

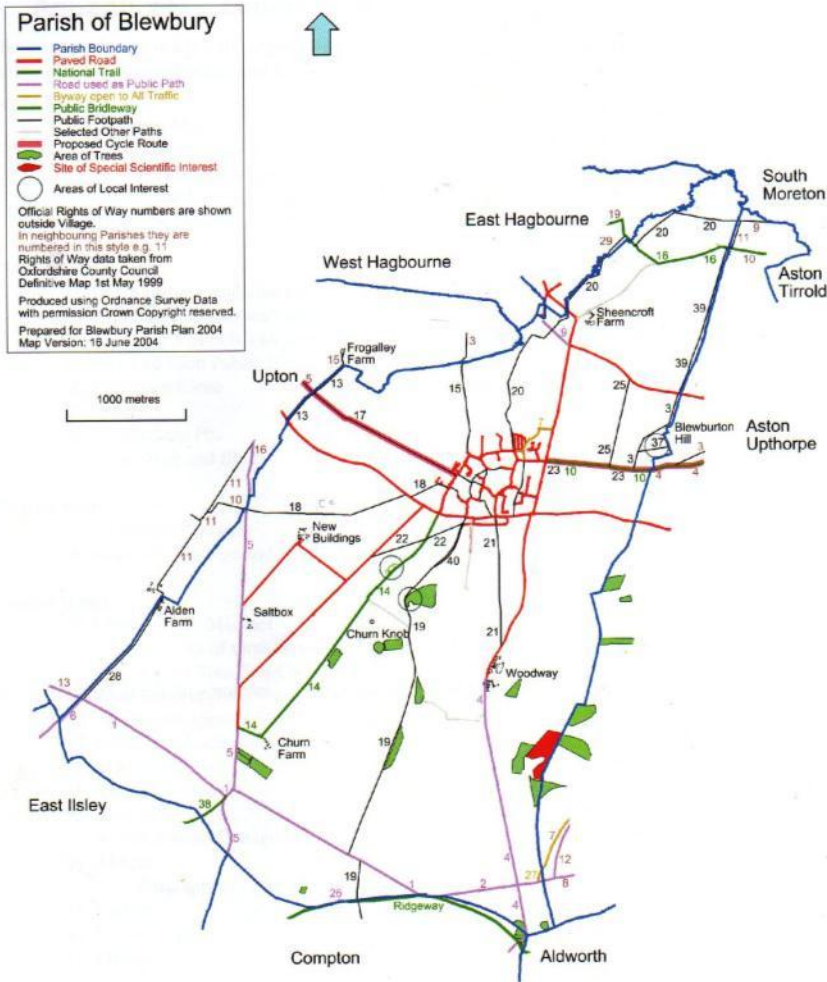
# Food initiatives at a village scale

## Blewbury Oxfordshire

Mike Edmunds, Sarah Deco, Ange Barton  
Sustainable Blewbury



# Blewbury - A Downland village

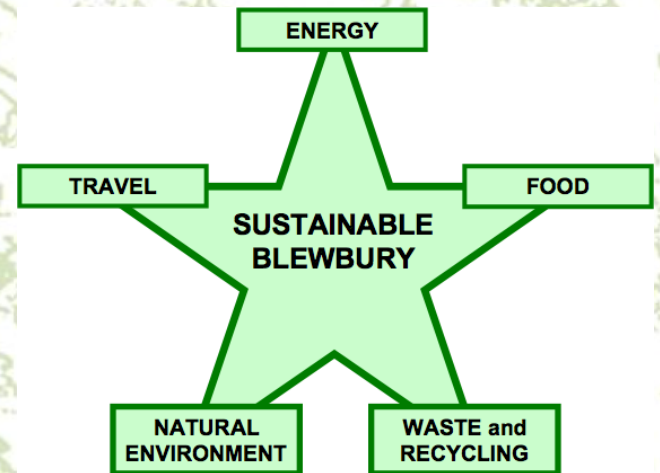


- Mainly large arable – some organic trends
- A farming tradition of mixed farming
- Most food now bought in supermarkets
- One large greengrocer-cum-plant nursery
- One shop
- Allotments
- Village school
- A well endowed village!

