

About Wolds End Orchard

Wolds End Orchard forms part of the historic environment and cultural heritage of Chipping Campden and is a tribute to our agricultural past.

The Orchard contains rare varieties of fruit trees and its distinctive Ridge and Furrow landscape is one of the town's last remaining examples of medieval farming methods. It has never been intensively farmed and its veteran trees, hedgerows, grassland and limestone soil create a unique and irreplaceable 'mosaic' habitat; an ideal environment for vulnerable species of plants, insects, bats and birds.

As a Community Orchard and Nature Reserve, Wolds End will:

- protect, and improve upon, the existing flora and fauna
- be the only accessible open space in Campden that prioritises wildlife
- follow Chipping Campden's tradition of preserving the local landscape, traditional crafts, and historical context around the town for future generations
- provide a local resource for schools and others to learn about nature and rural skills
- be a space for people to volunteer and to enjoy wildlife in its most natural form, providing numerous social & health benefits

Wolds End Orchard holds a very special place in the hearts of many local people; to us, its history and unique status is of equal importance to Campden's iconic architecture and, as such, must be protected from development.

History Society Quotes:

- Wolds End Orchard is shown on an Ordinance Survey map of 1885 therefore it must have been established before then to be marked on the map.
- **Ridge and Furrow - Excerpt from FWAG Report, 2006:** "The site mirrors the impressive ridge and furrow landscape that can be seen in the fields to the North and West of the site which combine to be a particularly striking example. Although not designated as a scheduled monument the ridge and furrow should be preserved as much as possible ... as the historic environment is considered to be of increasing importance."
- **Excerpt from Cotswold Archaeological Ltd Topographical Survey, 1994:** "The most significant earthworks recorded within the study area comprised substantial ridge and furrow ... the form of ridge and furrow seen within and around the study areas falls

within the category known as ‘broad rig’ generally accepted as having origins in the medieval period.”

PTES quotes:

- Traditional orchards are designated a Priority Habitat in the Habitats Directive, Section 41 (habitat of principal importance). They were awarded this status in 2007 for their high levels of biodiversity and importance on a national scale.
- The wholesale destruction of mature veteran fruit trees and the associated hedgerows and long- established grasslands beneath is of major concern due to high biodiversity, heritage, cultural and amenity value. Like ancient woodland sites, there is no mitigation that can feasibly compensate for the loss of the habitat provided by mature veteran fruit trees, short of planting another orchard nearby and managing it for 50+ years before removing the old one.
- An on-site condition assessment of the orchard in 2008 recorded veteran mixed fruit trees, standing, fallen and canopy deadwood habitats, branch and trunk crevices and holes, fruiting fungi, notable old hedgerows, a significant lichen population, mistletoe, areas of scrub development and nearby non-fruit veteran trees. This array of habitat types creates a ‘mosaic’ which serves to support more species than would each element alone.
- Although this site may seem a convenient location for development, this is far outweighed by the impact on area character, biodiversity and heritage landscape.

Community Benefit – health and education quotes:

Here are some of the statements, taken verbatim from the impact assessments of 10 community orchards. The orchard group frequently receives e-mails from people wanting to thank them for the difference the orchard has made to their lives.

- ... fostering neighbourly cooperation which will be enhanced through the exchange of horticultural tips and recipes, and the shared appreciation of the beauty of the fruit trees in a valued green space.
- There has been an increase in the community working together since the orchard was created with local children showing an interest in where food comes from and older people getting out of their homes more and becoming less socially isolated.
- A new community of people who contribute to the work in the orchard has developed. People work together and families with children attend events which are put on by the orchard group.
- Enhanced community cohesion has been created by working in the orchard. New friendships have been formed and new skills developed.

Bernwode Trees (fruit tree experts) quotes:

- In our view, Wolds End Orchard is of national importance and ranks very highly in comparison to the many old orchards we have visited. Its importance is further amplified by its location within such a significant town as Chipping Campden. It comes as a great surprise, in the modern era, that it is being considered a useful piece of real estate for modern purposes, at complete variance with the increasing national acceptance that such rare orchards should be protected and enhanced, for local amenity, research and preservation of local history. From our view the loss of any part of the orchard would be a calamity.
- The land it occupies is some of the best-preserved mediaeval ridge and furrow land we have seen and is equally of national importance, within the definitions of English Heritage, who record a catastrophic decline in such well-preserved field systems. The National Planning Policy Framework (2019) requires the conservation of veteran trees and their historic context.
- The orchard would, if left alone, probably reveal in time that it contains rare, if not unique, apple and pear varieties, now 'lost' or never recorded outside the locality. We have already learned enough from the site to suggest this. The method of grafting of some of the trees there also presents some searching questions, with examples never previously observed by us or recorded. The trees and the site itself need long term observation.
- We have known of car parks that have been removed to make way for community orchards.... but we have not encountered the destruction, even in part, of such an important orchard in such an important place. It is our guess that the orchard predates the 1790s Enclosure Act for Chipping Campden, and local research might confirm this.
- Every part of the Wolds End Orchard is historically integral to the whole parcel of land, which is a remarkable survivor so close within an historic town.