

Churchyard Management Planning Guidance



Photos A Riggs

Land and Nature Motion passed in Feb 2024

One part...

d. call on all parishes, cathedrals, Theological Education Institutes, National Church Institutions offices with land they manage or influence to:

- i. create a simple land management plan, with reference to the guidance and examples from Caring for God's Acre,
- ii. work towards an increasing level of Eco Church, including the actions in the 'Land' section, and
- iii. record the biodiversity of their green spaces, through taking part in Churches Count On Nature each year.

www.churchofengland.org/media/press-releases/general-synod-backs-action-tackle-biodiversity-crisis

Therefore, information is gathered here by the Diocese of Oxford Environment Team and shared to help churches meet these calls, specifically focussed on the first.

Useful Resources

Wilder Churches www.bbowt.org.uk/team-wilder/team-wilder-churches

Caring for God's Acre Action Pack www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/resources/action-pack/section-a-managing-churchyards-burial-grounds/

Diocese of Oxford information

www.oxford.anglican.org/parish-support/church-buildings/permissions-and-how-to-apply/caring-for-our-churchyards.php

www.oxford.anglican.org/parish-support/church-buildings/permissions-and-how-to-apply/trees.php

www.oxford.anglican.org/parish-support/church-buildings/permissions-and-how-to-apply/monuments.php

A Rocha UK <https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/> <https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/resources/land/>
<https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Land13-Management-plan.pdf>

Existing species records

TVERC https://records.nbnatlas.org/occurrences/search?q=data_resource_uid%3Adr2418&nbn_loading=true&fq=-occurrence_status%3A%22absent%22#tab_mapView

BMERK www.bucksmkerk.org.uk/ usually free records searches for non-commercial clients

Churches Count on Nature (8-16 June 2024) NB Great Big Green Week is the same week in 2024

www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/get-involved/event-register/

www.churchofengland.org/about/environment-and-climate-change/webinars-land-and-nature-churches-count-nature#na

www.inaturalist.org/ & how to use it www.youtube.com/watch?v=HCUWHW338gU

<https://d3hgrrlq6yacptf.cloudfront.net/61f2fd86f0ee5/content/pages/documents/churchyard-nature-hunt.pdf> a family activity

It's not only about long grass!

Churchyards often form valuable islands for wildlife, providing both habitats to live in and stepping-stones for movement through urban or agricultural landscapes. Here are some ways we can make them even more beneficial for wildlife...

Hedgerows and old trees are valuable habitats for bats, birds and small mammals

Regularly updated interpretation boards inform visitors about the wildlife and habitat management

Churches often provide much needed roosting habitat for bats and nesting holes for swifts

Regularly mowing both paths and areas with recent burials allows good access

A compost heap and patches of nettles can be tucked away to provide more wildlife habitats

Reducing the number of cuts allows wildflowers to grow and set seed

There are 600 or so lichens found in churchyards in lowland England and half of these are very rare

Log piles can shelter invertebrates, small mammals, reptiles and amphibians

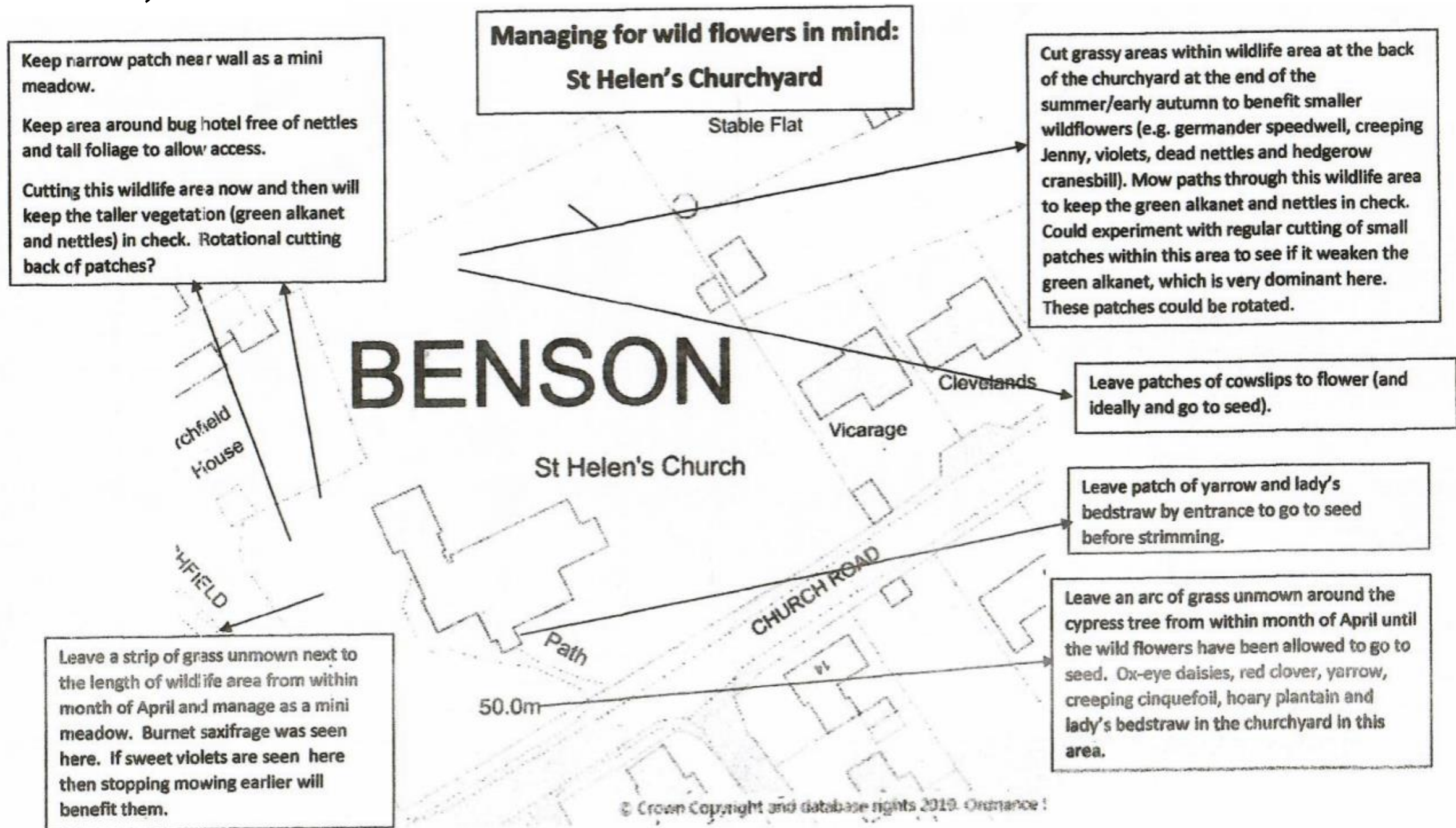
Stone walls provide a habitat for mosses, lichens and ferns and homes for numerous animals