# Blewbury Village Society Environment Group (est 1989)

“Sustainable Blewbury”  
Five themes

- Energy
- Travel and Transportation
- **Food and Farming**
- Waste and Recycling
- Natural Environment and Heritage



# Origins of our interests in food and farming



We wrote a book:  
“A View from the Hill”



# Inspirations - food and farming

- Awareness of the oil dependency in modern agriculture.  
“One calorie of food requires 10 calories of fossil fuel”
- The rapid local growth of interest in local foods, production, markets, TV gardening, good food...
- We have been here before - WWII

# Local allotments

- A strong tradition of allotment gardening
- Other village producers emerging
- “Community Orchard”



# What do we have already?

- Savages shop.
- Local Honey. Cider making.
- Produce Stall
- Bread Making
- Apple Day
- Permaculture Group
- Untapped potential..WI, VPA with related aims



# A Farm for the Future

Rebecca Hosking BBC2

- Used this film as a part of awareness raising
- Village discussion meeting - local farmers also invited

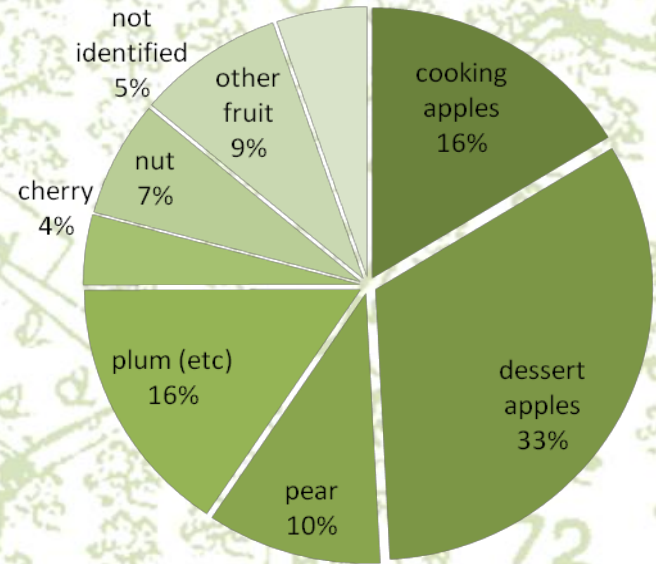


# Orchards Survey – past and present

- A tradition of fruit growing (1860s-1910s)
- Replanting in 1950s onwards
- Related C19<sup>th</sup> industries (eg sievers or basket makers)
- Now Blewbury village is really one orchard- 58 varieties of apple
- Plan to continue biodiversity survey through PTES



# Results of Orchards Survey



Some 57 varieties of apple have been identified (so far) growing in the village. Blewbury village can be looked on as one single orchard but with large diversity of apple varieties. However, apples are just in a minority compared with other fruit and nuts.

# Apple Day October 2010



**Blenheim Orange**  
An 18th century dual-purpose apple.  
Historical that probably Bramley, Chiswick, Court  
and many other varieties and some with other  
having a really apple-scented taste with a crunchy texture.



