



RELEASE

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Egremont Regeneration Partnership
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Egremont Community Orchard

Egremont school children, assisted by the Mayor of Copeland Cllr Anne Faichney, plant the first apple trees in the new community orchard.

Tuesday 4th March 2008

Planting takes place between 10am and 2pm.

Cllr Anne Faichney will be planting a tree at around 10.30

Children and teachers from St Bridget's, Orgill, Bookwell and Wyndham Schools will all help to complete the planting of Apple trees in Egremont's new Community Orchard on Tuesday 4th March. between 10am and 2pm.

The Worshipful the Mayor of Copeland, Cllr Anne Faichney will be planting a tree at around 10.30 on Tuesday 4th March.

The children will plant 50 trees making 100 trees in total as 50 trees have already been planted on Saturday 1st March by volunteers, under the supervision of Stuart Murfitt of Whitehaven Garden Centre, an experienced orchard keeper.

The orchard is part of the Egremont gateways scheme that aims to restore Egremont's historical connection with apples, celebrated each year through the Crab Fair.

The planting focuses on varieties of crab apple tree and a selection of six varieties, including traditional local kinds and those known to thrive in the area.

In future it is hoped that the fruit from these trees will be sold in the local shops and to involve the community in running a social enterprise that plants and manages the orchard, producing distinctive Egremont apple based products that raise the profile of the town, increase skills in the community, provide enjoyment and a source of pride to those that are involved, helping to reconnect Egremont with its historic past.

The project is located on a bank to the north of the town, between a housing area and the main road at the junction of Gillfoot and Howbank roads.

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Editors Notes:

The Community Orchard is part of the Egremont Gateway scheme

The entrances to Egremont on the A595 are to be transformed, thanks to a new £500,000 Gateway scheme, which will also include a pocket park near the Castle, and a community orchard.

The project, which is being funded by West Lakes Renaissance and the European Regional Development Fund, and implemented by the Egremont Regeneration Partnership with Copeland Borough Council



West Lakes Renaissance is the Urban Regeneration Company for Furness and West Cumbria. The company is a public-private partnership that was formed in 2002 with the aim of stimulating the economic regeneration of the main urban centres along the west coast of Cumbria. The boundary of operation extends from Barrow to Silloth. The company operates from offices in Barrow and Westlakes Science and Technology Park (near Whitehaven).

West Lakes Renaissance has a Board of 13 non-executive directors and is chaired by Bob Watson, formerly Managing Director, Iggesund Paperboard and Managing Director (Europe) Fujifilm Sericol. The partners behind the company include the Northwest Development Agency, English Partnerships, the Government Office for the North West, the Borough Councils of Allerdale, Barrow and Copeland, together with the County Council, and local business leaders.

The company has put together a 10 year £200+ million investment programme. The company's mission is:

“Renewing the economy of Furness and West Cumbria through the co-coordinated delivery of infrastructure, new skills and sustainable communities.”

Further details of the main projects and proposals being promoted by WLR can be found on the following website: www.westlakesrenaissance.co.uk



The Northwest Development Agency (NWDA) is responsible for the sustainable economic development and regeneration of England's Northwest and has 5 key priorities: Business Development, Regeneration, Skills & Employment, Infrastructure and Image.



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Egremont Community Orchard

March 2008

1 Project Aims

- 1.1 The Egremont Gateways Project was conceived as a landscaping project that would lead to a step change in the perception of Egremont for visitors and people that would normally pass by along the A595. Early in the project the inclusion of public art and particularly community engagement through planting was identified as a key aim.
- 1.2 The theme of the Gateways project is restoring Egremont's historical connection with apples, still celebrated each year through the Crab Fair. The planting focuses on varieties of crab apple tree and proposals to use the fruit from these to create Egremont products for sale in the local shops was the first incarnation of the community orchard project.
- 1.3 In further discussion an area originally identified for ornamental planting was given over for a community orchard and within the Gateways contract, this area is due to be prepared, fenced and left for community planting.
- 1.4 The project aims to involve the community in running a social enterprise that plants and manages the orchard, producing distinctive Egremont apple based products that raise the profile of the town, increase skills in the community, provide enjoyment and a source of pride to those that are involved, and help to reconnect Egremont with its historic past.

