

## Colwall Orchard Group Environmental Policy

### 1. Introduction

Colwall Orchard Group (COG) was set up to restore, promote and celebrate traditional orchards. Environmental sustainability is fundamental to our ethos and we are committed to improving the environment through the ways in which we manage our land and undertake our other business activities.

COG owns 9 acres of land where we manage two community orchards at Colwall Village Garden (CVG) and Lugg's Mill Orchard. At CVG we lease about 2 acres of land to allotment tenants and this land is also covered by our environmental policy. Allotment tenants are required to undertake good environmental gardening practice through the conditions of their tenancy agreements (see COG Allotment Policy). We also help manage other orchards in private ownership. Most orchards we manage, including our own, incorporate other habitats such as hedges and ponds.

### 2. Principles which guide our environmental policy

- 1. Orchard sustainability:** We will manage our land and all of the orchards we support in line with best practice, and to promote biodiversity. We will encourage the sustainable harvesting and use of orchard produce.
- 2. Compliance with environmental legislation:** We will ensure that we are aware of and compliant with relevant environmental legislation which impacts on the way we manage our land and operate our business. We will also meet relevant cross compliance undertakings for our land within any government agri-environment scheme (eg Environmental or Countryside Stewardship).
- 3. Implementing best practice for wildlife:** We will manage all habitats we support in line with best practice and to conserve all aspects of wildlife.
- 4. Reduce, reuse, recycle:** We will minimise the environmental impacts of our activities by following the basic tenets of reduce, reuse, recycle.
- 5. Think global, act local:** We will consider the global impacts of our actions and translate these into taking appropriate local action.

### 3. How we put our principles into practice

#### 1. Wildlife

- Create habitats for wildlife such as log piles, standing dead wood, standing log piles, hibernaculum.
- Set up and maintain nest boxes, dormouse boxes, bat boxes.
- Ensure that there are access points through the sheep netting for medium sized mammals.
- Increase the floral biodiversity in our orchard grassland.

#### 2. Control of plant pests, diseases and disorders

- Accept that pests and diseases are a part of the environment and seek to use preventative methods, along with cultural and biological controls to keep plants healthy.
- Avoid use of herbicides, pesticides and insecticides. Where approved products are used, ensure that they are stored, applied and disposed of correctly.

### **3. Soil management**

- Manage soil as a vital resource. Seek to maintain and improve soil fertility and structure. Avoid soil contamination and erosion.

### **4. Water**

- Encourage water conserving growing methods such as mulching in the allotments and orchard.
- Minimise the use of mains water and at CVG harvest and store rainwater from the roof of the Apple Packing Shed to supply allotment holders and for use in maintaining the community orchard when necessary. Mains water will be made available if rainwater reserves are depleted.
- Release dirty/used water back into the environment through our own soakaway.
- Provide a composting toilet at Colwall Village Garden for use by members and visitors.
- Put lids on all water tanks and place floating wood in open troughs to allow trapped insects and birds a means of escape.

### **5. Reduce, reuse, recycle**

- Wherever possible, equip our group through the purchase or donation of second hand or recycled equipment and materials.
- Sell surplus materials, or recycle them for community use.
- Minimise the use of disposable plastic items in our catering activities, by using glass and crockery wherever possible. We will wash and re-use as many plastic items as possible. Preference will be given in all future purchases of 'consumable' catering items to biodegradable materials.
- Minimise the volume of landfill waste generated by our activities by composting all biodegradable waste and recycling as much non-biodegradable waste as possible. When disposal of material is necessary ensure it is taken to facilities that incinerate to generate electricity.

### **6. Timber**

- Bonfires should not be used as a means of disposal of wood and other plant materials but wood should be stored and dried for fires on special occasions.
- Heat our main volunteer room with a wood-burning stove, sourcing our fuel locally, ensuring and that wood used has a moisture content of 20% or less. If possible heat output from the stove should not be controlled by reducing the air intake unless there is only charcoal and ash left in the stove.
- Ensure the timber products purchased are FSC certified from sustainably managed sites.
- Use local sustainably sourced timber products and avoid the use of treated wood.
- Dispose of treated timber at a suitable waste disposal facility.
- Grow our own hazel for stakes, binders etc.
- Brash generated from pruning our orchard trees and managing our hedges should be used to generate wildlife habitats, chipped or stored for wood burning.

### **7. Transport**

- Minimise our use of cars and other vehicles and encourage cycling and car-sharing.
- Support Malvern Hills Car Club and use shared vehicles available through the project, including the Pickup truck when required.

**8. Sales and purchasing**

- Supply local orchard produce to our members and the local community.
- Wherever possible, purchase any new materials through local suppliers, both to recycle funding into the local community and to reduce the transport miles of materials bought.

**9. Chemical substances**

- Minimise the use of COSHH-able substances. Preference will be given in all future purchases to non-COSHH-able alternatives eg biodegradable, low phosphate washing up liquid.

**4. Implementation**

We will ensure that all Colwall Orchard Group volunteers and allotment tenants are aware of and comply with our environmental policy, providing appropriate training as required.

**5. Monitoring**

The Board of Trustees and Directors will monitor our environmental performance and review our policy annually.

**Approved by the Board of Trustees on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

**Signed**

**Lindsay Williams, Chair of Trustees**