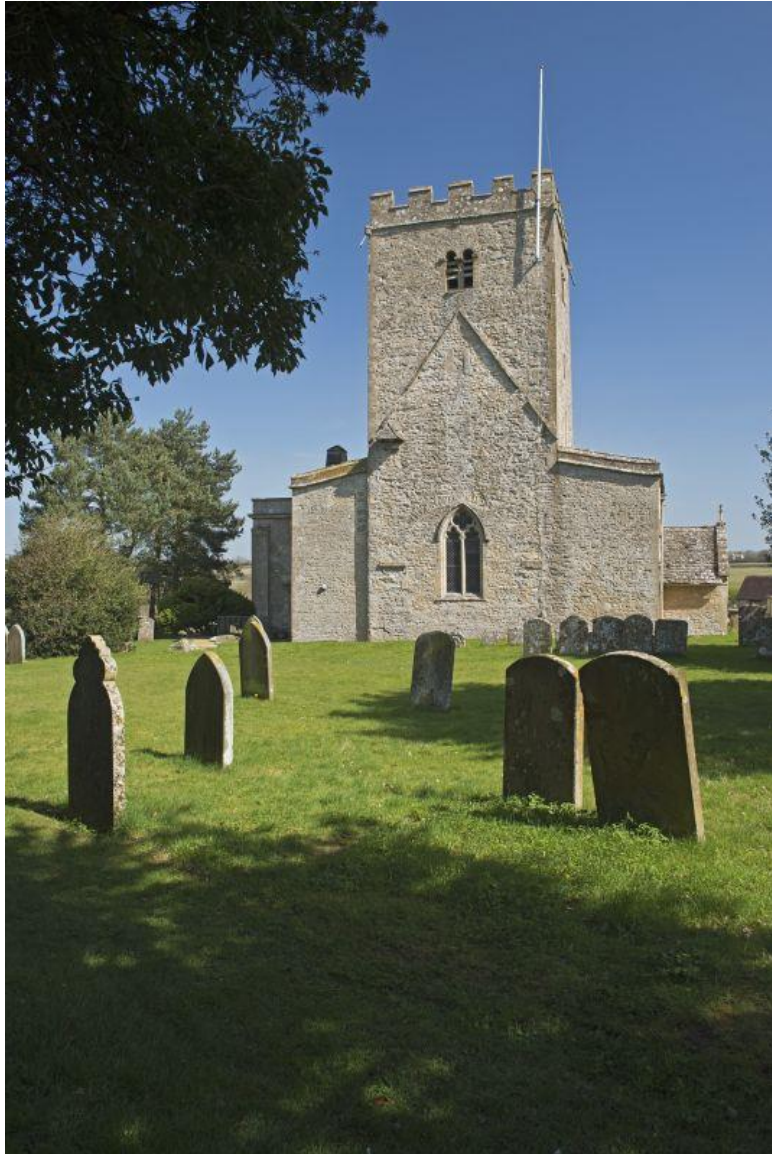
With credit to victoriawainwright.com and kentwildlifetrust.org.uk

Sample management plans follow, showing a variety of document styles



St Helen's, Benson Shows the species to look for where but does not define months, giving flexibility.





St Mary's Church North Leigh

Churchyard Management Plan

Revision date 02.04.03

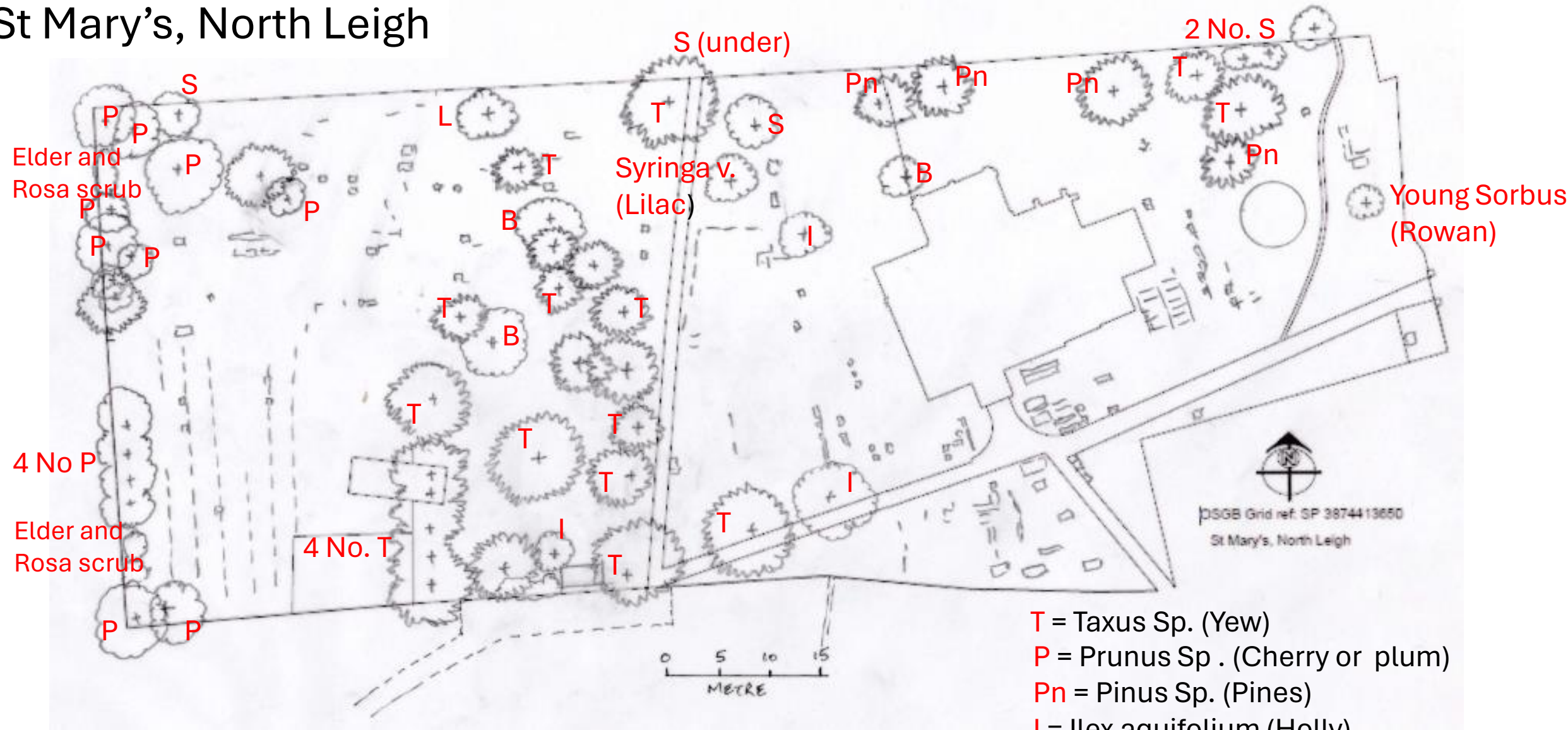
Purpose of management plan

To ensure sustainable land use that:

- meets the functional needs of the church including worship, encouraging spiritual reflection and prayer in the natural environment allowing the benefits of creation to be enjoyed
- maximises the value of our land for biodiversity allowing a diversity of plants, animals, insects and birds to thrive alongside human activity
- provides an outdoor space that benefits the whole community, providing an attractive and appropriate setting for the church, graves and footpaths.

The plan will also be used to record features of interest, allowing their retention and ongoing improvement.

