

# Caring for God's Acre Creating a Haven for Wildlife



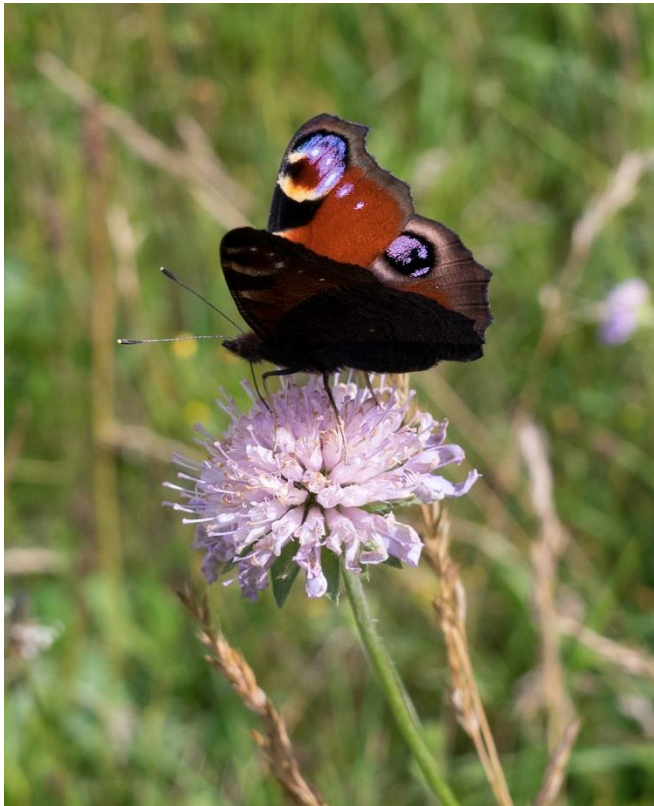
# Cambridgeshire Churchyard Conservation Award



# Traditional Churchyards

- May be the most ancient enclosed piece of land in a parish.
- Contained a diversity of trees, beautiful grasses and flowers which supported insects, small mammals, amphibians and birds.
- More recent mowing, cutting and 'tidying' has destroyed much of the diversity that had flourished over centuries.

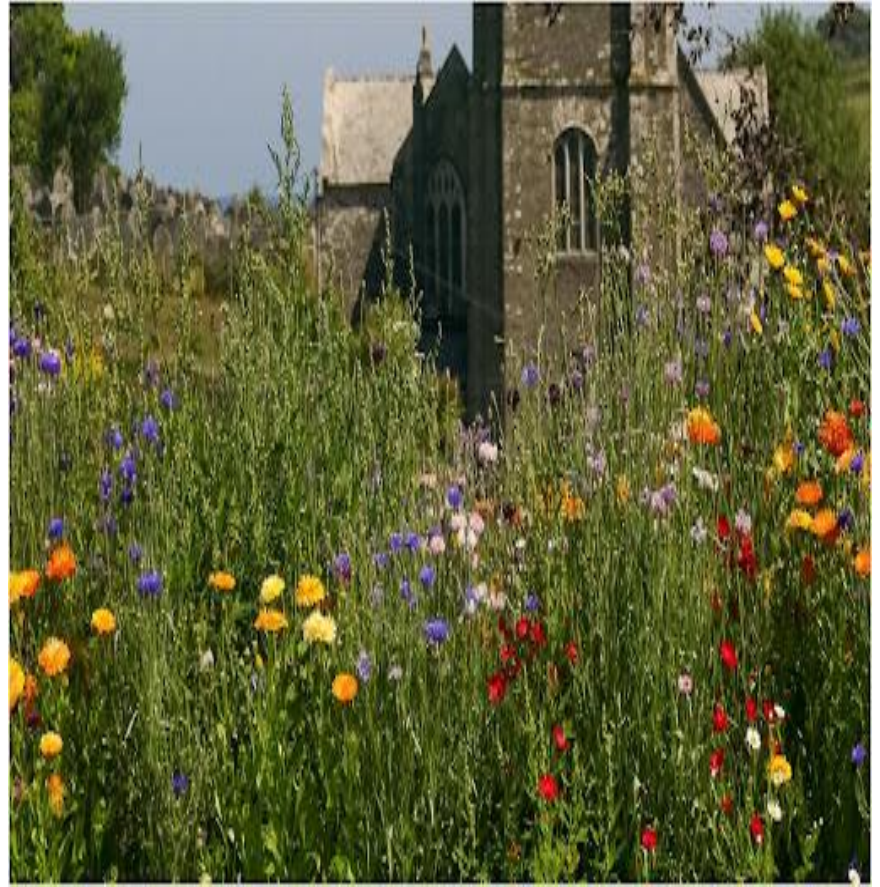
# Churchyards can be rich in Flora and Fauna again



# Wildflower grasslands lost in churchyards need to be replaced



# Wildflower meadows are one of the rarest habitats in the UK Loss of 97% since 1930



# REVERSING THE TREND

Create a variety of  
grass heights.

Establish a mowing  
regime.

