

# Fruit tree co-operatives

Lessons learnt in the North of England

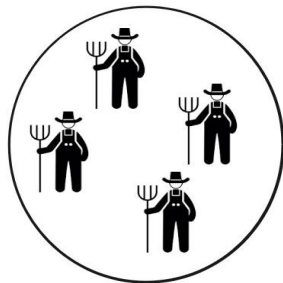


# What we'll cover

1. What is a co-operative
2. Different types of co-op
3. 3 different co-operative approaches to fruit livelihoods
4. Discussion | Q&A

# What is a co-op?

A co-operative is an **autonomous** association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a **jointly-owned** and **democratically-controlled enterprise**.

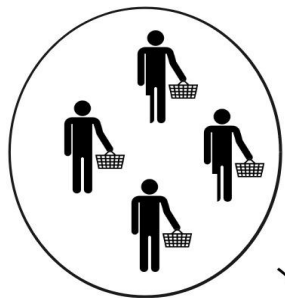


## **Grower led**

Worker co-op

Producer co-op

Co-op consortium

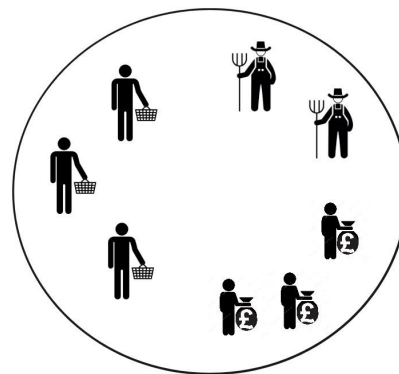


## **Consumer led**

Consumer co-op

Food co-op

Many CSAs



## **Multi-stakeholder**







Gini Morandi

Fruit Works Co-op



# October 2020

Community apple juicing at  
All Hallows' Church, Leeds







# Dec 2020

Establishing our  
tree nursery







Oct 2020-Dec 2021  
The pre-van days





# A few milestones



New 0.5 ac site



50+  
orchards  
planted



Got a van!



2000+  
trees  
planted







# What we do



Planting



Pruning



Propagating



# But also...

- Making apple juice with schools and community groups
- Making & bottling apple juice to sell
- Teaching pruning and grafting workshops
- Selling apples
- Maintenance visits
- Corporate day
- Propagating fruit bushes
- Tree giveaway





























# THE GREAT NORTHERN FRUIT MOOT

**FRIDAY 2 FEBRUARY 2024**

9:00 AM until 4:00 PM

A GATHERING FOR ANYONE  
INTERESTED IN SUSTAINABLE  
FRUIT PRODUCTION ON A  
COMMUNITY SCALE



# HOW IT ALL STARTED

- SFT grew out of the Abundance fruit-harvesting project, which started in 2007
- Abundance harvests fruit and distributes it to the local community
- Through the project fruit trees growing in Sheffield were mapped, many likely to be seedling varieties - ie. genetically unique 'ecotypes'
- We started grafting from these trees to both increase the local abundance of fruit and preserve these varieties
- SFT began as an independent project in spring 2018





# WHO ARE WE?



Daniele



Julie



Oli



# WHAT WE DO

- Grafting trees for sale to the general public
- Applying a regenerative agriculture approach to all our cultivation
- Designing and planting community orchards for local councils and other organisations
- Running workshops and training on grafting, pruning and general tree care





# OUR GROWING SET-UP

- We started the project on a community allotment in Meersbrook, south Sheffield
- The site has a very limited amount of space, so we grow around 350 trees and soft fruit bushes each year on this site
- We grow mainly potted trees for ease of sale throughout the year
- We're gradually developing the plot as a 'demonstration site' to showcase the various ways of growing fruit trees in small spaces

















# TAKING IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL!

- Two years ago we had the opportunity to take on a larger site and expand the project
- A 0.5 acre section of a larger field, part of the Sheffield Organic Growers' site
- The land has been farmed chemically for many years, mainly as a hay meadow













# FUNDRAISING

- We successfully applied for £14.5k from the Forestry Commission's Tree Production Capital Grant
- We then raised £17.5k of match funding through a crowdfunding campaign and a grant from LUSH via their 'Charity Pot' scheme
- Also received business support through Co-operatives UK's 'The Hive' scheme































# NEXT STEPS

- As of last November, the core work to run the project is paid at minimum wage
- To make sure we can maintain this, we're looking to expand the work we do planting orchards with local councils
- Plenty more work at our new site to build soil fertility, develop infrastructure and graft more trees!