St Mary's, North Leigh



Tree Survey

North Leigh

Compost heap for cuttings and dead flowers



Grass Maintenance

Labyrinth unknown

Spring flower area (cowslips)
Areas along path to be confirmed on site

Mowing regime for areas of reduced mowing

Purpose

- To allow any bulbs and meadow plants in the seedbank to grow, flower and set-seed and multiply

Management

- Tidy area with a high cut in March if necessary then leave uncut through to end July/early August. Then cut and remove the grass cuttings.
- Mow again in October prior to winter.
- Leave a strip of vegetation along side northern wall uncut from April through to October. This strip will act as a refuge and food source for a range of invertebrates, small mammals, reptiles and amphibians
- Mow a neat edge to paths alongside areas of reduced mowing to maintain neatness and signal intentionality rather than neglect.
- Areas either side of church entrance to be mown when spring flowers have set seed (cowslips, primroses, violets). Snowdrops and grape hyacinths also noted which are less sensitive.
- Grass cuttings to be taken off site for composting when identified compost heap is full.

Other actions

- If possible, leave any access holes through walls / fences, as well as any 'untidy corners'. It will allow access to and from the churchyard, as well as refuge/hibernation opportunities for hedgehogs.
- Pile any dead wood/branches into an undisturbed corner. An often overlooked habitat that supports a huge array on invertebrates.
- Put up and maintain (annual cleaning in the autumn), bird and bat boxes to provide a safe nesting /roosting
- Put up bird feeding station
- Maintain the compost heap by turning and removal of compost

St Mary's, North Leigh

Robin/ Wren



Starling



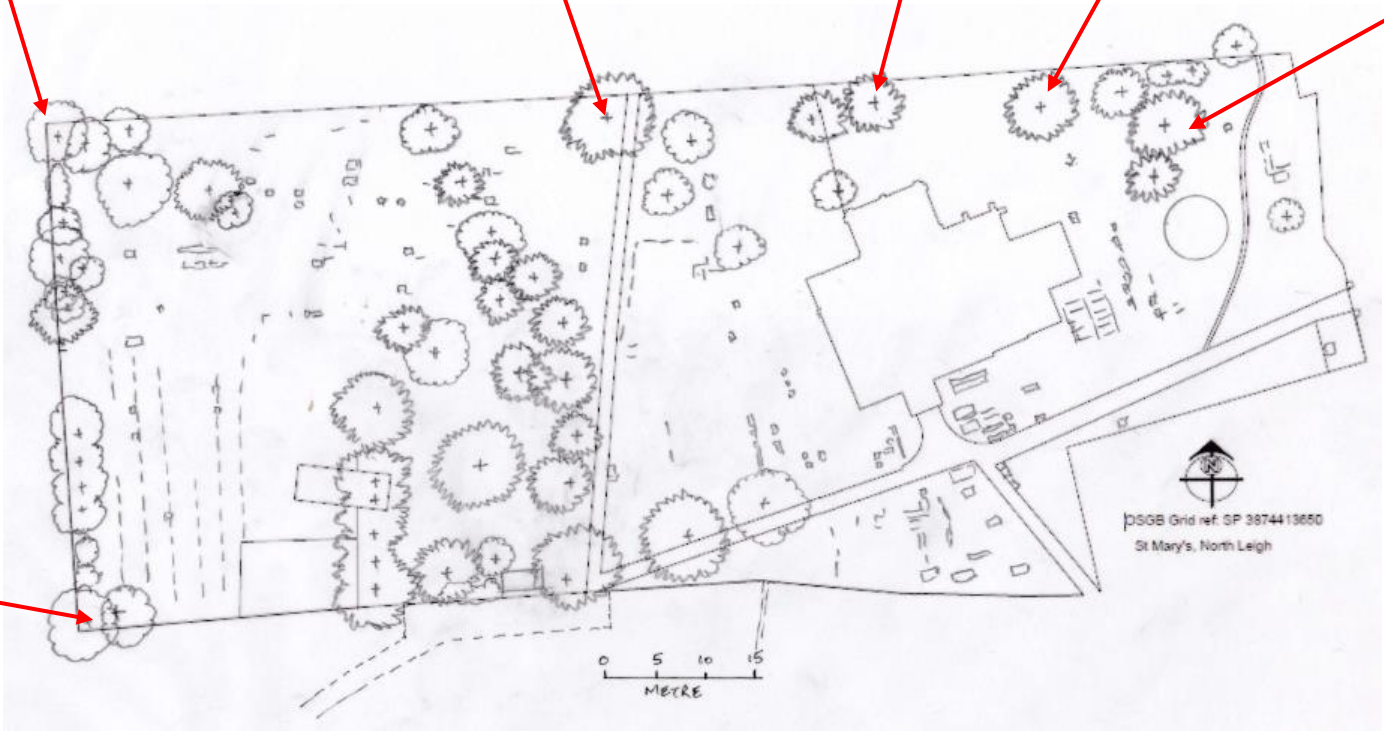
Sparrow / Tit / Nuthatch



Robin/ Wren



Wagtail / Robin/
Wren



**Bird Boxes
erected Oct
2022**

St Mary's, North Leigh

Consider erecting notices to inform visitors of management aims and objectives



Poster resources www.oxford.anglican.org/environment-and-social-justice/environmental-action/biodiversity/
www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/free-meadow-management-sign/
or www.plantlife.org.uk/campaigns/nomowmay/

Things to avoid

- Don't spray herbicides and pesticides. It may kill native wild flora and/or pollinators and invertebrates that are food e.g. for hedgehogs.
- Don't clean tombstones to remove lichen – this is a valuable habitat for insects.
- Don't remove plants mosses and lichens from walls. Some of these plants can be quite rare but all provide habitat for insects.
- Don't cut trees and hedges during the bird breeding season (March – August). Hedgerows support numerous species of invertebrate, small mammal and bird amongst other groups. They provide shelter, food and a safe place to nest. If possible cut only every two - three years.

St John's, Stone

St John's Churchyard Butterflies

As a local resident and a long-standing member of Butterfly Conservation I have been conducting surveys on the Butterflies to be found in St John's Churchyard for almost 20 years. Following regular consultations with the churchyard maintenance team we have been able to establish areas in the churchyard where the wild flowers and grasses have been allowed to grow and flourish while the grass in other areas has been cut neatly.

As a result, there has been a good supply of nectar plants on which butterflies can feed and their food plants have been able to develop so that they can lay their eggs. I have been very pleased to see how this arrangement has resulted in an increase in the number of species which are breeding in the churchyard. In the current year I have recorded a total of 19 different species of butterfly and a large number of caterpillars of the Cinnabar Moth which feed on the ragwort.

Churchyard Butterfly Surveys

www.upperthames-butterflies.org.uk/churchyards

Porch notice about the value of the churchyard for butterflies, also on the EcoHub here:

<https://oxford.anglican.org/xdb/ecohub/s/how/notice-on-butterfly-friendly-management-of-churchyard>

At the end of each season the Upper Thames Branch of Butterfly Conservation publishes the results of all the churchyard surveys in their region. This covers a total of 67 churchyards. I have been delighted to find that in most years St John's Churchyard has been among the top three churchyards for butterflies within the region and is often at the top of the list. The exceptions to this have been those years where the grass has been cut in mid-summer before the grass loving insects have had the opportunity to hatch and breed. This emphasises the benefit of allowing the grass meadow to remain uncut until the end of August.

As I am a keen photographer, I have been taking pictures of the butterflies I have recorded and I have used a few of these pictures to illustrate this article. I have also produced a number of posters which are on display on the church notice board to enable people to recognise and appreciate the beauty of our butterflies.

We have a beautiful churchyard and I would like to thank everyone who has helped to encourage our butterflies to feed, breed and flourish.

