**Tom English**

Tom died suddenly after a stroke on 28th November, 2021. His passing was a terrible shock to us all.

Tom had been a stalwart supporter of the community orchard idea since its inception within Lynsted with Kingsdown Parish Council, in 2004. Under his chairmanship a community orchard committee was formed, on which Tom served. This obtained the grant funding and professional advice needed to get the project going as the Park Farm Community Cherry Orchard, Lynsted. With the ready cooperation of the landowners Pip and Sue Neaves, the first Blossom Day event took place in the spring of 2005.

When the time came for the expanding orchard project to become independent of the parish council in 2009, Tom became a member of the new Orchard Group. He served as chairman for five years from 2015, and was ‘in harness’ as vice-chairman when he passed away. Tom was always on hand to help, too, with the physical work of erecting marquees, digging holes for information panel bases and stringing up festoons of lights for events. His regular spot on Cherry Day was managing the pick-your-own punnet desk.

Despite serving on an active parish council for 32 years, eleven of them as chairman, Tom always found time for the Orchard Group. Only one activity had precedence for his attention: Gillingham Football Club. The Group soon learned to steer around the home fixtures!

Tom was an essential part of the community orchard project from the start. He will be enormously missed.

It is planned to create a suitable memorial feature in the Orchard in due course.

*RB 30.05.22.*

*TomObit.221*

**Caption to picture.**

Tom, right, with the late Frank Champion, 2007.