# 1. Short Grass

for paths, borders, visited graves





## 2. Medium Height grass

- Less regular mowing
- Establishes strong spring flower areas
- Cut after spring flowers have finished and set seeds (May/June)
- Mow monthly in summer
- Remove cuttings



# 3. Long Grass

- Contains a wealth of plant and animal life
- Requires little management
- Establishes rich summer flower area. Cut February then late July/August, collect cuttings



## 4. Uncut and tussocky areas

- Provides year round shelter for small animals, amphibians and insects, which live and hibernate amongst the stems and roots.
- Some butterflies lay their eggs on long grasses over winter.
- Amphibians live in long grass over winter



# Importance of Paths

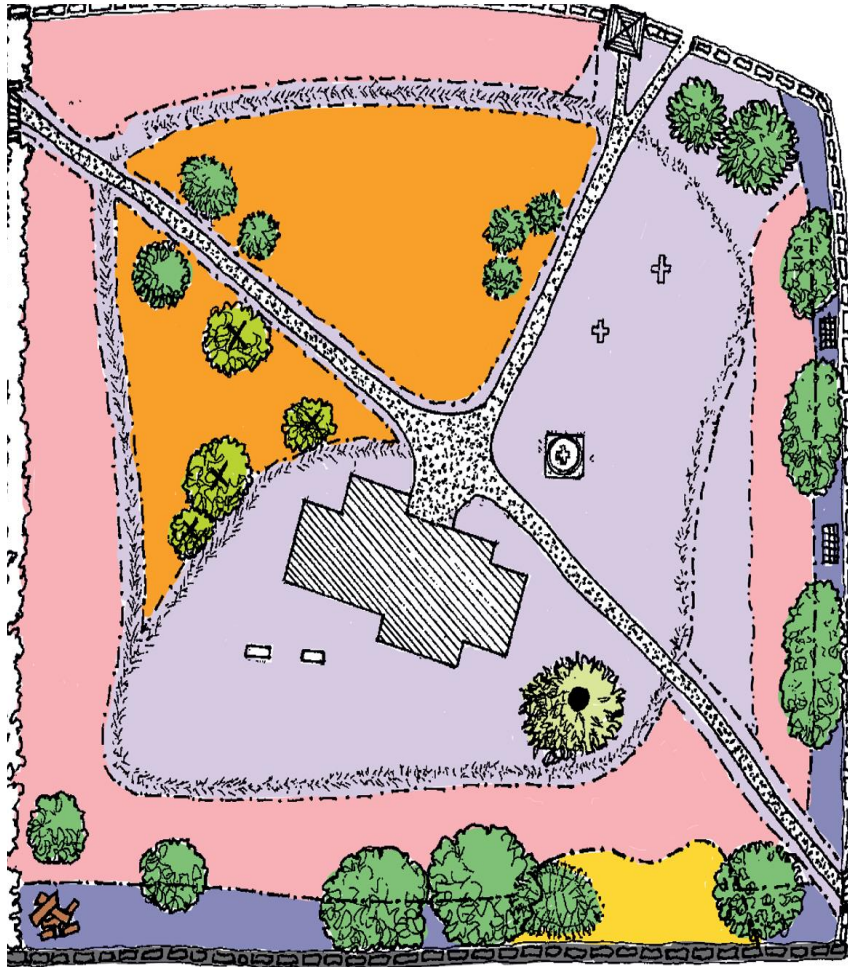
**Show churchyard is  
being managed**











**Allows visitors to  
enjoy wildlife and  
flowers**



# Mapping the Site



-  Short Mown grass
-  Medium Mown grass
-  Long grass
-  Tussocky
-  Manage Nettles + Scrub.
-  Yew trees
-  Compost Bins
-  Deadwood Pile
-  Repair gaps in Wall

# Explain what's happening



# Mature Ivy

**Birds feed on berries  
and nest in ivy**

**Flowers provide late  
food for insects**



# Nurture Nettles

**Foodplant for butterfly caterpillars**

**Ladybirds feed on nettle aphids**

**Small seed eating birds eat flower seeds**





# Nettle notice in St Mary's, Burwell and Mill Road Cemetery nettles

**St Mary's Churchyard Conservation Project**  
**Mowing Plan - Nettles and Butterflies**

These nettles have been left for a very important reason  
They are the principal foodplant for many of our favourite species of butterfly, in their larval (caterpillar) stage.

1  2 

3  4 

Red Admiral  
Comma  
Peacock  
Small Tortoiseshell



# Composts, water and wood piles



# Trees, shrubs and hedges

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Provide shelter and  
food for a rich  
variety of wildlife  
in churchyards



Caring for other wildlife in the churchyard – bats, swifts, hares, bees



• **Shouldn't every church porch have a swift nest?**

# 5 steps to Churchyard Care

- Form a small group of helpers
- Map the site
- Draw up an annual mowing plan for the grassland
- Plan what you plan to do and mark on the map
- Inform people of the plans



# Plant flowers that feed birds over winter

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- Teasels
- Thistles
- Sunflowers



# More information from Cambridgeshire Wildlife Trust



Bedfordshire  
Cambridgeshire  
Northamptonshire

## Cambridgeshire Churchyard Conservation Award Scheme

Patron; The Bishop of Ely, The Rt. Revd. Stephen Conway



## Cambridgeshire Churchyard Conservation Award Levels

Once registered as part of the scheme you can work towards the Bronze, Silver or Gold award. Each award lasts for 3 years, after which you can re-apply or go for a higher award. Free advisory visits are always available, to help you on your way. To request a visit or to apply for an award please contact the Wildlife Trust. Applying for an award is free and information on the criteria can be found overleaf.

*The Wildlife Trust BCN, The Manor House, Broad Street, Great Cambridge, Cambs, CB23 6DH. Telephone (01954) 713500 or email the Co-ordinator: [diana.cook@wildlifebcn.org](mailto:diana.cook@wildlifebcn.org) tel. 07968245457*



Cambridgeshire Churchyard Conservation Award

**BRONZE LEVEL 10 points**



Cambridgeshire Churchyard Conservation Award

**SILVER LEVEL 25 points**



Cambridgeshire Churchyard Conservation Award

**GOLD LEVEL 40 points**



**Patron: The Bishop of Ely, The Rt.  
Revd. Stephen Conway**





Caring for God's Acre website

Church of England website:  
Nurture in His Name - short film