Michael Pitt-Payne

St John's, Stone



Valuable habitats for wildlife are not always traditionally “pretty”. 19 species of butterfly are recorded here, it also provides habitat for reptiles and small mammals.

Holy Trinity, Prestwood



It's not all about flowers, this is a churchyard noted for its importance for fungi.

An example of a detailed management plan is available here:

<https://www.caringforodsacre.org.uk/churchyard/prestwood-holy-trinity/>

Month	Regular outdoor tasks	Less regular outdoor tasks	Information/Management
January	<p>Empty bins / General tidying – remove dead flowers, fallen twigs, prune any items that restrict the paths or are dangerous</p> <p>Collect rubbish round the outside of the church in the hedges - recycle as much as possible on the compost heap/recycle bin -rest to land fill in wheelie bin</p> <p>Manage waste disposal on compost heap to ensure appropriate cycling of waste NB take care not to disturb mini-beasts and slow worms unduly</p>	<p>Planning for planting in beds around standard roses?</p> <p>Remove Christmas wreaths/commemorations from graves by Candlemas</p> <p>Monitor trees for wind damage esp. cedar</p>	<p>Churchyard team - no regular meeting</p> <p>Maintenance of strimmers mowers and other tools</p> <p>Be aware of funerals and weddings so the entrances look tidy</p>
February	<p>Empty bins / General tidying – remove dead flowers, fallen twigs, prune any items that restrict the paths or are dangerous</p> <p>Collect rubbish round the outside of the church in the hedges - recycle as much as possible on the compost heap/recycle bin -rest to land fill in wheelie bin</p> <p>Manage waste disposal on compost heap to ensure appropriate cycling of waste NB take care not to disturb mini-beasts and slow worms unduly</p>	<p>Prune standard rose bushes</p> <p>Monitor trees for wind damage esp. cedar</p>	<p>Churchyard Team – meets Wednesday reserve day Friday</p> <p>Day confirmed by email consent between team members based on weather and personal choice</p> <p>Be aware of funerals and weddings so the entrances look tidy</p> <p>Rose pruning - when buds start to appear late Feb or very early March - three D's remove dead diseased damaged wood sometimes crossing wood can be removed</p> <p>Reduce branches by a ¼ to a 1/3rd in length - cut above a bud on a slope - more removed the stronger the remaining buds will grow</p> <p>Leave outward facing buds – overall aim is a wine goblet shape</p>
March	<p>Empty bins / General tidying – remove dead flowers, fallen twigs, prune any items that restrict the paths or are dangerous</p> <p>Collect rubbish round the outside of the church in the hedges - recycle as much as possible on the compost heap/recycle bin -rest to land fill in wheelie bin</p> <p>Manage waste disposal on compost heap to ensure appropriate cycling of waste NB take care not to disturb mini-beasts and slow worms unduly</p>	<p>Mow grass zone 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8</p> <p>NB zone 7 area of heather use high setting on mower</p> <p>Collect grass cutting</p> <p>Trim grass around edges of flower beds</p> <p>Prune trees as required</p> <p>Monitor trees for wind damage esp. cedar</p>	<p>Churchyard Team – meets Wednesday reserve day Friday</p> <p>Day confirmed by email consent between team members based on weather and personal choice</p> <p>Purchase of fuel for strimmers and mowers</p> <p>Be aware of funerals and weddings so the entrances look tidy</p>

St John the Baptist, Crowthorne

Month	Regular outdoor tasks	Less regular outdoor tasks	Information/Management
April	<p>Empty bins / General tidying – remove dead flowers, fallen twigs, prune any items that restrict the paths or are dangerous</p> <p>Collect rubbish round the outside of the church in the hedges - recycle as much as possible on the compost heap/recycle bin -rest to land fill in wheelie bin</p> <p>Manage waste disposal on compost heap to ensure appropriate cycling of waste NB take care not to disturb mini-beasts and slow worms unduly</p>	<p>Mow grass zones</p> <p>1 to retain path to compost heap</p> <p>2 along hedge to GoR</p> <p>3+4 edge of path only +strim around memorial tablets</p> <p>6 memorial end only</p> <p>7 entrance path side only +strim around memorial tablets</p> <p>8 path to noticeboard only</p> <p>Prune trees as required</p>	<p>Churchyard Team – meets Wednesday reserve day Friday</p> <p>Day confirmed by email consent between team members based on weather and personal choice</p> <p>Be aware of funerals and weddings so the entrances look tidy</p> <p>From Lindum Nurseries Eversley Cross RG27 0NJ purchase</p> <p>6 plant trays x 9 antirrhinum (white)</p> <p>6 plant trays x 20 bush geranium (red or pink)</p> <p>9 plant trays x 7 bush lobelia (dark blue)</p>
May	<p>Empty bins / General tidying – remove dead flowers, fallen twigs, prune any items that restrict the paths or are dangerous</p> <p>Collect rubbish round the outside of the church in the hedges - recycle as much as possible on the compost heap/recycle bin -rest to land fill in wheelie bin</p> <p>Pull up any sprouting bracken</p> <p>Manage waste disposal on compost heap to ensure appropriate cycling of waste NB take care not to disturb mini-beasts and slow worms unduly</p>	<p>No mow May</p> <p>Allow grass in zone 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 to grow for wild flowers</p> <p>Plant and water summer bedding plants</p>	<p>Churchyard Team – meets Wednesday reserve day Friday</p> <p>Day confirmed by email consent between team members based on weather and personal choice</p> <p>Be aware of funerals and weddings so the entrances look tidy</p>
June	<p>Empty bins / General tidying – remove dead flowers, fallen twigs, prune any items that restrict the paths or are dangerous</p> <p>Collect rubbish round the outside of the church in the hedges - recycle as much as possible on the compost heap/recycle bin -rest to land fill in wheelie bin</p> <p>Pull up any sprouting bracken</p> <p>Remove creeper from hedge zone 1</p> <p>Manage waste disposal on compost heap to ensure appropriate cycling of waste NB take care not to disturb mini-beasts and slow worms unduly</p>	<p>Mow grass zone</p> <p>1 to retain path to compost heap</p> <p>2 along hedge to GoR</p> <p>3+4 edge of path only +strim around memorial tablets</p> <p>6 memorial end only</p> <p>7 entrance path side only +strim around memorial tablets</p> <p>8 path to noticeboard only</p> <p>Strim boarder outside church - west end</p> <p>Mechanical or chemical removal of weeds along paths</p>	<p>Churchyard Team – meets Wednesday reserve day Friday</p> <p>Day confirmed by email consent between team members based on weather and personal choice</p> <p>Maintenance of strimmers and mowers</p> <p>Be aware of funerals and weddings so the entrances look tidy</p>