21 years of Inspiration from "Common Ground"

# Apple Day booklet

- Contents
- The Significance of Orchards 1
- The Origin of the Apple 3
- Blewbury and Fruit Growing – a History 4
- Bohams Orchard 7
- A Scrumper's Paradise 8
- Orchards and Blewbury Artists 10
- Poet's Corner 11
- Apple Varieties 12
- Blewbury's Orchards Today 14
- Planting My Orchard 18
- The National Orchard Situation Today 19
- Apple Recipes 20
- Cider Growing in the Vale 22
- Apple Sayings 25
- Apples in Stories and Legend 26
- A Community Orchard for Blewbury? 28



# Sustainable Blewbury Produce Stall – 2010

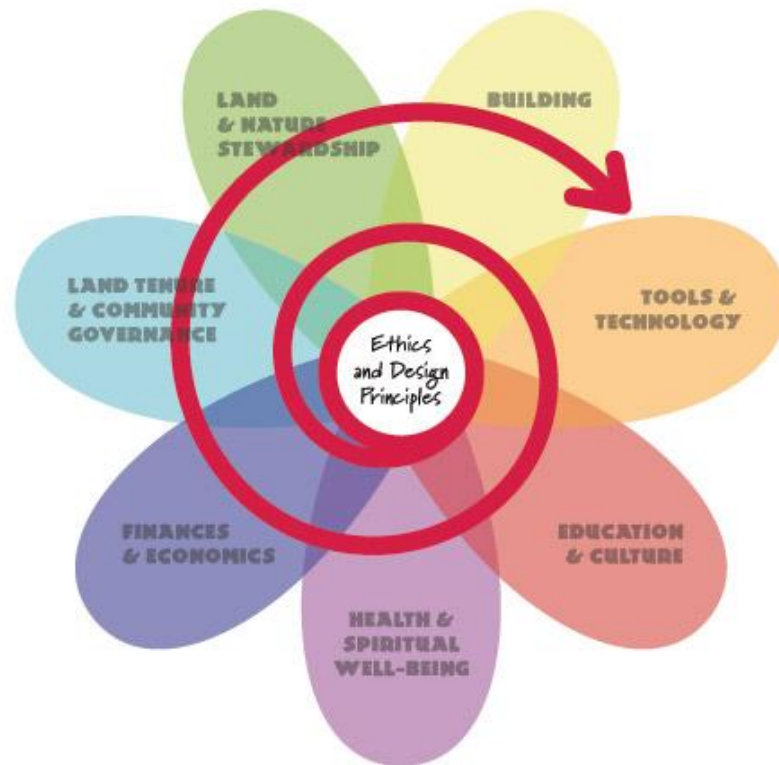
Cumulative growth and success



# Blewbury Permaculture Project

Participating in Oxford permaculture Design Course – Barracks Lane

- 'Permaculture is about creating sustainable human habitats by mirroring nature's patterns and minimising waste



# Permaculture

## *Woodway Permaculture Project*



- Providing produce, grown and consumed locally
- For it to be an example of good long term sustainable management of land
- Increased biodiversity.
- To provide education about sustainability
- To help wean people off supermarkets.
- The creation of a “beautiful and pleasant place to be”.
- To be a focus bringing the village community together



# Food Group

## Active interests and initiatives

- Allotments and smallholdings
- Liaison with local farmers
- Environmentally friendly methods of production such as permaculture and organic growing methods
- Local bread production
- Supporting local milk deliveries
- Beekeeping promotion
- Food foraging map
- Re-distribution of food surpluses from local growers
- Reducing food waste



## Future plans

- Locally sourced food evening
- Seed swap event
- Invited speakers
- Schools link (school allotment, food for dinners)
- Blewbury Festival 2011 – Village market
- 2011 enhanced Produce Stall

# Looking to the future – ideas, challenges

- Community Supported (Shared) Agriculture  
Soil Association
- How to raise awareness: word of mouth, events
- Local “training” – eg care of fruit trees, ABC of gardening
- Local area networking
- Growing a critical mass of people (producers, buyers)



<http://www.foxglovefarmbc.ca/>



“Make friends with farmers”  
Michael Abelman  
*Resurgence*, 259. 2010

“The day will come when farmers will be looked to for leadership and farms themselves will be respected as living models keeping sacred knowledge alive”

# Signs of Change

- “existing patterns of food production are not fit for a low-carbon, more resource-constrained future” The Cabinet Office (*A recent Cabinet Office discussion paper on food security*)

