

## Update from Friends of The Hook – March 2023

Spring is in the air on The Hook Nature Reserve. Look out for the white flowers of blackthorn and for catkins on alder and hazel. The first seedlings from the wildflower seed mixes sown in the autumn should soon be emerging.

The apple and pear trees in the Community Orchard have had their annual prune. The damson and plum trees are left until later in the year as they can be damaged by winter pruning. Marc Richmond, fruit tree expert, will be running a 'stone fruit' workshop on pruning and care later in the season – open to all. Details to come later.

### **Conservation Action**

*This Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> March we'll be working in the Community Orchard, looking after the fruit trees and getting them ready for the year ahead. There will be a variety of jobs for all ages and abilities: checking the tree ties and stakes, fixing labels, weeding around the trees and spreading mulch. Meet 2pm at Mona Road entrance. Everyone is welcome. We can supply equipment if needed.*

### **Did You Know? Facts about The Community Orchard**

- The Community Orchard was planted in 2010 when the area became a nature reserve, with a selection of 20 apple, pear and plum trees.
- Friends of The Hook have added new trees since then.
- There are now more than 35 fruit trees – most of them labelled with the variety, origin and harvest time. We're still trying to work out the rest!
- The oldest variety, 'Cat's Head' dates originally from 1629. It has an unusual shape, from which it gets its name.
- Some local varieties include 'Newton Wonder' which originated in Melbourne Derbyshire in 1870 and 'Annie Elizabeth' from Leicestershire 1857
- Others come from further afield such as 'Orleans Reinette' apple, origin France 1776 and 'Beurre Hardy' a dessert pear origin France 1820.
- Fruit tree blossom is a great source of nectar for pollinating insects such as bees, hoverflies and butterflies.
- Fruit trees support many species of wildlife, particularly as the trees get older.
- The fruit is eaten by birds, insects and mammals – so leave some fruit for wildlife!
- The UK has lost 80% of its traditional orchards since 1900 - so it's important we look after ours.

### **AGM**

The AGM of Friends of The Hook will take place on Tuesday 9 May 7pm at Breckles Hall, All Hallows. Everyone welcome.

Help With Website Design and Social Media

Would anyone like to help us improve our social media output? We're novices in terms of website and mailing design, so if anyone could offer help with this it would be much appreciated.

Regards

Jane Browne

Secretary Friends of The Hook