Month	Regular outdoor tasks	Less regular outdoor tasks	Information/Management
July	<p>Empty bins / General tidying – remove dead flowers, fallen twigs, prune any items that restrict the paths or are dangerous</p> <p>Collect rubbish round the outside of the church in the hedges - recycle as much as possible on the compost heap/recycle bin -rest to land fill in wheelie bin</p> <p>Pull up any sprouting bracken</p> <p>Remove creeper from hedge zone 1</p> <p>Manage waste disposal on compost heap to ensure appropriate cycling of waste NB take care not to disturb mini-beasts and slow worms unduly</p>	<p>Mow grass zone</p> <p>1 to retain path to compost heap</p> <p>2 along hedge to GoR</p> <p>3+4 edge of path only +strim around memorial tablets</p> <p>6 memorial end only</p> <p>7 entrance path side only +strim around memorial tablets</p> <p>8 path to noticeboard only</p> <p>Mechanical or chemical removal of weeds along paths</p> <p>Vigilance for sudden limb drop</p>	<p>Churchyard Team – meets Wednesday reserve day Friday</p> <p>Day confirmed by email consent between team members based on weather and personal choice</p> <p>Be aware of funerals and weddings so the entrances look tidy</p>
August	<p>Empty bins / General tidying – remove dead flowers, fallen twigs, prune any items that restrict the paths or are dangerous</p> <p>Collect rubbish round the outside of the church in the hedges - recycle as much as possible on the compost heap/recycle bin -rest to land fill in wheelie bin</p> <p>Pull up any sprouting bracken</p> <p>Remove creeper from hedge zone 1</p> <p>Manage waste disposal on compost heap to ensure appropriate cycling of waste NB take care not to disturb mini-beasts and slow worms unduly</p>	<p>Mow grass zone</p> <p>1 to retain path to compost heap</p> <p>2 along hedge to GoR</p> <p>3+4 edge of path only +strim around memorial tablets</p> <p>6 memorial end only</p> <p>7 entrance path side only +strim around memorial tablets</p> <p>8 path to noticeboard only</p> <p>Vigilance for sudden limb drop</p>	<p>Churchyard Team – meets Wednesday reserve day Friday</p> <p>Day confirmed by email consent between team members based on weather and personal choice</p> <p>Be aware of funerals and weddings so the entrances look tidy</p>
September	<p>Empty bins / General tidying – remove dead flowers, fallen twigs, prune any items that restrict the paths or are dangerous</p> <p>Collect rubbish round the outside of the church in the hedges - recycle as much as possible on the compost heap/recycle bin -rest to land fill in wheelie bin</p> <p>Manage waste disposal on compost heap to ensure appropriate cycling of waste</p> <p>NB take care not to disturb mini-beasts and slow worms unduly</p>	<p>Mow grass zone</p> <p>1 to retain path to compost heap</p> <p>2 along hedge to GoR</p> <p>3+4 edge of path only +strim around memorial tablets</p> <p>6 memorial end only</p> <p>7 entrance path side only +strim around memorial tablets</p> <p>8 path to noticeboard only</p> <p>Mechanical removal of self sown plants in graves</p> <p>Remove summer bedding plants re plant with winter pansies</p> <p>Vigilance for sudden limb drop</p>	<p>Churchyard Team – meets Wednesday reserve day Friday</p> <p>Day confirmed by email consent between team members based on weather and personal choice</p> <p>Be aware of funerals and weddings so the entrances look tidy</p> <p>From Lindum Nurseries Eversley Cross RG27 0NJ</p> <p>purchase 12 trays of pansies</p>

St John the Baptist, Crowthorne

Month	Regular outdoor tasks	Less regular outdoor tasks	Information/Management
October	<p>Empty bins / General tidying – remove dead flowers, fallen twigs, prune any items that restrict the paths or are dangerous</p> <p>Collect rubbish round the outside of the church in the hedges - recycle as much as possible on the compost heap/recycle bin -rest to land fill in wheelie bin</p> <p>Manage waste disposal on compost heap to ensure appropriate cycling of waste NB take care not to disturb mini-beasts and slow worms unduly</p>	<p>Collect leaves from zones 3 4 5 6 as required</p> <p>Mow grass zone 12 3 4 5 6 7 8</p> <p>NB zone 7 do not cut until heather finished</p> <p>flowering use high setting on mower</p> <p>Strim all areas not accessible to mowers</p> <p>Collect all grass clippings</p> <p>Monitor trees for wind damage esp. cedar</p> <p>Prune trees as required</p> <p>Annual church hedge cutting</p>	<p>Churchyard Team – meets Wednesday reserve day Friday</p> <p>Day confirmed by email consent between team members based on weather and personal choice</p> <p>Minimum leaf collection to keep paths clear as leaf litter valuable for wild life</p> <p>Be aware of funerals and weddings so the entrances look tidy</p> <p>Advertise annual church hedge cutting – volunteers required for cutting tidying up and making tea/coffee</p> <p>Contact MP PM re cutting on Friday before main event</p>
November	<p>Empty bins / General tidying – remove dead flowers, fallen twigs, prune any items that restrict the paths or are dangerous</p> <p>Collect rubbish round the outside of the church in the hedges - recycle as much as possible on the compost heap/recycle bin -rest to land fill in wheelie bin</p> <p>Manage waste disposal on compost heap to ensure appropriate cycling of waste NB take care not to disturb mini-beasts and slow worms unduly</p>	<p>Collect leaves from zones 5 6 7 8</p> <p>Special attention around Lychgate /Zone 6 in preparation for Remembrance Sunday Service</p> <p>Remove Remembrance crosses/wreaths from graves before Advent</p> <p>Fill collapsed graves and sunken paths with decomposed material from compost heap</p> <p>Monitor trees for wind damage esp. cedar</p>	<p>Churchyard Team – meets Wednesday reserve day Friday</p> <p>Day confirmed by email consent between team members based on weather and personal choice</p> <p>Minimum leaf collection to keep paths clear as leaf litter valuable for wild life</p> <p>Be aware of funerals and weddings so the entrances look tidy</p> <p>Lych gate wreaths normally managed by Churchwardens</p>
December	<p>Empty bins / General tidying – remove dead flowers, fallen twigs, prune any items that restrict the paths or are dangerous</p> <p>Collect rubbish round the outside of the church in the hedges - recycle as much as possible on the compost heap/recycle bin -rest to land fill in wheelie bin</p> <p>Manage waste disposal on compost heap to ensure appropriate cycling of waste NB take care not to disturb mini-beasts and slow worms unduly</p>	<p>Fill collapsed graves and sunken paths with decomposed material from compost heap</p> <p>Mechanical removal of self sown plants in graves and unwanted ivy</p> <p>Monitor trees for wind damage esp. cedar</p>	<p>Churchyard team - meets Wednesday reserve day Friday</p> <p>Day confirmed by email consent between team members based on weather and personal choice</p> <p>Tidy garden shed</p> <p>Be aware of funerals and weddings so the entrances look tidy</p>

