Lancaster Civic Vision

Celebrating our Heritage – Enhancing our Environment – Shaping our Future

FAIRFIELD

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Fairfield is an area to the south-west of central Lancaster. It is a mix of late 19th-century and interwar housing. However, our focus here is on the open space to the south of that; the large green area between the housing, shown below.



The Fairfield area between Lancaster Canal and Haverbreaks (bottom right) and Abraham Heights (top left)

Land so close to the city could be developed for housing: to protect it, the Fairfield Association was set up in 1996. The Fairfield Allotments were already being run by a separate association.

Their first target was to buy nearby derelict garages (proposed for housing), demolish them and use the land to extend the City Council's long-established Fairfield Green play area. A range of new play equipment was installed.



The allotments, play area (top) and orchard (left)



The Allotments; Williamson Memorial on the horizon



Play area: Castle and Priory on the horizon

The next task was to convert nearby unused land into a Millennium Orchard (2.2 acres, 1999). This has a wide variety of fruit and nut trees and anyone can pick the produce of this community orchard. The Association leases the site from the City Council.



The Orchard in spring



The Orchard in spring

Moving further out they leased 16 acres in 2011-2 from the City Council to form Fauna, an actively managed Local Nature Reserve. New footpaths give public access to the whole area and new ponds and hedges have been created.

There are many habitats here, including pasture, wet pasture and boggy areas. The old hedges and a variety of mature trees offer a diversity of niches for many species of plants, birds and animals. A wild flower meadow is developing. The area is grazed by White Park cattle, a heritage breed.



FAUNA sculpture



White Park cattle

The next stage was the Flora project. This saw the Association raise around £300,000 to buy 34 acres from various owners to form a major extension to the nature reserve.

This completes the green wedge between Lancaster Canal and the existing housing in south-west Lancaster, ensuring that the whole area will be a green community asset in perpetuity for walkers, nature lovers and the local residents.

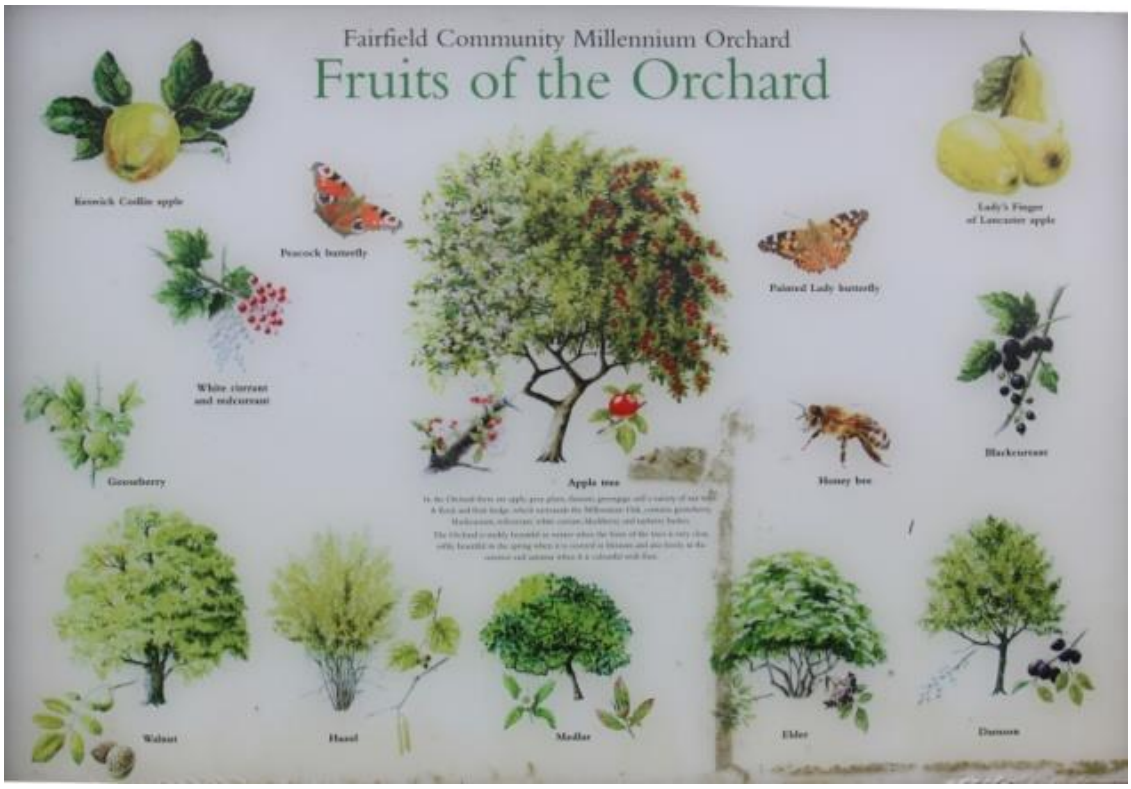
Remarkable features of the Fairfield Association's work have included the twenty years of hard effort needed to achieve what they have, and their ingenuity and skill in fundraising to turn their ideas into over 56 acres (*ca.* 23 ha) of valuable and useful community assets. Their work has been recognised by their receiving The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service.

The Association has recently taken over a small triangular plot beside Lancaster Canal on Aldcliffe Road for future community use. The Fairfield lands can be accessed most easily from either Cromwell Road (off Aldcliffe Road) or Ashfield Avenue and Sunnyside Lane (off Westbourne Road).

The Fairfield Association's website is at www.fairfieldassociation.org



Wildlife pond, Castle on the horizon



Text and ground photographs – Gordon Clark. Satellite imagery – Google Earth.
Published by Lancaster Civic Vision (©2015; revised 2022)
Lancaster Civic Vision is the trading name of Lancaster Civic Society, registered charity no. 258434