2 Project Description

- 2.1 The project is located on a bank to the north of the town, between a housing area and the main road. This area has been fenced and prepared for planting. It is highly visible and accessible, although its position on a small hill makes access for those in wheelchairs difficult to engineer.
- 2.2 The area has been laid out with 450mm cubed tree pits at 3m centres, giving space for one hundred trees. A selection of six varieties, including traditional local kinds and those known to thrive in the area has been made, with the intention that their fruit will be usable.
- 2.3 Community interest has been sampled and is high. Schools and community groups have been approached to take part in the planting, which is proposed for the first week of March, within the dormant period for apple trees.
- 2.4 A local apple expert with experience of similar projects elsewhere in the country has given time to advise on the types of apple tree and also the different ways in which the community can be involved, including training opportunities, for example, and on how income can be generated. Other

project partners in the planning stage have included Egremont and Area Regeneration Partnership (leading), Age Concern North West Cumbria, Community Action for Egremont, Copeland Borough Council, Copeland Homes, Grizedale Arts and West Lakes Renaissance.

- 2.5 The project will evolve over a period of time and in order that the impetus for the project is maintained, a social enterprise, working alongside the De Lucy Community Resource Centre (a partnership between Age Concern North West Cumbria and Community Action for Egremont) will be formed.
- 2.6 There will be ongoing opportunities for people and schools to remain involved in the project, with sessions on pruning and maintenance of the orchard planned for the autumn, and with sessions on the use of apples in future years.

3 The reasons for the project

- 3.1 The project provides a very good opportunity to widen the base of people who are involved with the regeneration of the town.
- 3.2 The Tourism Action Plan identified the need for Egremont to re-establish its historic connections and this project contributes to that, helping to link the town closely with its apple heritage which is still apparent in the Crab Fair, the town's most celebrated event.
- 3.3 The project contributes to awareness of healthy lifestyles including activity and healthy eating.

4 Outputs and Results

- 4.1 The project will increase participation in regeneration activities in the town, increasing awareness and involvement.
- 4.2 Egremont's historic connection with the apple harvest will be reinforced and its reputation enhanced through the range of apple products.
- 4.3 Awareness of apples, their growing and uses will be increased, particularly amongst young people.

5 Community Involvement

- 5.1 Initial planting sessions will be used to recruit people to the project committee and to increase awareness.
- 5.2 As wide involvement as possible in the production will be encouraged and outlets around the town and the Farmers Crafts and Fairtrade Market will be used for sale of produce. Selected other outlets will be found with the strategic intention of spreading knowledge of Egremont and its history.

- 5.3 50 trees were planted on Saturday 1st March by volunteers, under the supervision of Stuart Murfitt of Whitehaven Garden Centre, an experienced orchard keeper.
- 5.4 St Bridget's, Orgill, Bookwell and Wyndham Schools are all due to help with the planting on Tuesday 4th March. between 10am and 2pm. The Worshipful the Mayor of Copeland, Cllr Anne Faichney will be planting a tree at around 10.30 on Tuesday 4th March.

6 Project Organisation

- 6.1 A volunteer group will be established through the initial tree planting sessions, building up a management committee that will run the operation into future years. This group will be overseen by the Egremont and Area Regeneration Partnership and in time the De Lucy Community Resource Centre Management Committee. The De Lucy Centre will be the beneficiary of any income from the sale of products in due course.
- 6.2 There will be a small crop in the first and second years, with the first substantial crop coming in the third year. Initial crops will be used to raise awareness of the project and to recruit more volunteers. The apples will be given away at the Crab Fair and at events later in the year.
- 6.3 It has not yet been finally decided how the processing of any crop will be carried out, although there are a number of viable alternatives. Initial crops might be divided up amongst volunteers for processing to pre-agreed recipes, either provided by the individuals or by the Community Orchard Committee. Jars will be provided, and labels marked up with the Egremont Orchard logo (to be designed by local school children with an artist's involvement) and distributed either for hand completion of ingredients, or pre-printed with the appropriate standard recipe. Alternatively, the facilities at the De Lucy Centre might be employed to create the products.
- 6.4 Continuing support for the project through grant funding is anticipated, in particular through the European funds to be distributed via the new Local Action Groups in the successor to the Leader Plus programme, for which this project is especially suited.

7 Project Funding

- 7.1 The project will cost in the region of £3,000 and has been funded as part of the Market Town Initiative by the Northwest Regional Development Agency, West Lakes Renaissance and the European Regional Development Agency.