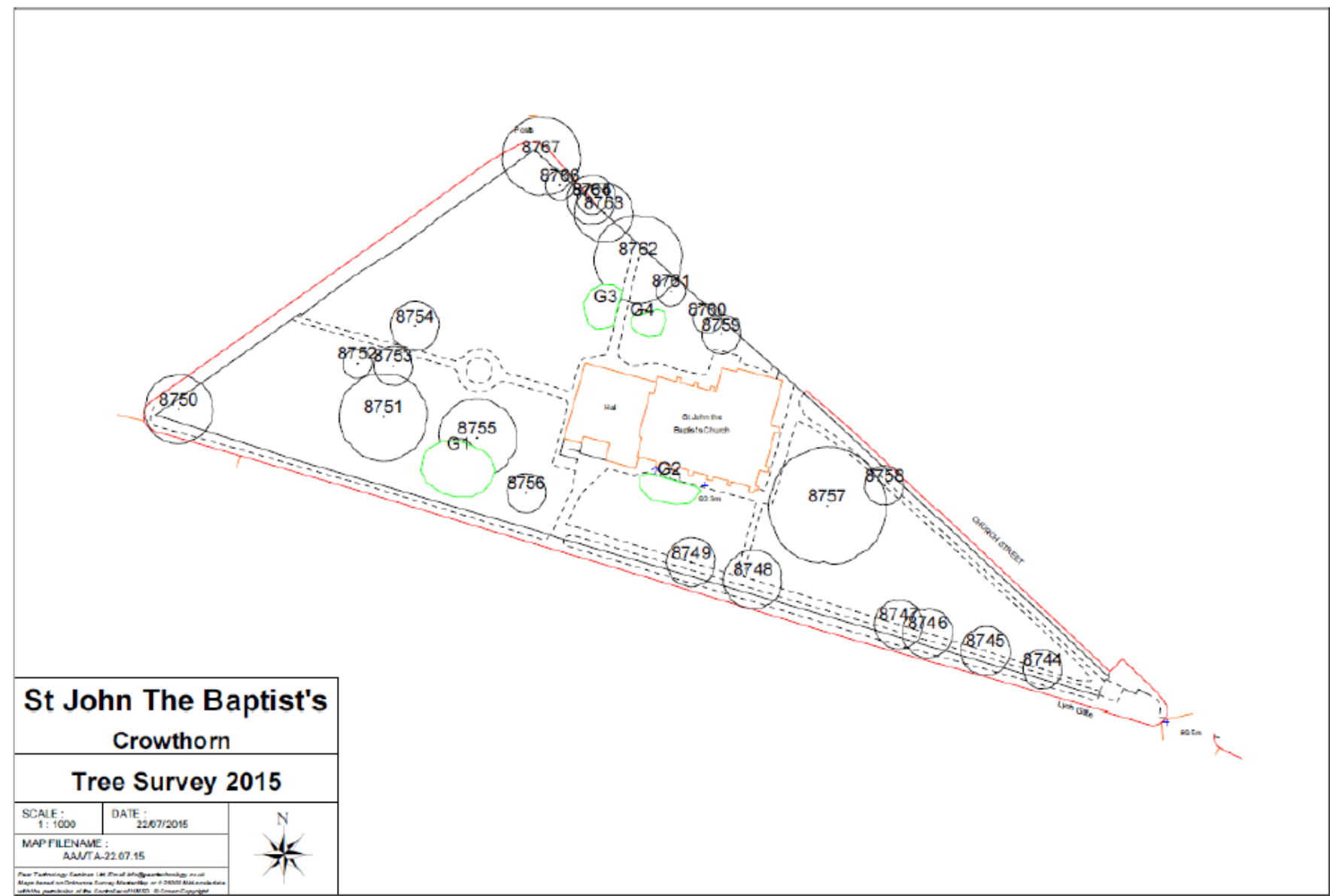
St John the Baptist, Crowthorne

Churchyard Zones



St John the Baptist, Crowthorne

Tree Positions



St John the Baptist, Crowthorne

Trees latin name	Trees common name	Number on tree survey
Acer platanoides	Norway Maple	8755 8760
Acer pseudoplatanus	Sycamore	8750
Acer purpureum	Red Sycamore	
Aesculus hippocastum	Horse Chestnut	8744 8745 8746 8747
Betula pendula	Silver Birch	8758
Castanea sativa	Sweet Chestnut	8764
Chamecyparis lawsoniana	Lawson's Cypress	8759 8761
Coryllus avellan	Hazel	
Crataegus monoguna	Hawthorn	
Cupressus sempervirans	Italian Cypress	
Cedrus deodara	Deodar	8757
Fagus sylvatica	Beech	8748 8749 8762 8767
Fagus pupurea	Copper Beech	
Ilex aquifolium	Holly	8752 8756
Laburnum anagyroides	Laburnum	
Prunus avium	Wild Cherry	G1 8751 8753 8765 8766
Prunus laurocerasus	Cherry Laurel	
Quercus robur	Pendunculated Oak	
Sorbus aucuparia	Rowan	G3
Salix caprea	Goat Willow	8754 8763
Sambucus nigra	Elder	
Taxus baccata	Yew	G2
Taxus fastigiata	Irish Yew	G2

Church perimeter hedges are mixed-made up mainly of laurel holly beech wild rose and hawthorn interspersed with bracken ivy nettles virginia creeper

Zone 1 road side has a clump of Rosa rugosa

The churchyard is in an area of lowland heathland

St John the Baptist, Crowthorne

Churchyard Personnel

Name	Associate	Contact details email mob. No. tel no.	GDPR consent	Preferences (eg happy to use machinery?) Zone responsible for???
	Churchyard team co-ordinator Lead		Y	Experienced with all machinery Happy with general gardening duties
	Team member		Y	Prefers to empty bins keep churchyard tidy No heavy machinery use
	Team member		Y	Happy not to use machinery Happy with general gardening duties
	Team member		Y	Experienced with all machinery Competent in all maintenance skills
	Team member		Y	Experienced with all machinery Competent in most maintenance skills
	Team member		Y	Experienced with all machinery Happy with general gardening duties

Choir Vestry

Key for garden shed are ...

Machinery

Make /Model	Type	Fuel	Oil	Maintenance/problems
	Mower	unleaded	SAE 30 lawnmower oil	Sharpen blade check oil clean after use refill fuel
	Mower	unleaded	SAE 30 lawnmower oil	Sharpen blade check oil clean after use refill fuel
	Mower	unleaded	SAE 30 lawnmower oil	Sharpen blade check oil clean after use refill fuel
	Strimmer	unleaded	2 stroke oil ratio ??	Clean after use check strimmer line full
	Strimmer	unleaded	2 stroke oil ratio ??	Clean after use check strimmer line full
	Leafblower	unleaded	2 stroke oil ratio ??	Clean after use refill fuel
	Leafblower	unleaded	2 stroke oil ratio ??	Clean after use refill fuel

St John the Baptist, Crowthorne

Inventory of garden shed equipment- to be confirmed

Rakes
Leaf Rakes
Spades
Tree Loppers
Waste Collection Bags
Wheelbarrow
Gloves
Mower
Strimmer
Leaf blower

Machinery Information Booklets

Churchyard Guidelines for Safe Gardening

The Churchyard is a delightful place to work and is a vital green and quiet space for central Crowthorne. It is also a haven for wildlife, heritage, and people. Over the years Churchyard volunteers have reflected on experiences, some of which need to be shared with anyone joining the team.

Before Gardening, Plan Your Safety

Weather, if it is looking sunny wear a floppy hat and sunglasses and apply sun block, especially if working around midday.

If the weather is hot carry a bottle of water.

Footwear should be of robust design with strong toe caps, and cleats. Slippery grass can lead to accidents.

If planning to use machinery e.g. mowers, strimmers please wear ear protectors to reduce risk of tinnitus, safety glasses, and ideally steel toe cap shoes.

Please read the notice **“Use of eye, ear, hand and foot protection is recommended when using power tools”**

Periodically check that the First Aid box is fully stocked

Ensure you know where the Fire Extinguisher is located

If planning to handle weeds, branches, litter etc please wear gloves.

If a thunderstorm is lurking please do **NOT** go out, especially if the time lapse between the lightning and thunder is reducing.

St John the Baptist, Crowthorne

Gardening Safely

Do not garden alone, you could have an accident, and as the churchyard is large with large headstones you may not be either seen or heard if injured.
Beware slippery surfaces, as slipping on wet grass can create awkward falls.
Beware holes either caused by animals trying to burrow or collapsed graves. Contact a colleague and/or find some soil and fill them in...
Do NOT lean on headstones as some are secured to the grave by a small amount of mortar, which crumbles over time. A headstone is heavy and could trap your leg.

