assets Committee on 26 June. Our Committee will consider selection of trees, layout, costs, community benefits and events and anything else that could help to make our submission effective and successful, and will keep the members informed of progress by distributing copies of Committee Meeting minutes.

2014:057 Date of first Committee Meeting: The Committee agreed to meet at 7pm on 27 March at 1 Saville Close. Rowland Carson gave apologies in advance that he would be unable to attend on that date; Mary-Ann McClaran agreed to take the minutes in his stead.

2014:058 Closure: The meeting closed at 20:00. There were 16 people (not including councillors) present for 1 hour

Appendix 6

Community Pride Funding 2014

Further to my recent correspondence, I am pleased to tell you that the Council's Cabinet has agreed £3777 for the Albemarle Orchard Garden project. I have attached two signed copies of a project agreement which I would be pleased if you could sign and return one copy to me.

To claim the funding, you will need to submit a monitoring report / claim form. I can issue this on request although it is available on the council's website:

<http://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/communitypride>

Good luck with the project and do let me know how you are getting on. If you have any queries, please contact me on the number above.

If you have any queries in the meantime, please contact me on the number above.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 7

TEN YEAR MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR ALBEMARLE ORCHARD GARDEN

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

- To conserve the rural character and scenic quality of the site.
- To develop and maintain an attractive environment for the use and enjoyment of the local community and those who visit.
- To conserve protected species on the site, e.g. bats.
- To conserve and develop site biodiversity.
- To refurbish any trees and hedgerows for long-term viability.
- To achieve an environmentally and economically sustainable management level for the site that is sensitive to future changes.
- To replace with appropriate materials or species all trees and plants which die, become over-mature, diseased or unsafe.
- To use plant materials of British provenance and, where practical, from local sources.
- To avoid the use of chemicals, pesticides and herbicides other than those approved by The Soil Association.

- PLANTING

The new trees are to be on different rootstocks the largest of which would be semi dwarfing and placed at the entrance side of the orchard. The time for planting is from the end of November till end of April but this is dependent on the weather.

SITE PREPARATION

All trees encroaching on to the site to be crown lifted and cut back from the site to give maximum light and space for the new orchard. Waste and cuttings to be retained and utilised for reasons of biodiversity.

The hedge along the road which may have evidence of honey fungus will be removed and a barrier placed underground between that and the new orchard. This will be done with a mechanical digger and the waste burnt. Alternatively the new trees can be planted away from any infected hedge.

The sward is to be cut prior to planting to make it easier to dig the holes.

MAINTENANCE

Grass is to be cut frequent enough to disperse the cuttings. If less frequent the cuttings will be composted. Any weed growth will also be controlled by mowing.

All Hedgerow around the site will be trimmed at least once a year in order to maintain their current height and width, encourage bushy growth and prevent any further growth out of existing shrubs. Trimming of the hedgerows will take place in January/early February to minimise the risk of damaging active birds' nests. Any gaps within the hedgerows will be filled by laying of adjacent sections where possible.

Sufficient watering will be applied to maintain healthy growth to the trees during the growing season and following any dry periods of 7 days.

YEAR 1.

There is a saying about the first few years of a new planted fruit tree "Year 1 they sleep, year 2 they creep, year 3 they leap". So in the early years not much will be done to the tree itself.

July- Tree guards to be re-adjust where needed, particularly if any chaffing is evident. Broken stakes to be replaced. Grass to be removed from inside tubes and around the base of the tree. Any fruit to be removed from the trees to help wood growth.

YEAR 2.

Jan/Feb- Orchard to be walked regularly checking if pruning is required, cutting broken and diseased wood out from the apple and pear. Plum trees are not to be cut.

July/aug- Guards to be checked and adjusted as required. Spirals to be checked for damage and changed as required. Any growth below the knee to be pruned away. Grass to be carefully removed from around the trunk of the trees. Plum trees to be pruned and any excess fruit removed. New spirals and guards to be fitted as required.

October- Apple day celebrations!!

YEAR 3.

Jan/Feb- Guards and spirals to be checked. Trees pruned cutting back leader to encourage lower limb growth.

July- Guards and spirals to be adjusted and change where needed. Trees pruned and grass removed along with any excess fruit. Plum trees to be pruned.

October- Apple day celebrations!!

YEAR 4.

Jan/Feb- Shaping of the trees can now begin so pruning where required. Check Guards and remove grass. Remove and replace dead trees .

June /July- Guards to be checked. Continue to shape the trees being careful to chose well positioned branches; to be advised by tree consultant. Grass to be removed around tree. Pruning of plum trees and thinning of fruit.

October- Apple day celebrations .

YEAR 5.

Jan/feb- Trees to be pruned in earnest, guards checked and removal of grass. Replace any dead, unhealthy, or squirrel-damaged trees.

June/July- Prune plum trees and summer prune apple and pear. Thin out fruit Check guards and remove grass.

October- Apple day celebrations!!

Time to think about what to do with the fruit. Ideas include making chutney's and jams. Sending fruit off to be pressed for own juice (possibly with own branding).

Fruit can be sold to local shops, cafes and restaurants.

Begin to prepare for storage and picking. Apple boxes, plum trays and picking equipment as well as the use of bodjers and ladders.

YEAR 6.

Jan /Feb- Removal of sheep guards. Winter pruning. Remove rotten fruit still on trees, grass to be kept in check.

June/July- every year there is a phenomenon called 'June Drop' whereby apples plums and pears shed fruit that is not going to be pollinated for what ever reason. It is quite obvious when it happens as the ground will be festooned with small discarded fruit. After this occurrence the trees are to be thinned out of fruit to ensure larger better quality apples, plums and pears.

Summer prune the trees for light and future growth. Prune the plum trees.

Years 7 – 10.

The trees will now be well developed. Pruning will continue in accordance with good horticultural practice to maintain healthy well shaped specimens.

This management plan was drawn up with the assistance of Martin Hayes from the Gloucestershire Orchard Trust. As part of his commitment to the Gloucestershire Orchard Trust he has volunteered to act as Orchard consultant on the project and will be available to give free pruning workshops and educational talks on good horticultural practice. This will enable members of our local community to learn the skills required to maintain the orchard as set out in this plan.