Safety Maintenance

After gardening please clean all equipment used and ensure that all machinery is switched off before cleaning, refill fuel tanks outside.
No smoking around the garden storage area.
Sweep out the garden store.
Lock the store to ensure that unauthorized persons do not have access to garden tools.

For future discussion

Confirm non mowing areas for wild flowers
Permanent planting in flower beds around standard roses to reduce maintenance
Reducing height of hedges for ease of cutting in the future
Removal of creeper in hedge in zone 1 west end
Leaf collection whilst still encouraging wildlife
Assist in completing new churchyard survey
Caring For God's Acre –review action pack

Useful Information

GDPR	All members of Churchyard team to be made aware that contact details will be circulated within the team only. If individuals want to be added to the church database they can sign a church contact form - attached
Safeguarding	New Team members to be given instruction on use of machinery. Team members must not work alone particularly if using machinery. Team members should be advised to carry mobile phone whilst working in case of an accident or they require assistance. See Safe Gardening Guidelines

St John the Baptist, Crowthorne

Emergency Contacts

Church Office tel no. open Wednesday morning only
Vicar tel no.

Useful information

Health and Safety	Quarterly inspections of paths, drains, general building fabric is usually carried out by the churchwardens. If any team member notices a problem would be helpful to let CWs know.
Waste disposal Biffa	2 bins general waste/recycle Collection on Tuesdays General waste and recycling get collected in alternate weeks.
Churchyard Survey	Original carried out in 1996 - see attached New Survey activated 01-2020 – to be completed - see attached
Tree Survey	Tree survey carried out 22/07/15 results are in fabric file in choir vestry safe.
Graves information	Church Office computer has a comprehensive database of information.
GoR information	Ken is the source of knowledge for this. Padlock code last 4 digits of LC tel no. 2413 Remembrance book is behind swing door on pillar

Website information

<https://www.trees.org.uk/Help-Advice/Help-for-Tree-Owners/Guide-to-Tree-Pruning> Information on when to prune trees

<https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk> Eco Church website

<http://www.churchcare.co.uk/> ChurchCare is the Church of England's national resource and is the comprehensive source of information for everyone managing a church building.

<http://www.churchcare.co.uk/shrinking-the-footprint/ways-to-take-action/managing-your-churchyard>

<http://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/> Caring for God's Acre works nationally to support groups and individuals to investigate, care for, and enjoy these unique sites.

www.ico.org.uk for GDPR information

<http://www.crowthorneparishchurch.org.uk/community/st-john-the-baptist-parish-church-14961/home> Church Website

Historical status Church is Grade 2 listed by Historic England no.1393560 church was consecrated 5th May 1873

Charity Commission Registration ... Church Architect ...

Insurance Treasurer holds paperwork and renews annually <https://www.ecclesiastical.com/> lot of useful information on their website

General Tips



Notices can help explain to visitors why a churchyard is managed as it is, you may want to keep them on a board or in the church porch, or it may help to put temporary ones in specific areas of the churchyard

St Mary's, Wargrave

Signs explain the reasons behind the management



St Mary's, Wargrave

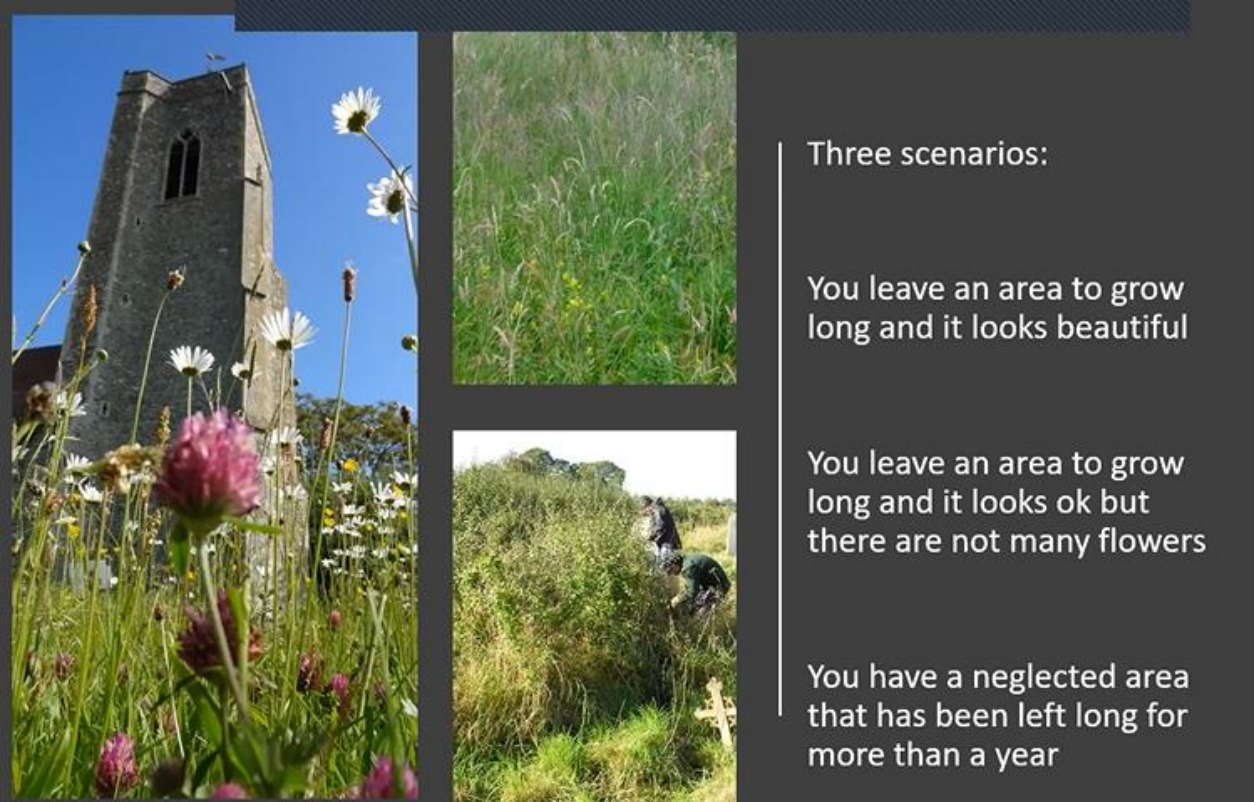


Sources of notices to adapt

www.oxford.anglican.org/environment-and-social-justice/environmental-action/biodiversity/

www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/free-meadow-management-sign/

www.plantlife.org.uk/campaigns/nomowmay/



Grassland management

From a Caring for God's Acre Webinar

Scenario 1 looks lovely. If you leave the area to grow within spring/summer for ~14 weeks and it looks nice. Likely it has been cut and collected regularly. Keep it up. Need to cut & collect before the grass yellows, or nutrients return to the ground.

Scenario 2 when long looks ok at first but with few flowers and starts to look a bit messy halfway through the season. Likely that you have rich soil and taller, tougher grasses outcompete smaller flower. Ensure grass is cut early enough and removed after each cut. Can use yellow rattle.

Scenario 3 an area has been left long for over a year and looks messy to start. Some areas like this can be good in a large churchyard for small mammals, reptiles, hedgehogs etc. However, for wildflowers we need to cut and clear for a few years monthly or 6 weekly to reduce the strength for coarse grasses. Try at least 3 times a year early June, early July and early Sept. Then carry on with cutting for long medium or short grass. Can try green hay spreading from richer areas.

Info sheet here:

<https://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/A2-Caring-for-Grassland-2022.pdf>

and webinars eg:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U2UJNtljHxo&list=PLcc_HT5TeqjpwXmnMDjMyC1-dbeZPCJOK&index=7



Defined cutting and reduced cutting areas can make the management look purposeful

Be very careful with planting or seeding in any new species, find out the history and what's present naturally first. Ancient grasslands are best not added to.

Raking after cutting important to reduce smothering of smaller plants and to prevent nutrients going back into the soil

Edges or areas within grave boundaries can sometimes be left to grow and flower even when the main areas need to be regularly mown



Surveying is best done over several months to record the variability

Same area (from different angles) in different months at St Bartholomew's, Yarnton.

April mainly cowslips and primroses



June mainly
oxeye daisies and
yarrow



Place bug
hotels in a
sheltered
spot that
receives the
morning sun



Bat/bird
boxes can
increase
habitat
niches

Water butts
useful for
graveside
flowers



Drawing up a simple management plan

A basic format is an annotated map with a calendar of actions relating to the areas defined.

Here's a worked example begun as a draft for the churchyard of St Bartholomew's. It would need agreeing with the parish council as it's a closed churchyard that they have responsibility for.

Churchyard boundary shapes can be obtained from the CofE's Faculty Online website. Credit the map: © [Open Street Map](#) contributors

Viewing satellite images e.g. from Google Maps or Bing can help to plot trees and shrubs more accurately than is possible from the ground.

Calendar list by month of the main tasks to do (or avoid).

St Bartholomew's

Faculty Online Plan









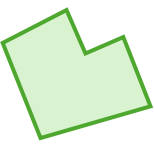

<https://facultyonline.churchofengland.org/churches>

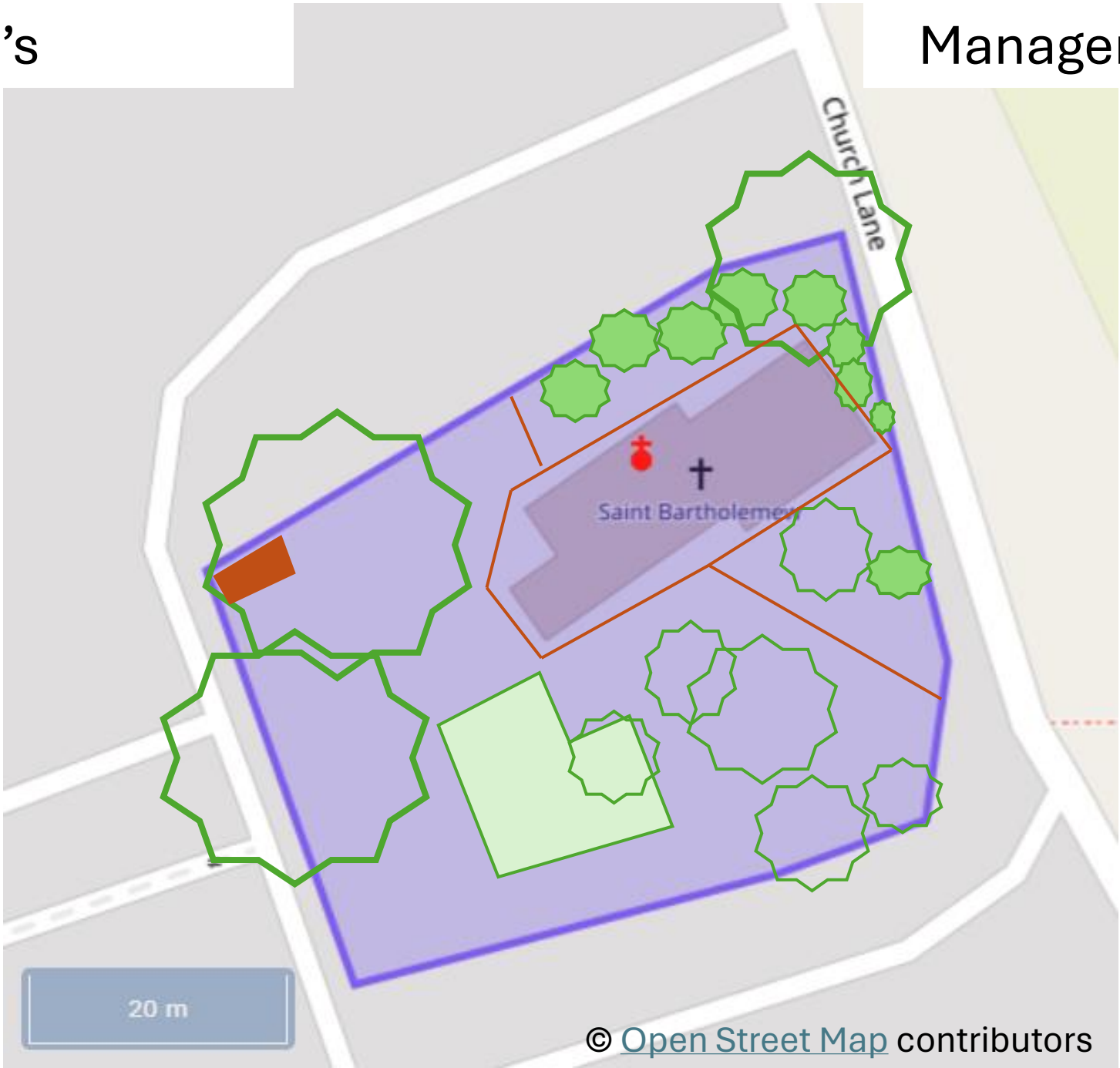


© [Open Street Map](#) contributors

St Bartholomew's

Management Plan Map

-     
-  Path
-  Shrubs
-  Mature trees
-  Area of reduced mowing
-  Compost heap for grass cuttings and dead flowers



St Bartholomew's

Management Plan Calendar

Regular tasks, all/any months – check trees for wind damage, weed paths and flower bed, pull up sycamore seedlings, gardening of flower bed area at NE of churchyard

Jan – trimming of ivy where it's growing up the church walls or over gravestones and tombs

Feb – pick up fallen twigs from trees before they get hidden as grass grows and damage mower later, make habitat pile by compost heap

Mar – initial high-level grass cut and collect everywhere if primroses not up or avoiding the reduced mowing area if they are flowering already, (no more hedge trimming or dense ivy clearance until end Aug and only emergency tree work)

Apr – regular mowing with grass collection except for reduced mowing area grass to compost heap in corner of church

May – regular mowing with grass collection except for reduced mowing area

Jun – regular mowing except for reduced mowing area

Jul – regular mowing short areas, early to mid-July strim/scythe & rake up cuttings on reduced mowing area

Aug – mowing as needed with grass collection everywhere

Sep – mowing as needed with grass collection everywhere

Oct – mowing as needed with grass collection until grass stops growing, carry out any hedge and tree maintenance

Nov – pick up fallen twigs from trees make habitat pile by compost area

Dec – pick up fallen twigs from trees, add to habitat pile

Things to avoid - do not clean gravestones/monuments of lichens and bryophytes, do not disturb nesting birds.



Thank you to all the churches
that shared their
management plans.
Almost all photos by A. Riggs